

RHODES UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE INTERPRETATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *PARZIVAL* MAIN LESSON WITHIN THE
CONTEXT OF THE WALDORF CURRICULUM: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY**

Volume one

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ABSTRACT

The Steiner/Waldorf school movement is currently one of the fastest growing independent school movements internationally. In several countries it seems to have developed into the most popular form of alternative education. South Africa has 17 Waldorf schools and one full-time teacher training facility.

This study investigated the interpretation and implementation of the *Parzival* main lesson within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum. The main lesson system is an essential constituent of the Waldorf curriculum. Most academic subjects in a Waldorf school are taught in a three- or four-week main lesson block. The main lesson occupies the first two hours of the school day. A main lesson consists of a particular three-part structure, and the main lesson book is the keystone to the Waldorf evaluative process. The *Parzival* main lesson is specifically taught in Class 11, and most Waldorf schools consider it as one of the most important main lessons in the high school.

The interpretivist model was ideally suited to this research. The investigation was conducted as a multiple case study, and the main source of data was provided by classroom observation. This was supported by interviews and classroom artifacts.

The study involved two South African Waldorf schools at which the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. This main lesson is presented at only three South African Waldorf schools. I

teach at the remaining school, and therefore conducted my research at the other two schools. The teachers who facilitated the *Parzival* main lesson, as well as the Class 11 students at the selected schools voluntarily participated in the research.

My research findings indicate that the possibility exists for the teacher to exercise a certain degree of freedom and creativity within the parameters of Waldorf methodology and the Waldorf curriculum. The study also determines that teachers often find it difficult to integrate the three-part structure, as indicated by Waldorf methodology, in a single main lesson. Furthermore, my research establishes that main lesson books can indeed serve as both text and as an assessment tool.

I therefore conclude and maintain in this study, with particular reference to the *Parzival* main lesson, that despite the prescriptive structure of the Waldorf system and Steiner pedagogy, teachers need not necessarily sacrifice their freedom and creativity within the classroom.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all those devoted and hard-working Waldorf teachers all over the world to whom Waldorf education is a calling, and who so often give their time generously with love, enthusiasm, and passion.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Today's children are an endangered species (Schwartz, 1999: vii).

1.1 THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The Steiner/Waldorf school movement is currently one of the fastest growing independent school movements worldwide. In fact, John Barnes (cited in Lachman, 2007: 231) states that “Waldorf education...is the largest non-parochial, independent educational movement in the world.” In many countries it seems to have become the most popular form of alternative schooling, attracting more applicants than other alternative approaches (Lachman, 2007: 230, 231). There are approximately 1 200 Waldorf schools and about 1 600 kindergartens worldwide, as well as 50 international full-time teacher training facilities (Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen, 2008). South Africa has 17 Waldorf schools and one full-time teacher training facility (Federation of Southern African Waldorf Schools, 2008).

The subject of this research, namely the interpretation and implementation of the Parsifal legend within the context of the Waldorf curriculum, was influenced by a number of factors. As a trained Waldorf teacher with fifteen years teaching experience at a Waldorf school, I am keen to make a contribution to the educational field in South Africa by bringing about a stronger awareness and a deeper understanding of the principles of Waldorf education. I have a particular interest in the Parsifal legend and the Arthurian Romances, and have taught the *Parzival* main lesson in the upper school of an established South African Waldorf school for a number of years. As an upper school teacher trainer at the in-service teacher training facility of the school at which I teach, I am as such concerned with the particulars of Waldorf pedagogy and its translation into classroom practice. Exploring how teachers at other South African Waldorf schools interpreted and implemented the Parsifal legend, how this translated into classroom practice and into classroom artifacts in particular interested me.

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Anthroposophy

Rudolf Steiner was an Austrian scientist and philosopher who developed a school of thought called Anthroposophy. Anthroposophy, literally translated, means “study of man”. The word Anthroposophy was initially used by Immanuel Hermann and Robert Zimmerman. Zimmerman was one of Steiner’s tutors at the University of Vienna (Hemleben, 1975: 78). However, the term became almost exclusively associated with Steiner’s own philosophy.

It is essential to have a knowledge of the fundamental teachings of Anthroposophy as it forms the basis of Waldorf education (Childs, 1991: 20). Anthroposophy provides Waldorf teachers with a comprehensive world view as it places child development in the perspective of physical and spiritual evolution (Demanett, 1988: 11). Waldorf education acknowledges an important claim made by Anthroposophy, namely that man is a being participating in two worlds, a material-physical world, and a divine-spiritual world (Lievegoed, 2005: 16). Steiner’s epistemology is clearly set out in several of his publications (1964; 1978; 1994b). Similarly, his ontology is expounded in depth in other seminal works (1966; 1969; 1994a) in which he explains the nature of the human being in both its physical and spiritual aspects.

1.2.2 The main lesson system

The main lesson system forms an integral part of the Waldorf curriculum. Most subjects in a Waldorf school are taught in two-hour main lesson blocks of three to four weeks. The main lesson is the first activity of the school day. It is followed by other activities such as second-language lessons, crafts, art, and Eurythmy (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19–22).

A main lesson consists of a specific three-part structure (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20), and should aim at engaging the students' willing, feeling, and thinking capacities (Maher & Bleach, 1996: 36). In terms of structure and rhythm the main lesson is the clearest and most systematic way of putting Steiner's educational thought into practice (Blunt, 1995: 168, 169). The main lesson book moreover forms the keystone to the Waldorf evaluative process, and serves both as text and as an assessment tool (Schwartz, 1999: 228).

1.2.3 *Parzival*

The *Parzival* main lesson is taught in Class 11 in almost every Waldorf school in the world (Stockmeyer, 1991: 36). The text used in Waldorf schools is the one written by Wolfram von Eschenbach (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 58). It is the most complete text on the Parsifal legend, and is studied in translation in the English-speaking world (Hatto, 1980: 7).

Parzival is taught specifically in Class 11 because it echoes the 16/17-year old adolescent's fundamental existential questions (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 58). The story explores many issues relevant to late adolescence, e.g. the nature of love and marriage; illusion and temptation; the abuse of power; alienation and doubt; and meeting one's destiny (Rawson et al. 1999: 16). The story also examines the quest for the Holy Grail and its symbolic and spiritual significance (Rawson et al., 1999: 16). *Parzival* takes man on a journey into his innermost being on a quest to find and possibly answer fundamental existential questions (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 157). It is an archetypal biography containing all the joy, sorrow, disappointment, failure and success that are integral to everyone's life. In this way the story goes beyond a pleasant fireside tale of adventure (Newbatt, 2006: 8). Within the Waldorf curriculum it becomes a tool to be used in the classroom to help shape the adolescent's understanding of modern life.

Aspects of this tale are also echoed in contemporary stories and films such as the *Harry Potter* (Rowling: 1997) series, *Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien: 1954), and the *Star War* films.

1.3 FOCUS OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Research Goal

The goal of this research was to investigate critically the interpretation and implementation of the *Parzival* main lesson within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum. The research was conducted as a multiple case study involving two South African Waldorf schools. The *Parzival* main lesson is taught at three South African Waldorf schools, including the school where I am employed. As the study examined the interpretation and implementation of the *Parzival* main lesson within the parameters of Waldorf pedagogy, I was therefore interested in observing how Waldorf pedagogy took place in the classroom, and in how the classroom work manifested in the main lesson books in terms of this particular main lesson.

1.3.2 Research Question

The fundamental research question was therefore: How is the *Parzival* main lesson interpreted and presented by selected teachers at two different South African Waldorf schools, within the broader framework and parameters of the Waldorf curriculum?

1.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

1.4.1 Interpretive paradigm

The research was conducted from an interpretive orientation. Henning et al. (2004: 20) state that the interpretivist researcher looks at different places and different things in order to understand a phenomenon. Interpretivist research is also a communal process involving participating practitioners, and unstructured observation and open interviewing form an integral part of this paradigm (Henning et al., 2004: 20). The interpretivist model was therefore ideally suited to my research since I included two different schools in my study, and used classroom observation, interviews, and classroom artifacts in order to

understand the interpretation and presentation of the Parsifal legend by the selected teachers.

At times I referred briefly to my own practice as I teach at the only other Waldorf school in South Africa where the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. I believe that it added another perspective to the sample of the two Waldorf schools that participated in this study.

1.5 THE POTENTIAL VALUE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I hope that this study would contribute to a greater awareness and interest in Waldorf education, as well as a clearer understanding of its principles, in the wider South African educational community. In order to facilitate this, I include a comprehensive literature review which would make it possible for readers other than those familiar with Waldorf education, to situate the context of this research within the perspective of the principles of Waldorf pedagogy. The literature review incorporates a biography of Steiner as well as the basic tenets of Anthroposophy, which is closely linked with the unfolding of his biography and the development of Waldorf education.

My wish is that this research would also be valuable to teachers within the Waldorf school movement. It provides a multiple case study of a specific aspect of the Waldorf curriculum and highlights the different ways in which teachers can interpret this curriculum. The study furthermore endeavours to reinforce Steiner's wish for the *spirit* of the curriculum rather than the letter to be maintained (Childs, 1991: 166).

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter two comprises the literature review that forms the background to this research. The literature review is quite comprehensive since the study concerns a specific aspect of Waldorf education which is dependant on an understanding of the context within which it takes place and which determines the parameters of this research. Chapter two is therefore divided into three categories, namely a short biography of Rudolf Steiner and

the emergence of Anthroposophy; an outline of Waldorf pedagogy and child development; and finally, a discussion of *Parzival* and its significance within the Waldorf curriculum.

Chapter three examines the goals of this study, the significance of the research, the research paradigm, the research design, and data generation. This chapter also discusses ethics and validity.

The data is presented in Chapter four, which relates primarily to classroom observation. Classroom artifacts and the significance of *Parzival* in the Waldorf curriculum are also discussed.

The findings of this study are discussed in Chapter five. The results are presented in much the same format as the arrangement of the data in the previous chapter.

Finally, the study is concluded in Chapter six. This chapter offers a summary of the findings, and discussions on the relationship between *Parzival* and adolescence, classroom practice, and main lesson books. It terminates with comments on the limitations of the research, the potential value of the study, and recommendations.

The appendices include a précis of *Parzival* to facilitate easy access to the story and its characters to which I refer in various chapters. Appendix B is an example of a “typical” main lesson book which will give the reader a clearer idea of what is meant by the traditional way of creating these books within the context of the Waldorf main lesson.

1.7 A FINAL NOTE

Throughout this thesis I have used the masculine pronoun as opposed to writing he/she, which I find rather cumbersome. This in no way indicates prejudice on my side, but was done simply to allow the text to flow and read more easily.

I have used two different spellings for Parsifal. Parsifal refers to the personality of Parsifal as such, whereas *Parzival* refers to the Wolfram von Eschenbach text. I also refer to Wagner's opera of the same name which is spelt Parsifal.

Extracts from students' work have been italicized. Quotations from interviews are indicated by indented margins and single spacing. Verses by Steiner are printed in bold.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The reason why the world lacks unity and lies broken and in heaps is because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit...But when a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations and see it in the light of thought, shall at the same time kindle science with fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into creation (Emerson, cited in Poirier, 1990: 35).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the principles of Waldorf education, it is essential to have a knowledge of Anthroposophy and of how Rudolf Steiner's own biography eventually led him to the establishment of what he termed Anthroposophy.

A.P. Shepherd called Steiner (Figure 2.1) "a scientist of the invisible" (1954: title of biography). Steiner evolved a philosophy that presented an alternative way of thinking and resulted in different methods of education, agriculture, art, and medicine (The Times Educational Supplement, quoted on dust jacket of Shepherd, 1954), giving rise to the development of Waldorf schools, biodynamic agriculture, Anthroposophical medicine, and influencing the work of modernist artists such as Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Malevich (Taylor, 1992: 55–84). According to Shepherd (1954: dust jacket), Steiner applied "scientific methods" to his examination of the spiritual world, challenging many of the scientific conclusions of his time. However, Steiner always appealed to those studying his work to subject what he said to their own clear and unprejudiced thinking (Easton, 1975: 11).

2.2 RUDOLF STEINER AND ANTHROPOSOPHY

Steiner was born on 27 February 1861, only a few years after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (Shepherd, 1954: 36). He was born in Kraljevec, then on the border between Austria and Hungary, but now in Croatia (Childs, 1995: 11). Steiner was the eldest of a family of three children, born to Johann and Franziska Steiner (Hemleben, 1975: 8, 9, 10). His childhood was fairly unremarkable, apart from the discovery at about the age of seven of an awareness of an invisible, intangible world not accessible to those around him (Childs, 1995: 11). He was educated in science at the *Realschule* in Wiener-Neustadt, which he entered in October 1872 (Steiner, 1951: 21) and at the Technical University of Vienna, where he majored in mathematics, natural history, and chemistry (Shepherd, 1954: 36).



Figure 2.1: Rudolf Steiner

2.2.1 Supersensible perception

While still at a village school in Neudörfel, Steiner came across a book on geometry, which he borrowed from his teacher. Steiner (1951: 11) described how he “plunged into it with enthusiasm”. He came to the conclusion that geometry, although a knowledge which appeared to be produced by man, had also a significance quite independent of man (Steiner, 1951: 11). In his autobiography he wrote (1951: 11) that the discovery that one could live within the mind in the shaping of forms perceived only within oneself, gave him the deepest satisfaction. He continued to describe how the objects and occurrences which the senses perceived, were in space. However, just as this space was outside man, so there existed within man a sort of soul-space which was filled with spiritual beings and occurrences. He therefore saw in thoughts the revelations of a spiritual world (Steiner, 1951: 11).

Steiner grew up while German society was absorbing and developing Darwinian ideas, and he later became an admirer of Haeckel, whom he knew personally (Allen, in Steiner, 1981: 103). Haeckel was deeply influenced by Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, and became known as “the apostle of Darwinism in Germany” (Allen, in Steiner, 1981: 103). Steiner studied Haeckel’s *General Morphology* with interest, and this began to shape his own theory of knowledge and his world view (Steiner, 1951: 39, 40). He also experienced the years of Einstein’s discovery of relativity and the emergence of the New Physics. Although Steiner’s own investigations carried him far beyond the range of physical science, his investigative methods remained influenced by his early scientific training (Shepherd, 1954: 20).

Steiner claimed that phenomena perceivable by us through our physical senses and deducible by thought from those perceptions did not constitute the whole range of the actual realities of our universe (Hemleben, 1975: 61 - 62). He stated that behind the physical realities were so-called supersensible realities which were directly perceptible by senses other than the physical. This supersensible perception, which Steiner claimed to possess, could be acquired by others through a method of conscious, concentrated

thinking as later set out by him in many of his major works (1994; 1994a). By supersensible Steiner meant that which is beyond the physical world, beyond the perception of the physical senses, that which exists outside the natural world (Steiner, 1994a: 16, 18). The German philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, with whose work Steiner was familiar, also mentioned such a supersensible world in his book *Science of knowledge*, published in 1813 (Steiner, 1994a: 14). Fichte speaks of a “new inner sensory instrument through which a new world is opened up, a world that simply does not exist for the ordinary person” (Steiner, 1994a: 14).

2.2.2 The evolution of human consciousness

Steiner furthermore stated that man and the physical world had a spiritual origin, not a material one. He stated in a lecture that he delivered in Berlin in 1912 that “during the course of evolution, man, proceeding from a purely spiritual form, gradually descended to become the material being we know today. The materialistic doctrine of evolution, in tracing man’s being back through the ages, leads to external, animal forms, whereas Spiritual Science leads us back to forms which more and more reveal the nature of soul and spirit, and finally to a wholly spiritual origin” (Steiner, 1912: 1).

Steiner (Easton, 1975: 147) claimed that man is a threefold being consisting of body, soul, and spirit. Man’s body is made up of the same substance as the observable physical world. His soul, however, belongs to him only during his life between birth and death. After death it gradually dissolves and ceases to exist as a separate entity. Man’s spirit is indestructible and is the spiritual part of the human being that passes into the spiritual world after death (Easton, 1975: 147). The physical world as well as man has a spiritual origin (Steiner, 1994a: 149). Steiner stated that forces stream into the being of man from the vegetable and animal world, the earth around him, as well as from the surrounding atmosphere and from the great cosmos of sun and stars (Shepherd, 1954: 22). The secret of the universe is therefore expressed in the real nature of man, and can be discovered by an understanding of man’s nature (Shepherd, 1954: 25).

Steiner explained that man's earthly evolution was also the evolution of human consciousness (Lachman, 2007: 148). According to Steiner, man descended from a supersensible awareness of the beings and activities of his spirit-environment and a vague comprehension of the physical world, to an increasingly conscious perception and understanding of the physical world and, consequently a dimming of his supersensible perception (Shepherd, 1954: 22). Steiner therefore claimed that history is primarily the story of the evolution of the consciousness of humanity towards self-conscious freedom of being (Easton, 1975: 20). The whole purpose of the existence of the physical world was accordingly this attainment of self-conscious freedom (Hemleben, 1975: 62-63). This journey of man is not limited to one earthly life, but is an ongoing process of evolution of the individual soul (Easton, 1975: 86).

Steiner claimed that he was aware of the existence of "another" world from a very young age (Hemleben, 1975: 23). He was not the only person claiming an awareness of another dimension. Thomas Traherne and the poet William Wordsworth both made similar claims (Shepherd, 1954: 29). The most pressing question for Steiner though concerned the relationship between this "other" world and the material world. He spent 40 years of his life pondering this particular question. When he eventually reached some understanding of the relationship between these two worlds, he devoted the rest of his life to trying to convey this answer to his fellow men (Childs, 1995: 11).

2.2.3. A theory of knowledge

His entire life was dominated by a vast range of intellectual activities. He delivered 5 105 public lectures, published in the region of 85 academic articles and essays and wrote twenty-seven books (Rudolf Steiner Archives: 2007). At the age of fifteen he was already engaged in philosophical studies. He read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* during his history lessons at school because he apparently found the history lessons dull and boring (Hemleben, 1975: 20). Even at this stage he was constantly occupied with the scope of the human capacity for thinking (Steiner, 1951: 26). He stated in his autobiography (1951: 26) that he wished to reach an understanding of his own thinking through the

reading of this book by Kant. Steiner at this time formulated three conclusions concerning the nature of thought: each thought should aim at complete accuracy; there should be harmony between the conclusions of thought and those of religion; and nothing could be excluded from the realm and range of thought (Shepherd, 1954: 32).

Steiner's father wanted him to study at the Realschule as opposed to the Gymnasium. The Realschule had a curriculum of science and modern languages, whereas the Gymnasium offered a curriculum of classics. His father wished that he should become a railway engineer, and the Realschule therefore seemed a better choice (Hemleben, 1975: 20). While at school, Steiner felt a need to educate himself in the classics as well, since this was not included in his daily curriculum. He bought his own texts and studied Fichte's *Theory of Science*, Taugott Krug's *Transcendental Synthesism*, and Thilo's *History of Philosophy* (Blunt, 1995: 4).

By the time Steiner left school to attend the Technische Hochschule (university) in 1879 (Steiner, 1951: 37), he was convinced of the absolute reality of the world of spirit, the world that lay beyond the world of sense experience. In his autobiography (1951: 12) Steiner wrote that the reality of the spiritual world was to him as certain as that of the physical world. He wished to reach some sort of justification of this reality of the spiritual world of which he was so convinced. He found this partly in his study of geometry. Geometry seemed to him to be a knowledge which appeared to be produced by man, but which also had a significance quite independent of man (Steiner, 1951: 11). Steiner stated that he clearly distinguished between objects and beings which were "seen" and those which were "not seen". Furthermore, he was convinced that there were no barriers to the range of thought. He believed that both religion and philosophy imposed barriers on thought in that they claimed that thought could not reach beyond the realm of sense experience (Shepherd, 1954: 34). Steiner disagreed with the claim by science that all that was real could be explored by logical thinking, and that beyond logical thinking there remained nothing else to discover. He claimed that the world of spirit was directly linked to the world of pure thought (Hemleben, 1975: 61–62). When he then sought to understand spirit realities, Steiner believed that thinking of a higher order needed to be

engaged that was dependent upon a higher stage of human consciousness. He wrote “that it is possible... to come to an understanding of the experience of the spiritual world through one’s soul only if one’s process of thinking itself had reached such a form that it can attain to the reality of being which was the phenomena of nature” (Steiner, 1951: 24). In this manner, Steiner proceeded from observable fact, and in his search for knowledge of nature as well as of the spirit, he waited until reality revealed itself to his developed consciousness (Shepherd, 1954: 34).

At the university, Steiner enrolled for mathematics, natural history, and chemistry (Steiner, 1951: 37). He also studied German literature under Karl Julius Schröer, professor in German literature and language (Hemleben, 1975: 26, 27). Schröer became an important influence in his life, and introduced him to the work of Goethe and Schiller. He was often invited to Schröer’s home, where Schröer continued to answer Steiner’s questions, and lent him books from his own library (Steiner, 1951: 39). Steiner took a great interest in Goethe’s scientific work, especially in his work on optics. He made a thorough study of Goethe’s theory of colour, which contrasted quite markedly from that of Newton (Childs, 1995: 16). Through this study of Goethe’s colour theory, Steiner discovered further evidence of the interplay between the material and the spiritual (Childs, 1995: 16). Steiner continued to study botany and anatomy from a Goethean standpoint in his spare time. Schröer also influenced Steiner’s view on education (Blunt, 1995: 5). Steiner (1951: 74) said that Schröer often opposed the mere imparting of information, and that he was in favour of the evolution of the full and entire human being.

Robert Zimmerman and Franz Brentano were his philosophy lecturers. Steiner gave a delightful description of Zimmerman in his autobiography (1951: 38) and stated that it seemed to him as if Zimmerman in his bearing and movement formed himself through a long process of discipline according to the aesthetic principles of Herbart, on whom he lectured. He continued to make an in-depth study of Zimmerman’s book, *Aesthetics as the science of form*. He (1951: 40) stated that Zimmerman presented him with a developed theory of beauty, and that theories of knowledge and world views were stimulated in him through the lectures of Schröer and Zimmerman.

Steiner attended Brentano's lectures on "Practical Philosophy", and was captivated by his personality (Steiner, 1951: 40). He described Brentano as a "keen thinker and at the same time given to reverie" (Steiner, 1951: 40). Brentano seemed to him to be the perfect logician, and Steiner took to studying and reading most of what Brentano wrote in the course of his later years (Steiner, 1951: 41).

Although Steiner had to study mathematics and natural science, he felt that the study of philosophy was essential. He was convinced that he would develop no relation to mathematics and science unless he could place their findings upon a solid foundation in philosophy (Steiner, 1951: 41). To this end he also studied the works of Hegel, Darwin, and Fichte (Hemleben, 1975: 22). Mathematics, however, still retained its importance in Steiner's life as a foundation of his striving for knowledge (Steiner, 1951: 44). He concluded that mathematics provided a system of percepts and concepts which had been arrived at independently of any external sense-impression. He stated that through mathematics one learnt to know the world, because one used these percepts and concepts to approach sense-reality and to discover its laws (Steiner, 1951: 44).

Steiner found the way in which Hegel set forth the reality of thought congenial to his own thinking (Steiner, 1951: 44). However, he felt that Hegel limited his thinking to a thought-world only, whereas Steiner was interested in the perception of a world of spirit. Steiner realized that people often distinguished between experience and thinking. He believed that thinking itself was experience, and experience in the sense that one lived in it, not such that it confronted one from without (Steiner, 1951: 44).

At that time, according to Steiner (1951: 46), the sciences of organic nature were steeped in Darwinian ideas. Steiner stated that he then felt that Darwinism was scientifically untenable. He believed that the inner being of man was of a spiritual nature, and he therefore could not reconcile himself with Darwin's ideas (Steiner, 1951: 46).

In his search for a satisfactory theory of knowledge, Steiner read Fichte's book *Science of knowledge*, which he then proceeded to rewrite, page by page (Steiner, 1951: 36). He did not quite agree with Fichte's theories, and tried to find a way of illustrating his belief that the human ego was the sole starting point for true knowledge, and that when the ego was active and itself beheld this activity, there was something spiritual present in one's consciousness (Steiner, 1951: 35). In other writings of Fichte, e.g. *The vocation of the scholar*, and *The nature of the scholar*, Steiner found more of an ideal towards that which he wished to attain (Steiner, 1951: 36).

In his search for a deeper understanding of the problem of knowledge, Steiner found inspiration in Schiller's letters on the aesthetic education of man (Steiner, 1951: 49). Schiller spoke of a certain state of consciousness which should be present in order that one might experience the beauty of the world (Steiner, 1951: 49). Schiller suggested that there was a state of consciousness in which the soul lived in sense-experience. The soul imported into this state of consciousness an element of thought which then transported sense-experience into aesthetic experience (Easton, 1975: 3). Steiner took Schiller's suggestions one step further by suggesting the possibility of a still higher state of consciousness in which the soul could have a direct intellectual experience of the spiritual world (Steiner, 1994 a: 13, 14). In ordinary human consciousness, Steiner claimed, thought was an after-reflection upon experience and stood apart from it (Steiner, 1951: 50). However, in spirit-consciousness thought and experience were united and were two aspects of one activity (Steiner, 1951: 50). To experience something was to know it, and the knowledge was itself part of the experience. Steiner therefore concluded that a new approach was needed to the activity of thinking (Steiner, 1951: 50).

2.2.4 The art of education

After graduating from university, Steiner took up various tutoring positions. The most important of these was his position as the resident tutor of a ten-year-old, hydrocephalic Jewish boy, Otto Specht (Childs, 1995: 17). He took up this position in 1884 (Blunt, 1995: 5) on the recommendation of Schröer (Childs, 1995: 17). Although he also tutored

the three other sons of this family, his main responsibility was Otto (Childs, 1995: 17). When Steiner took on this position, the boy could hardly read or write, and had a very limited capacity for sustained mental effort (Shepherd, 1954: 42). Within two years under Steiner's tutelage, the boy had completed his preparatory school work and was able to attend a public school. This boy eventually qualified as a doctor (Blunt, 1995: 6). Steiner described in his autobiography (1951: 75) how the educational task of this boy had become a source from which he had learnt much. Through the method of instruction which he had to apply, there was exposed to his view the association between the spiritual-mental and the bodily in man. He became aware that teaching and instructing must be an art with its foundation in a genuine understanding of man. Steiner (1951: 76) stated that it was from this task of educating Otto that his real study of physiology and psychology emanated. The experience he gained in tutoring this boy was of paramount importance in enabling him to formulate his ideas about education which about thirty years later formed the basis of his educational system (Childs, 1995: 19). His ideas on education were also influenced by Schröer's book *Problems of Teaching*, about which Steiner and Schröer had many conversations. Steiner agreed with Schröer that the imparting of knowledge *per se* to children is a means to an end, and is only incidental to the development of the whole human being in terms of lifelong learning (Childs, 1995: 17).

2.2.5 The Goethe Archives

While tutoring this boy, Steiner, who was twenty-two at the time, was invited by Professor Joseph Kürschner, upon Schröer's recommendation (Childs, 1995: 16), to edit and write an introduction to Goethe's scientific writings for an edition of the German Classics, the *Deutsche National-Literatur* (Blunt, 1995: 6). In 1888 he was asked by the Grand Duchess Sophie of Saxony, who had inherited all Goethe's manuscripts from his grandson and established the Goethe Archives, to participate in the preparation of Goethe's writings concerned with natural science for the Weimar Edition of Goethe's work (Shepherd, 1954: 45). Steiner believed that Goethe had found the secret to bridging the gap between nature and the human concepts of nature. Goethe argued that concepts

which were appropriate to inorganic nature had to be vitalized and had to develop a life of their own (Blunt, 1995: 6). Steiner (1951: 80-83) believed that Goethe's idealism provided a gateway into the world of the spirit and consequently Goethe's work influenced much of Steiner's future work. Steiner knew from experience that it was within the capacity of the human being to know actual spiritual reality (Smith, 1998: 12). He was particularly delighted when he discovered Goethe's notion of the "sensory-supersensory form" which is interposed, both for true natural vision and for spiritual perception, between what the senses grasp and what the spirit apprehends (Childs, 1995: 16). He found in Goethe's science a key to developing a methodology by which one could move from the sense world of ordinary consciousness to the world of pure thinking, and thence to the world of the spirit (Smith, 1998: 12).

2.2.6 The Theosophical Society

At this time, Steiner also met members of the Theosophical Society. The Society was founded in 1875 by the Russian woman Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (Taylor, 1992: 54). The aim of the Society was to form a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, colour, or creed. Furthermore, the Society's objective was to promote the investigation of the scriptures of world religions, and especially those of the Oriental religions. The third aim of the Society was to investigate the hidden mysteries of nature, and the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man (Blavatsky, 1972: 39). Steiner shared with traditional mysticism their interest in spirit-reality, but differed from them in his approach (Shepherd, 1954: 47). He was by no means in full agreement with the Theosophical Society's practices and doctrines (Childs, 1995: 22). Traditional mysticism usually regarded thought as opposed to spirit, and favoured inner experience above that of the intellect. Steiner however, argued that without the corrective of clear thinking, inward experience could easily become subjective (Easton, 1975: 129, 130)). He never accepted any theories or doctrines at face value, but tested them against his own researches into the spiritual world. In this way he maintained his rigorous standards as a spiritual-scientific researcher (Childs, 1995: 22).

Before the turn of the twentieth century, Steiner's association with the Theosophical Society was purely informal. On 22 September 1900, Steiner delivered a lecture on Nietzsche to the members of the Theosophical Society. This was followed that same year by a lecture entitled *Goethe's secret revelation*. A week later Steiner started a twenty-seven part lecture series on mysticism and the mystics of the Middle Ages (Childs, 1995: 23) at the Theosophical Society.

In October 1902 Steiner was asked to join the Theosophical Society formally, and to become the Secretary-General of its German branch (Childs, 1995: 25). Steiner accepted this new position, although it took him by surprise. He had earlier in the year clearly stated his main objections to Theosophical teachings, i.e. their lack of proper recognition and appreciation of Christ's mission and of Christianity as a significant impulse in the history of Western civilization (Hemleben, 1975: 80).

2.2.7 Truth and Knowledge

In the meantime Steiner received his doctorate in philosophy from Rostock University in 1891, just before he left Vienna for Weimar. His thesis was entitled *The fundamental problem of the theory of knowledge, with particular reference to Fichte's teaching. Prolegomena to the reconciliation of the philosophical consciousness with itself* (Hemleben, 1975: 157). This thesis was eventually published under the title *Truth and Knowledge*. It also appeared as an introduction to some editions of Steiner's book *The Philosophy of Freedom*.

In Weimar Steiner developed an interest in the work of Ernst Haeckel and his philosophy of evolution. What he admired in Haeckel was his scientific methods of observation, as well as the fact that Haeckel employed only observable facts as a basis for his thinking (Shepherd, 1954: 50). It might seem strange that a man like Steiner, with his firm belief in the existence of the spiritual world and the author of a book entitled *The philosophy of freedom*, could be interested in the work of a man such as Haeckel who on occasion stated with conviction "There is no God, no immortality, and no freedom of the human

soul” (Hemleben, 1975: 55). However, Steiner was convinced that the theory of evolution, of which Darwin and Haeckel were pioneers, simply had to be absorbed into the modern consciousness. He accepted the fundamental notion of the evolution of life (Lachman, 2007: 80). Steiner and Haeckel corresponded with each other for a number of years until Steiner received an invitation to Haeckel’s 60th birthday and was introduced to him (Hemleben, 1975: 56). Throughout Steiner’s life the subject of Haeckel appeared again and again. Haeckel’s name was mentioned in no fewer than 25 of Steiner’s publications (Hemleben, 1975: 57).

2.2.8 Nietzsche

During his time in Weimar he was asked by Nietzsche’s sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, to undertake the task of setting Nietzsche’s library in order (Shepherd, 1954: 50). The request was prompted by the book Steiner wrote in 1895 about Nietzsche, *Nietzsche as the adversary of his age*. Steiner was introduced by Elisabeth to Nietzsche in his last days (Hemleben, 1975: 54). Nietzsche made a lasting impression on Steiner, and he proceeded to publish two more works on him, i.e. *The philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche as a psychopathological problem*, and *The personality of Friedrich Nietzsche and psychopathology*. After Nietzsche’s death, Steiner delivered a number of speeches in commemoration of him (Hemleben, 1975: 54). Steiner saw in Nietzsche a spirit of great depth, insight, and fearlessness. He believed that Nietzsche’s true spiritual destiny had been stunted by the Positivistic outlook of his age, in which nothing existed but the purely material world (Steiner, 1951: 191).

2.2.9 The Philosophy of Freedom

In 1894 Steiner published *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* (also translated as *The Philosophy of Freedom*). This book was the result of many years of wrestling with the problem of knowledge, and of the relation between the worlds of sense and spirit (Steiner, 1951: 119). Steiner explained the nature of thinking as he saw it, and his belief that there was no limit to human knowledge (Easton, 1975: 124). The content of the book

was entirely based on Steiner's actual experience that pure thought led him directly into the realm of spirit-reality, the supersensible world. Here he experienced the manifestation of the relation between thinking and sense-perception, and between conscience and conduct (Shepherd, 1954: 52). The book was an attempt to lead the reader, by logical and clear thinking, from the universal level of sense-experience and sense-derived knowledge, to a deeper understanding of the nature of thinking as a true spiritual activity (Steiner, 1951: 120–122).

Steiner believed that our bodily senses, composed of matter, were capable of perceiving only material objects (Hemleben, 1975: 61). In order to develop spiritual perception, we needed to develop supersensory organs (Steiner, 1994b: 13). The faculty of exact perception into the spiritual world, as described in detail by Steiner (1994b), had little in common with what was generally termed clairvoyance, a word that often carried negative connotations of unreliability and charlatanry (Childs, 1995: 29). As a trained scientist, and dedicated to the investigative standards of scientific research, Steiner constantly strove to apply corresponding rigour to his own investigations (Childs, 1995: 29). Steiner hence claimed that his findings could be verified by anyone who had developed the necessary powers of perception, as well as by those who applied ordinary powers of observation and logic (Easton, 1982: 143).

Steiner's work in Weimar was concluded by 1897, when he had completed his work at the Goethe Archives (Shepherd, 1954: 52). While in Weimar, Steiner published 95 titles, including seven volumes of Goethe's scientific writings, a book on Nietzsche, and works on Fichte and Heackel (Blunt, 1995: 7).

Emanating from his work at the Goethe Archives, Steiner proposed that there were three types of knowledge (Shepherd, 1954: 53). There was the ordinary intellectual apprehension of the sense world. Then there was the direct apprehension of spirit-realities experienced inwardly in pure thinking. This knowledge transcended thought, but arose out of it. Lastly, there was the knowledge of the spirit-realities expressed in the sense world, derived from direct meditation on sense phenomena (Easton, 1975: 128). This

kind of knowledge was not arrived at out of penetrating logical thought. It was not a logical activity that analysed the sense-phenomenon in order to arrive at the mechanism of its physical being. It was a concentration upon the phenomenon as it is manifest to the senses, in its complete form, in an endeavour to penetrate to the ideal realities of form and colour, growth and consciousness expressed in it (Shepherd, 1954: 53, 54). It was a concentration that involved the awareness of the whole being of the observer. It was still thought that was leading him into the world of spirit, but in the process thought itself was transformed into a higher form of perception (Hemleben, 1975: 61). Through this way of thinking, Steiner was convinced that the fundamental error in the then widely accepted atomistic method of natural-scientific investigation, was its total reliance on logical analysis and experimental hypothesis (Wilson, in Steiner, 1964: x). He believed that the natural-scientific outlook was restrained by its false idea of matter. Steiner stated (1951: 81) that the natural-scientific method of investigation seemed to him inadequate for reaching an understanding of what Goethe strove to achieve for the science of nature. He felt that natural-scientific investigation was fit only for forming ideas about lifeless nature, and that it was incapable of entering with powers of cognition into the realm of living nature (Steiner, 1951: 81). In Steiner's introduction to Goethe's botanical writings, he endeavored to illustrate how in his theory of metamorphosis Goethe took the direction of conceiving of organic nature as similar to that of the spirit (Steiner, 1951: 83). In this way he illustrated that by tracing the development from the inorganic to the organic, it transported natural science into a spiritual science (Steiner, 1951: 84). Steiner discovered that there was no theory of knowledge fitting Goethe's form of knowledge, and he therefore wrote *The Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World-Conception*, which was published in 1886 (Steiner, 1951: 85).

Steiner moved to Berlin in 1897 to become the editor of *The Literary Magazine* (Childs, 1995: 21). This publication was a long-established independent weekly which had identified itself with the Free Literary Society, and represented the younger and more revolutionary literary circles in Berlin (Shepherd, 1954: 56). In Berlin Steiner also became involved in lectures, dramatic productions, and dramatic criticism (Shepherd, 1954: 57) and took up a teaching position at the Workers' Educational Institute

(Hemleben, 1975: 74). His lectures included courses on history, German literature, and the history of science (Childs, 1995: 21). At the same time, Steiner continued his investigation into the process of thinking and its relation to the spirit world. As he penetrated into the supersensible reality behind physical phenomena, he became aware of spirit-beings and their work (Steiner, 1994a: 122–131). This world of spirit beings consisted of the same substance as human thought. A human thought corresponded to a being in the spirit world, but appeared as a mere shadow to us. It was only when we had awakened our spiritual senses by means of active thinking, as described by Steiner in his *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, that we will be able to actually perceive the thought-being itself (Steiner, 1994a: 123).

2.2.10 Steiner's Christology

Through the development of his spirit-faculties, Steiner entered into a different form of time-experience. Here, past events could be recovered with the same validity and immediacy as any present physical experience (Shepherd, 1954: 59). In such an experience there was therefore the new possibility of historical research and understanding. Steiner claimed that in this experience of the past, he came into contact with the spiritual and historical facts of Christianity (Childs, 1995: 38). He furthermore claimed that his entire Christology was conceived and developed directly out of his perception of the spiritual world without reference to traditional scriptures (Childs, 1995: 38). Steiner remained critical of formal, organized Christianity, albeit not of the content of its faith (Shepherd, 1954: 60). He regarded the Incarnation as the pivotal incident in all history, and the deed of Christ on Golgotha as a mystical fact that affected all mankind in all its aspects (Easton, 1982: 197). Steiner endeavored to show that the Christ was the same Being that had been worshipped in previous ages in the mystery centres of the Persians, Egyptians, and Greeks (Childs, 1995: 40). At the baptism by John in the Jordan River, the Christ Being incarnated or descended into the bodily vehicle of Jesus of Nazareth (Childs, 1995: 40).

2.2.11 Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition

It was during this time that Steiner developed his concepts of Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. These concepts represented three successive stages of supersensory consciousness (Lachman, 2007: 138.) By Imagination Steiner meant the faculty and process of creating mental pictures, a product of our own consciousness and a step towards the realisation of something new. Imagination could provide insight also into the spiritual background of our physical life and of the phenomena of nature (Wilson, in Steiner, 1964: xviii). Inspiration opened the way into the purely supersensible world. With this consciousness one would see a man in outline and in form, as in day-waking consciousness, but one also could see at the same time what lived in his soul, streaming out as coloured clouds and pictures into what was called the aura (Steiner, cited in Seddon, 1993: 30). Intuition meant the faculty and process of grasping concepts, in particular the immediate apprehension of a thought without reasoning (Wilson, in Steiner, 1964: xviii). Steiner (1964: 122) described Intuition as “the conscious experience – in pure spirit – of a purely spiritual content. Only through an intuition can the essence of thinking be grasped”. Intuition enabled man to act as an inhabitant of the spiritual world itself (Shepherd, 1954: 63).

Steiner aimed at entering into spiritual knowledge in the mode of scientific thought – this he viewed as the essential path of modern esoteric thought (Wilson, in Steiner, 1964: viii). By starting from the spiritual nature of thinking, he endeavored to form ideas that bore upon the spiritual world in the same way that the ideas of natural science bore upon the physical (Wilson, in Steiner, 1964: viii). He believed that the development of logical thinking and of the scientific spirit of observation had been a necessary step in human evolution towards man’s rediscovery of the spiritual background of the universe (Shepherd, 1954: 69). Steiner stated that the time had arrived for man to advance to direct knowledge of the supersensible world by developing his own latent faculties of spiritual perception in full rational consciousness (Steiner, 1964: xxiv). Wilson (in Steiner, 1964: xi) stated that Steiner’s philosophy provided a sound basis to those who could not bring themselves to accept anything that was not clearly scientific. It opened up a way to the

spirit for all those for whom the scientific path to truth, rather than the mystical, was the only possibility.

2.2 12 The first lecture on education

Steiner delivered his first lecture on education, *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy*, the founding lecture on Anthroposophic pedagogy, on 10 January 1907, in Berlin, in the Architektenhaus (Bamford, in Steiner, 1996: xvi). It was published in April that year in the journal, *Lucifer-Gnosis*. This work was seminal to all his later thoughts on education (Blunt, 1995: 8). His idea of education was to be based directly on the development of the child. Steiner (1909: 5) stated that the proper point of view of education should result spontaneously from the nature of the growing and evolving human being. In this first lecture, Steiner laid out the soul-spiritual processes of human development. He described the necessity of understanding how children unfold with the physical body's entry into earthly life, and culminating in the emergence of the I-being or Ego at adulthood (Steiner, 1996: dust jacket).

2.2.13 The Anthroposophical Society

Steiner ceased to be a member of the Theosophical Society in 1913. The two leading personalities in the Theosophical Society at that time, Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater, claimed that a young Indian boy, Jiddu Krishnamurti, was the reincarnation of the Christ (Childs, 1995: 37, 38). Steiner was in direct opposition to this idea and felt that he could no longer associate himself with the Society. Krishnamurti himself never agreed to this claim (Childs, 1995: 38). In 1913 Steiner therefore formed the Anthroposophical Society as an independent movement. Anthroposophy, literally translated, means "study of man". Steiner first used the term Anthroposophy in 1903 when he delivered a lecture in Berlin entitled *From Zarathustra to Nietzsche. The story of the development of Man as reflected in world philosophies, from the earliest oriental times up to the present, or Anthroposophy* (Hemleben, 1975: 78). The term Anthroposophy was originally coined by Immanuel Herman, one of Steiner's tutors at the

University of Vienna. Herman was the son of the post-Kantian idealist Johann Gottlieb Fichte (Blunt, 1995: 7). The term was also used by Fichte, Thomas Vaughan, and Troxler, and by the systematic aesthetical theorist, Robert Zimmerman, Steiner's philosophy lecturer at the University of Vienna (Blunt, 1995: 9). Zimmerman entitled his standard work on aesthetics, *Anthroposophy* (Hemleben, 1975: 78). However, the term became almost exclusively associated with Steiner's own philosophy thereafter. Steiner used the term to describe his intuitive understanding of the spiritual world and its relation to the world we perceive with our ordinary senses (Smith, 1998: 26). He alternated the word Anthroposophy with the term Spiritual Science. Smith (1998: 26) explained that Anthroposophy was a combination of two Greek root words *anthropo* and *sophia*. *Sophia* was defined as "wisdom", whereas the suffix *sophy* meant "knowledge or thought", as in philosophy (Smith, 1998: 27). According to Smith (1998: 27) *anthropo* must be distinguished from *homo* (the Latin for a two-legged primate). *Homo* referred to the body, whereas *anthropo* referred to that aspect that set the human being above the animal, namely the soul and the spirit of the human being. Therefore, "Anthroposophy" really meant the wisdom of the soul of the human being.

With the outbreak of war, Steiner's European activities were curtailed and he concentrated on the building of the Goetheanum (Shepherd, 1954: 75). At the time, Steiner also devoted his energy to extending the application of Anthroposophy in other directions, especially in terms of what he called the Threefold Social Order. He focused especially on Germany after its defeat in the First World War, although he had himself emigrated to Switzerland earlier (Lachman, 2007: 190). With rising tensions between the right-wing nationalists and internationalist Communists, there was also a rise in anti-Semitism (Lachman, 2007: 190). Steiner tried to turn a defeated Germany away from bitterness and self-pity by communicating the ideals of his Threefold Social Order. Steiner stated that the First World War occurred as the result of incorrect education (Childs, 1995: 59). He concluded that if merely intellectual methods of teaching were continued, the outlook would be grim, and more conflict would follow (Childs, 1995: 59). Steiner claimed that as human beings were threefold in nature (body, soul, and spirit), so this same three folding should be evident in the organization of society, i.e. in

economics, politics, and civil rights (Childs, 1995: 59). The main idea behind Steiner's Threefold Social Order was that the social life of man could only prosper if it were consciously organized. The State and Industry must be organized so as not to impair the dignity of the worker (Hemleben, 1975: 117). The role of the State should be limited to actual political life, and its main task should be to protect its citizens from internal and external dangers. The State should not be involved in industrial enterprises, and should finally refrain from acting as its citizens' intellectual mentor. The freedom of art, science (including education), and religion must be guaranteed (Hemleben, 1975: 119). Steiner attracted the attention of various prominent businessmen and industrialists such as Emil Molt and Carl Unger, and the political economist Roman Boos (Lachman, 2007: 191). He lectured publicly on his ideas for social renewal, and for a time he was eminently popular (Lachman, 2007: 193).

2.2.14 The first Waldorf school

This actuated the opening of the first Waldorf School in 1919. Emil Molt, one of the most enthusiastic of Steiner's followers (Lachman, 2007: 194), and the owner of the Waldorf cigarette factory in Stuttgart, asked Steiner to start a school for the children of his factory workers. This was called the Free Waldorf School of Stuttgart (Blunt, 1995: 9). The school opened with twelve teachers and 253 children (Lachman, 2007: 194). Most of the children were from the workers' families, with about fifty children coming from local Anthroposophists (Lachman, 2007: 194).

During the next six years Steiner presented 15 courses of lectures on education in Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, and Switzerland (Blunt, 1995: 9). In these lectures he based the principles of education on the knowledge of the human being that he derived from Anthroposophy (Hemleben, 1975: 122). In 1921 Steiner hosted a conference on education at the Goetheanum. This conference attracted many foreign educators and, as a result, Steiner was invited to other countries in Europe to lecture on his educational ideals (Lachman, 2007: 196). In April 1922 Steiner was asked to speak at an educational festival in Stratford-on-Avon (Lachman, 2007: 197). In August of that year, he was

invited to attend the British Educational Conference in Oxford. The subject of the conference was *Spiritual Values in Education and Social Life* (Hemleben, 1975: 122). He met with publicly-expressed gratitude and recognition in England. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote: “At the centre of the entire Conference stands the personality of Dr. Rudolf Steiner. His lectures, for which we owe him our special thanks, vividly describe a humane educational ideal” (Hemleben, 1975: 122). Steiner’s reputation grew in British educational circles (Lachman, 2007: 197). In 1923 and 1924 he was again invited to give lectures in England, and in 1925 the first Waldorf school was founded in England, in the South London suburb of Streatham. The school later relocated to Forest Row in Sussex, and is now known as Michael Hall (Lachman, 2007: 197).

2.2.15 The Goetheanum

With the founding of the Anthroposophical Society a need arose for a building that could serve as its headquarters as well as a space where plays could be performed and where Anthroposophical research could take place. Steiner accepted a site donated to the Society for this purpose, in Switzerland. The Goetheanum, so called in recognition of Steiner’s esteem for Goethe, was erected on the slopes of the hills outside Dornach, near Basle. Steiner himself designed the building. It consisted of a huge double dome (Blunt, 1995: 9), and was constructed entirely out of wood, richly carved and painted, except for the cement substructure (Shepherd, 1954: 77) (Figure 2.2). Instead of drawing up plans for it, he constructed a sizable model (Childs, 1995: 49). The foundation stone was laid in September 1913 and consisted of two interpenetrating dodecahedrons made of copper. It remained in the same spot to serve the same function for the second Goetheanum, which was built on the same site, after the first one was razed by fire (Childs, 1995:49). Shortly after construction on the first Goetheanum was started, the First World War broke out. In 1920 the Goetheanum, begun in 1913, was inaugurated. A vast number of lectures, courses, plays, music, and Eurythmy performances were presented there. However, the activities at the Goetheanum drew much opposition in certain quarters, and it was burnt to the ground in 1922. Steiner experienced hostility especially from nationalist and orthodox religious movements (Hemleben, 1975: 140). In May 1922 he was actually

physically attacked after his lecture on *Anthroposophy and Spiritual Knowledge* in Munich, and had to be rescued through a back door of the hotel where he was lecturing (Hemleben, 1975: 140). After the destruction of the first Goetheanum on New Year's Eve 1922, plans were immediately set in motion to rebuild it. This time, to a different design, it was built entirely out of reinforced concrete, a fireproof material. It was constructed between 1925 and 1928 (Goetheanum, 2003:13). Steiner built a model of the second Goetheanum as well, but he died shortly after the work had begun on it (Easton, 1982: 227). The Goetheanum (Figure 2.3) is a massive building which seems to grow out of the rock on which it was built. Concrete was used in an entirely original manner that may have influenced later non-anthroposophical architects such as Le Corbusier (Easton, 1982: 227). The present Goetheanum's design was less inviting and more austere than the previous one (Lachman, 2007: 207). It was one of the first structures to use reinforced concrete and is today a feature in many books on modern architecture (Lachman, 2007: 208).

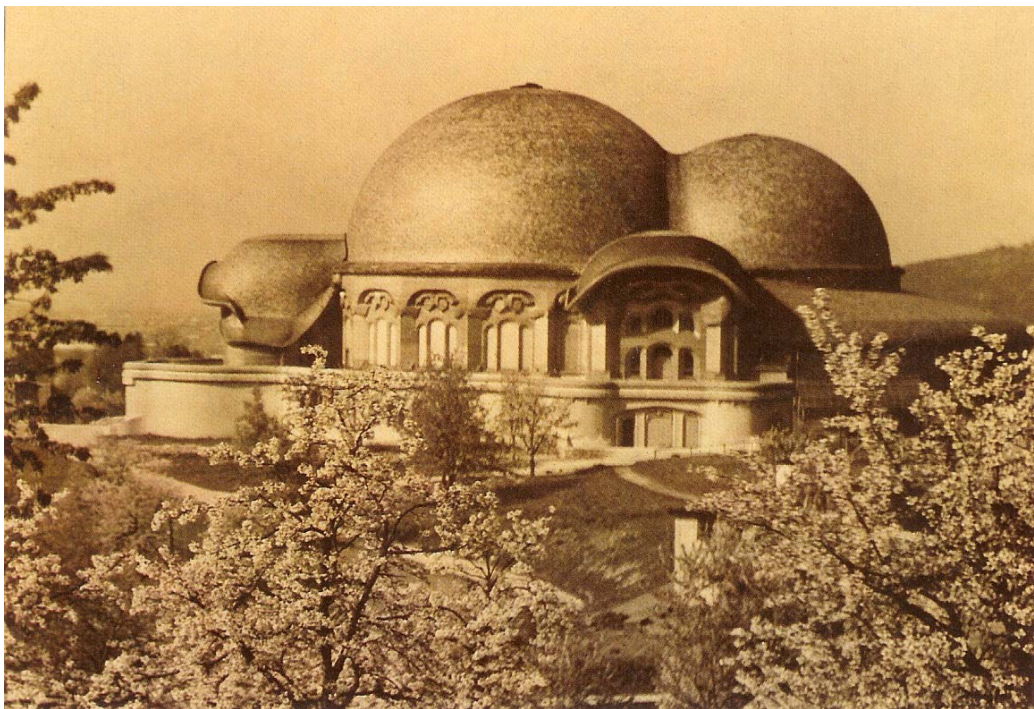


Figure 2.2: The first Goetheanum



Figure 2.3: The present Goetheanum

In the remaining three years of his life, Steiner concentrated on strengthening the spiritual life of the Society. He delivered numerous lectures all over Europe and wrote many articles and letters to members of the Society. He died on 30 March 1925.

2.2.16 Five major Anthroposophical movements

At the time of his death there were two schools in Germany, one in Britain, and one in the Netherlands. In 1962 there were 26 schools in Germany and 40 elsewhere in the world. By 1978 there were 150 Waldorf schools in 20 countries, accommodating some 50 000 students. It was then the largest independent educational movement in the world (Blunt, 1995: 10). In 1994 UNESCO's Commission on Education indicated in its report that the Waldorf movement was unequalled in its position as the largest independent educational movement, with more than 800 schools, 1 000 kindergartens and 500 institutions for remedial education in 56 different countries (Burnett, 2002: 6). Currently there are

approximately 870 Waldorf schools and about 1 600 kindergartens worldwide (Waldorf Education: a growing school movement, 2003).

Five major movements are active today which grew directly from Anthroposophy and Steiner's work: Waldorf education, bio-dynamic farming, Anthroposophic medicine, the Christian Community - a movement for spiritual renewal - and curative education.

In 1906 Steiner delivered a lecture on nutrition and curative methods, and in 1911 a lecture series entitled *An Occult Physiology* (Childs, 1995: 72). Over the years he had also given his followers advice on diet and health (Lachman, 2007: 214). In the spring of 1920 Steiner delivered a series of lectures *Spiritual Science and Medicine* to medical doctors and students which became the basis of Anthroposophical medicine (Lachman, 2007: 214). The principles of Anthroposophical medicine are similar to those of homeopathy, however Steiner never intended Anthroposophical medicine to be a substitute for orthodox treatment, but rather to complement it (Lachman, 2007: 216). Anthroposophical doctors qualify in conventional medicine first before training as Anthroposophical doctors (Evans & Rodger, 1992: 12). In the years 1921- 1924, Steiner delivered more lectures on medicine and also made certain suggestions for pharmaceutical products (Childs, 1995: 72). These remedies were eventually produced under the name *Weleda*, now well-known throughout the world (Childs, 1995: 72), especially for preparations such as Arnica, which is used principally for shock treatment and bruising (Evans & Rodger, 1992: 142). The first Anthroposophical clinic was opened in Arlesheim, Switzerland, in 1921, under the directorship of Dr. Ita Wegman (Easton, 1982: 414). Steiner co-authored a seminal book on Anthroposophical medicine with Wegman, *Fundamentals of Therapy*. Anthroposophical medicine has a holistic approach and aims to stimulate the natural healing forces in the patient. According to Anthroposophical medicine, it is essential that the basic conditions for health are present in the human being. Confining therapy to treatment only, will not necessarily lead to good health. This healing system therefore attempts to treat all four aspects of the human being, according to Anthroposophy, i.e. the physical, the life and soul elements, and the

spirit. True healing takes place when the body is stimulated to overcome the influences that are causing illness (Evans & Rodger, 1992: 21, 22).

Hemleben (1975: 133) stated that one could trace the origins of Steiner's interest in agriculture back to his childhood when he used to help his parents cultivate their small garden, where they grew much of their own food (Lachman, 2007: 219). Steiner also befriended an herb-gatherer in his youth, when making the long journey from Inzersdorf to Vienna, namely Felix Koguzki (Lachman, 2007: 48). Koguzki and Steiner travelled on the same train to Vienna, and Steiner here came across someone to whom he could speak of the world of the spirit quite spontaneously. Steiner (1951, 42) described him as a pious man without much formal education (Steiner, 1951: 42). He found it possible to look deeply into the mysteries of nature in this man's company as "in his heart he bore the findings he had won from the spirituality of nature in the gathering of these herbs" (Steiner, 1951: 42). One wonders whether this man did not also influence Steiner's agricultural ideas. The agricultural movement that is based on Anthroposophy is today called bio-dynamic farming (Hemleben, 1975: 133). The aim of bio-dynamic farming is to restore to a healthy condition the ravaged and poisoned earth, as well as its produce. This system of agriculture and animal husbandry employs an understanding of nature's economy and of the relation between earth and the cosmos (Hemleben, 1975: 133). Steiner deeply deplored the use of chemical fertilizers, because he was against the introduction of dead materials into the earth, which, according to Steiner, is a living organism (Childs, 1995: 86). He delivered a series of lectures on bio-dynamic farming in Koberwitz in 1924. These lectures were attended by about sixty farmers (Easton, 1982: 439), and were collected in print under the title *Agriculture Course: The Birth of the Bio-Dynamic Method* (Lachman, 2007: 255). Every suggestion presented in these lectures and in Steiner's answers to the many questions he was asked, has since been followed in the course of the development of this movement (Easton, 1982: 439). Steiner made suggestions, for instance, on how to prepare compost, how to control pests without using pesticides, and how to inhibit weed growth. He also maintained that a farm should be self-sufficient and that livestock should be fed on the plants grown on the farm, and that their manure should be recycled as fertilizer (Lachman, 2007: 219). All Weleda remedies

are cultivated and harvested according to bio-dynamic principles (Lachman, 2007: 220). An extensive bio-dynamic literature exists in many languages today. Bio-dynamic farmers are very active in exchanging information with each other on the results of their experiences (Easton, 1982: 440). Steiner's ideas on bio-dynamic farming therefore predated the interest in organic farming by decades (Lachman, 2007: 218).

Steiner had constantly stressed that he did not aim at becoming the founder of a religion (Hemleben, 1975: 134). He stated that Anthroposophy was primarily concerned with the quest for knowledge and the discovery of truth, so that anyone could become a member of the Anthroposophical Society (Hemleben, 1975: 134). He was approached, however, by a number of Protestant ministers after the First World War, who wished for some kind of religious renewal that grew out of their disillusionment with the German Evangelical Church (Hemleben, 1975: 134). This culminated in a series of lectures on theology in 1921 to a small group of young Protestant ministers in Stuttgart (Lachman, 2007: 198). He continued his lectures on theology later that same year in Dornach, to more than a hundred interested people. This gave rise to the establishment of the Christian Community, for which Steiner provided a new sacrament, the Act of Consecration of Man (Lachman, 2007: 199). Steiner realised that the intellectual approach of much of Anthroposophy could not fill the need that many people had for the ritual of worship (Lachman, 2007: 199). The Christian Community fell under the leadership of Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeyer (Hemleben, 1975: 135). Steiner remained detached from this organization, acting simply as an adviser (Lachman, 2007: 199).

Early in 1923, Steiner presented a course of twelve lectures on *Curative Education*. Many of his ideas were based on his success with Otto Specht (Lachman, 2007: 216). These lectures prompted the establishment of a home for mentally handicapped children in Arlesheim, under the direction of Dr. Ita Wegman (Childs, 1995: 86). This initiative spread, especially after World War Two (Lachman, 2007: 216), and today there are many schools and communities for special-needs young people all over the world, known principally as the Camphill Movement (Childs, 1995: 86). Steiner stated that the care of severely mentally or physically handicapped children required a different approach to

that used with normal children. It was essential to work with these children's souls, and he called them "children in need of special care of the soul" (Lachman, 2007: 217). The Camphill schools and communities are characterized by the great patience and affection which the caregivers have for their charges (Lachman, 2007: 217).

2.2.17 Conclusion

Steiner ranked amongst the most creative and prolific figures of the early twentieth century (Lachman, 2007: dust jacket). He left behind 40 volumes of written work and about 300 volumes of lecture transcripts (Rudolf Steiner Archive: 2007). He delivered just over five thousand public lectures during his lifetime (Childs, 1995: 32). Today, his achievements are felt all over the world in his legacy of a holistic medical science, an agricultural system in harmony with nature and the cosmos, and an educational method that nurtures head, heart, and hand (Easton, 1982: dust jacket).

2.3 KNOWLEDGE OF MAN AS THE BASIS OF EDUCATION: WALDORF PEDAGOGY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Imbue thyself with the power of imagination;

Have courage for the truth;

Sharpen thy feeling for responsibility of soul. (Steiner, 1966: 190)

2.3.1 Introduction

In 1919 Steiner presented the above meditative verse to teachers at all Waldorf schools (Steiner, 1966: 190). He stated that “the need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility, are the three forces which are the very nerves of pedagogy” (Steiner, 1966: 190). Steiner imposed strenuous demands on teachers, expecting them to take on teaching as a vocation that demanded the highest possible personal and moral standards and qualities, as well as the willingness to take on commensurate responsibilities (Childs, 1995: 66).

Waldorf education, sometimes also referred to as Steiner education, is a form of education, from pre-school to high school, which is based on the view that the human being is a being consisting of body, soul, and spirit (Steiner, 1994: 24, 25). The nature of the human being forms the central part of the philosophy that Steiner called Anthroposophy (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). Steiner (1973: 13) defined Anthroposophy as “a path of knowledge that seeks to lead the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.” Anthroposophy forms the epistemological basis for Waldorf education (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). Although Anthroposophy as such is not taught in Waldorf schools, its insights and ethos sustain the curriculum, and provide the teachers with information and ideas from which to work (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). Steiner’s books and lectures on education have been supplemented and supported by considerable research within the Waldorf movement over the past 80 years or so, and is described in an extensive secondary literature in various languages (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14).

2.3.2 The essential being of man

Steiner believed that the essential being of man is spiritual, not physical (Howard, 1970: 11). Whereas the physical is simply the form in which the spirit lives, the individual spirit within each child is the important entity. What the child receives through inheritance in terms of physical brain power is therefore not to be the only criterion of human worth and growth. While the one part of education certainly has as its task the training and development of the child's brain power, it has, according to Steiner, a far greater, and more social task, in preserving in each child a sense of human worth (Howard, 1970: 11). Steiner furthermore asserts that the individual has even had previous experience of human life, and would have subsequent experiences in the future through successive incarnations (Howard, 1970: 11).

Waldorf education therefore commences from the premise that the human being has a body, soul, and spirit. The physical part of the human being, the body, is that part of man that is directly sense perceptible. It is through his body that man is connected with and embedded in the material world (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). Steiner declared that the body as a whole, not merely the nervous activity impounded in it, is the physical basis of psychic life (Childs, 1991: 35). He described the bodily nature of man as three-fold: consisting namely of the nerve/sense system, located mainly in the head and serving man's thinking processes; the rhythmic system, comprising heart and lungs and serving man's feeling processes; and the metabolic/limb system, comprising the digestive organs as well as the arms and legs and serving man's willing processes (Childs, 1991: 35). Steiner's concepts of thinking, feeling, and willing bear little resemblance to the cognitive, affective, and conative attributes of the human being as understood in its usual sense (Childs, 1991: 35). The whole bodily-physical nature is a result of man's soul-spiritual nature (Childs, 1991: 36). Just as Steiner characterised the bodily nature of man as a trichotomy (Childs, 1991: 36, 37), he described the soul as possessing the attributes of thinking, feeling, and willing, as well as the attributes of sympathy and antipathy. In his soul, man develops an inner world of personal experience which relates him to the outer world and which expresses itself in the activities of thinking, feeling, and willing

(Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). The world reveals its complete nature to man through man’s spirit or “I” (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14), and Steiner conceived of the spirit in terms of consciousness in its attributes of waking, dreaming, and sleeping (Childs, 1991: 38). Childs (1991: 38) provides this useful explanatory diagram of the body, soul, spirit trichotomy:

| | Physical Expression: | Psychical Expression: | Spiritual Expression: |
|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Body</i> | Nerve/sense System | Thinking | Waking consciousness |
| <i>Soul</i> | Heart/lungs System | Feeling | Dreaming consciousness |
| <i>Spirit</i> | Metabolic/limbs System | Willing | Sleeping consciousness |

Figure 2.4

Steiner furthermore claimed that man also has a fourfold nature (Steiner, 1996: 14) consisting of the physical body, the etheric or life body, the astral or sentient body, and the I-body or the ego. He stated categorically (1996: 14) that “the correct foundation for education and for teaching involves a knowledge of these laws of development” as related to the fourfold nature of the human being. The etheric, astral, and I-bodies resemble sheaths around the physical body, and they are activated at various stages of development, usually at seven-year intervals (Steiner, 1996: 15). Steiner (1996: 14, 15) talks in terms of the “birth” of these sheaths or bodies. Each birth of one of these sheaths are pre-empted by a preparatory phase, just like the physical body is grown in-utero, and is then birthed by the mother at maturation (Steiner, 1996: 14). Inasmuch as the human

being is surrounded by the physical envelope of the mother's body before birth, the child is surrounded by the etheric, astral, and ego sheaths. The etheric sheath is nurtured during the years of childhood from 0 – 7 years, when, with the change of teeth, the etheric body becomes active (Steiner, 1996: 15). Likewise, the astral envelope liberates the astral body at the onset of adolescence at about the age of fourteen (Steiner, 1996: 15), and the ego or "I" becomes active at the age of 21 (Childs, 1991: 32).

According to Steiner (1996: 4), the physical body is subject to the same laws of existence and is built up of the same substances and forces as the physical world around us. He therefore reaches the conclusion that man's physical body is similar to the mineral kingdom as it is lifeless in its most basic form (Steiner, 1996: 5). Beyond the physical body Steiner recognizes another "body" which he terms the etheric body or the life-body. The word ether here does not equate to the hypothetical ether of physics (Steiner, 1996: 5). Steiner denoted by the term ether a kind of vital force (Steiner, 1996: 5) that produces the phenomena of life. The body of a man and an animal becomes a corpse when the etheric forces cease to be active in it (Childs, 1991: 27). The etheric body therefore preserves the physical body against dissolution (Childs, 1991: 27). This vital force is present in plants, animals, and human beings alike. Steiner (1994b) describes how the etheric body can be observed or sensed by anyone who has developed higher organs of perception. The etheric body moreover works in a formative way on the substances and forces of the physical body and brings about growth, reproduction, and the inner movement of vital body fluids (Steiner, 1996: 8). The etheric body therefore maintains life in the physical body. According to Steiner (1996: 15), the etheric body is also the vehicle of memory. In human beings the physical body and the etheric body are almost equal in form and size, but in plants and animals the etheric body is very different in form and extent (Steiner, 1996: 8).

The astral body or sentient body is the vehicle of pain and pleasure, of impulse, craving, and passion (Steiner, 1996: 8). These sensations, according to Steiner (1996: 8), are absent in a creature with only a physical and etheric body. It is possible to demonstrate that plants, for instance, respond to movement and sound, as proposed by botanists Peter

Tompkins and Christopher Bird (1973). However, Steiner explains that these are responses to external stimuli, and not an inner process as in the human being (Steiner, 1996: 8). He warns against assuming that the etheric and astral bodies simply consist of substances that are finer than the physical body (Steiner, 1996: 9). He explains that the etheric body is a force form consisting of active forces, and not of matter, whereas the astral body is an inwardly moving, coloured, luminous figure (Steiner, 1996: 9). The astral body deviates in both size and shape from the physical body, and is in the shape of an elongated, ovoid form around the physical body, in which the physical and etheric bodies are embedded (Steiner, 1996: 9). Minerals and plants do not possess an astral body, since they are, according to Steiner (Childs, 1991: 27), incapable of having sensations or of receiving sense-perceptions. Creatures which possess a central nervous system also have an astral body, including man and the whole animal kingdom (Childs, 1991: 27).

The fourth member of the human being, the human I or ego, is shared with no other earthly creature (Steiner, 1996:9). Steiner (1996: 10) explains that only the human being can call itself “I”. It expresses essentially who I am. “In designating oneself as I, one has to name oneself within oneself. Human beings who can say “I” to themselves are a world unto themselves” (Steiner, 1996: 10). This I is the vehicle of the higher soul of humanity, and determines man as the crown of creation (Steiner, 1996: 10). The ego represents the individualization of man, in other words, that which guarantees the uniqueness of every human being (Childs, 1991: 27).

Steiner claims that the I works on the other members of the human being, i.e. the physical, etheric and astral bodies, through successive lives or incarnations, refining and transforming these so-called bodies through the process of individual development (Steiner, 1996: 11). In this way the astral body becomes the vehicle of purified sensations of pleasure and pain, refined wants, and desires. The etheric also becomes transformed, and becomes the vehicle of habits, of more permanent intent or tendency in life, and of the temperament and memory. According to Steiner (1996: 11), one who has not yet worked upon the etheric body, simply lives out of what Nature has implanted in him.

Steiner states (1996: 11) that the growth and development of civilization mean the continuous work of the I on the lower members of human nature. The whole appearance and physiognomy, and the gestures and movement of the physical body become altered because the development of the I penetrates right into man's physical body. He also believes (Steiner, 1996: 12) that what we call conscience is the result of the I's work on the etheric body through many incarnations. Conscience arises when the human being begins to perceive that he should not do one thing or another, and when this perception makes a strong enough impression on him so that it passes into the etheric body (Steiner, 1996: 12). The I may also become so strong that it can transform even the astral body, and this transformed astral body Steiner calls the spirit-self (Steiner, 1996: 12). This transformation takes place mainly through a process of learning and enriching one's inner life with higher ideas and perceptions (Steiner, 1996: 12). An individual can transform his physical, etheric, and astral bodies by consciously working on strengthening the I. The physical body then becomes what Steiner calls the spiritual soul, the transformed etheric body he calls the intellectual soul, and the transformed astral body he refers to as the sentient soul (Steiner, 1996: 13). He continues to describe three even higher members of human nature (Steiner, 1996: 14): spirit-self, life-self, and the spirit-human being. All these transformations are a result of the I working on the human being.

According to Steiner (1996: 14), the educator works directly with the physical, etheric, astral, and I-bodies of the child. He furthermore states that the correct foundation for education and for teaching, involves a knowledge of how these bodies develop and become activated in the child (Steiner, 1996: 14). The child develops through a number of basic stages from childhood to adulthood, and these stages are directly linked to the activation or maturation of these four bodies (Steiner, 1996: 14). The Waldorf curriculum is therefore designed to work with the child through these stages in specific ways (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 5, 7, 14).

2.3.3 Three stages of child development

Waldorf education distinguishes three basic stages of child development: 0 to 7 years, 7 to 14 years, and 14 to 21 years (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 16). Each of these stages is characterized by significant and specific developments in physical, psychological, and spiritual maturation (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 16), including the maturation of the etheric, astral, and ego-bodies of the human being. The qualities of the body, soul, and spirit trichotomy are also developing during these three stages of child development, that is, the will is developing in the first seven years, the feeling realm is developing in the second seven year period, and thinking develops in the third period (Benians, 1970: 70). That is not to say that these qualities are not present at any other stage of child development. They are of course present in the child simultaneously, but are developing and becoming active during these various seven-year stages (Benians, 1970: 70).

In order to form a complete picture of the human being, we must recognize that there is a period before birth when the baby is in-utero (Steiner, cited in Clouder, 2003: 74). Normally, birth occurs when the child is sufficiently mature to meet the physical world without a protective mantle (Steiner, cited in Clouder, 2003: 75). Steiner (cited in Clouder, 2003: 74) explains that the etheric and astral bodies are, however, not adequately mature for coming into direct contact with physical surroundings. At birth the child frees his physical body from the protection of his mother's body. During the first seven years his etheric body is surrounded by a kind of protective envelope similar to his mother's body in his pre-natal state (Easton, 1975: 390). Within this protective covering, the child's own forces are now working so that it can be sloughed off at the age of about seven years, together with the change of teeth (Easton, 1975: 390), when the etheric body then becomes fully activated. There are two sides to this process of growth and development. The one process is carried out within the child by the work of the child's formative forces. The other process is the influence of the environment to which the child is highly susceptible (Comeras, 1996: 8). The child's etheric body is not individualized until about the age of seven with the eruption of the second teeth. Just as the physical body is born and separates from the mother, the etheric body becomes separated not only

from the mother's etheric but also from the etheric environment, at the age of seven. This process of individualization is often called the "birth" of the etheric, a process that happens gradually from 0 – 7 (Comeras, 1996: 9). The body is therefore no longer the product of the forces of heredity. Steiner (1996: 16) states that "the second teeth – that is, the person's own teeth – that take the place of those inherited, represent the culmination of this work." The child's own soul-spiritual nature has laid its stamp upon it, in part also as a result of his own personal karma that he has brought with him into his present life (Easton, 1975: 391). From the ages of seven to fourteen the astral body still has its own protective envelope, which is gradually cast off at puberty, enabling the full activation of the astral body (Easton, 1975: 391). In the same way the ego or I will become active and will take full possession of the physical, etheric, and astral bodies at the age of twenty-one. In this way we speak of the child 'coming of age' (Easton, 1975: 391).

2.3.4 The Waldorf kindergarten and primary school

Just as the physical influences of the external world should not be allowed to influence the unborn child, so until the change of teeth the etheric body should not be influenced by anything that will hinder its healthy development (Steiner, 1996: 17). In Waldorf education the kindergarten years continue up to the end of the first seven-year phase of child development, and children only start formal schooling in the year that they turn seven (Comeras, 1996: 8). The physical body and its organs must be allowed optimal growth without the unnecessary interference of other demands, for instance the training of memory. Steiner (1996: 15) feels very strongly that memory, which lives in the etheric body, should not be trained before the second dentition has taken place. It should simply be nourished and should not be cultivated externally. In this way, memory will be allowed to unfold freely and on its own in later years. The same forces that thrust forth the second teeth are those that take on the task of thinking and consciously remembering (Easton, 1975: 391). Children are able to remember instinctively from the moment they can say "I", but memory should not be cultivated, and neither should children be taught to read and write before the age of seven (Easton, 1975: 391). If memory is trained before the age of seven, Steiner (cited in Alwyn, 1997: 16) claims that arterial sclerosis and

rheumatism could be the result later in life. He states emphatically (1996: 18) that physical well-being in later years is firmly based on the forces developed in the first seven years of a child's life. Just as nature creates the proper environment for the physical body before birth, so the educator must provide the proper physical environment for the child after birth. The right physical environment allows the child's physical body and organs to shape themselves correctly (Steiner, 1996: 18). Benians (1990: 2) writes that our first task as educators is to realize that the child is a spiritual being who is striving to take possession of the body which has been prepared for him.

According to Steiner (Easton, 1975: 391), children between the ages of 0 and 7 years learn by imitation and example. Comeras (1996: 10) writes that although during the first seven years the nerve sense activity, the rhythmic activity of breathing and circulation, and movement and metabolism are all inter-playing, it is the nerve sense activity which predominates. The young child therefore lives in the world and participates in his surroundings through his senses rather than through his feelings and thoughts (Comeras, 1996: 10). The life of thoughts and the life of the senses are still a unity and not yet separated. This enables the child to imitate what he picks up from his environment. The child is at one with his environment and all the sense impressions are experienced in an extremely vivid way. The child experiences not only impressions of what is touched, tasted, seen, and heard, but also the impressions and the feelings of those around him (Comeras, 1996: 11). This is why the child's environment should be as healthy as possible, because sense impressions affect the child deeply and can influence his formative forces (Comeras, 1996: 11).

It is specifically the child's limb system that is developing now, and he therefore imitates and should imitate what his teachers do (Easton, 1975: 391). Fairy tales and other similar stories that are told to children of this age should be full of action. In Waldorf schools children are taught various skills, like baking and sewing, by copying and imitating. There is no attempt to make them learn anything intellectually, only to acquire certain habits and skills by doing and imitating (Easton, 1975: 392). The child's will is therefore educated at this time, and every attempt is made to provide an environment that is worthy

of imitation (Childs, 1995: 69). Steiner (1996: 19) states that children at this stage do not learn through admonition and by instruction, but simply through imitation. Accordingly it is held that the brain and other organs are guided into the appropriate course of development if they receive the proper impressions from their physical environment (Steiner, 1996: 19). The healthy development of the imagination is of paramount importance at this stage of the child's development (Steiner, 1996: 20), because the work of the imagination shapes and builds the form of the brain. Imagination exercises the brain in the correct way in order for it to develop the necessary pathways (Steiner, 1996: 20).

Play is of paramount importance and is a vital activity in early childhood (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 16). The stories children are told and the toys they are given to play with are therefore very important in allowing them to exercise their imaginations (Steiner, 1996: 20). Steiner (1996: 20) gives the example of how one could make a doll for a child by folding up an old napkin, making two of the corners into legs, and the other two into arms, and then painting eyes, a nose and a mouth, as opposed to buying the child a "pretty" doll with real hair and painted cheeks, which leaves little to the imagination. One of the most important principles in the Waldorf kindergarten is then that children are not given too many objects to play with, especially not "finished" ones (Carlgren, 1976: 30). Play is stimulated from outside the child, so the more simple and "unfinished" the toys are, the more scope there is for children to be inwardly engaged (Comeras, 1996: 11). Plastic toys have no place in these kindergartens and, instead, children are given objects of natural material, e.g. pieces of wood, cloths of various sizes and shapes, sea shells, stones, pine cones, wooden toys, and cloth dolls, to play with and to shape into whatever they are imagining it can be (Carlgren 1976: 30, 31). The inner activity of fantasy and imagination stimulates the formative processes within the body. By the time the child is about five the stimulus for play no longer comes so much from outside but is more inwardly directed from an inner picture (Comeras, 1996: 11). Children under the age of 10 years should also be discouraged from watching television as this provides the child with a complete picture and does not exercise the imagination (Carlgren 1972: 32, 33). Waldorf education discourages television watching for various other reasons as well, but

such a discussion is perhaps not within the scope of this thesis. Through play, creativity, imagination, and initiative are cultivated (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 16).

In the first seven years of a child's life the will is cultivated. This can clearly be seen in the many will activities through which the child develops and matures, e.g. suckling, sitting upright, crawling, walking, and talking (Benians, 1970: 70, 71). Waldorf pedagogy discourages any interference in these natural developmental processes (Benians, 1970: 70), as this weakens the development of the child's will forces, for instance, putting a baby in a walking ring as opposed to allowing the baby to start walking on his own when his legs are strong enough and when he has developed sufficient will forces to hold himself upright and to balance on his feet in order to walk. In fact, it goes as far as claiming that premature interference in these developmental processes can be harmful in later years in the intellectual development of the child, as well as causing serious disturbances in the child's metabolic system (Benians, 1970: 71). The child's speech formation is once again influenced by the speech he hears from the adults around him since he will emulate the words and sounds he hears (Benians, 1970: 71). It is therefore important that the child is surrounded, at home and in the kindergarten, by good and well-formed speech (Benians, 1970: 71). Waldorf pedagogy discourages so-called "baby talk" and encourages parents and educators to speak to the young child in normal language and diction (Benians, 1979: 71). Discourse contains a formative and health-giving power and we must ensure that our speech is worthy of imitation as the child's etheric forces, which are moulding his body at this stage, are influenced by the quality of the speech with which he is surrounded (Benians, 1970: 71, 72). Inharmonious speech can harm the child's digestion and may cause disturbances later in life (Benians, 1970: 72). The use of rich, imaginative language develops the body and the intelligence (Van Dam, cited in Comeras, 1996: 11). It brings about a certain movement within the etheric body from which intelligence develops (Comeras, 1996: 11).

Alwyn (1997: 18) writes that imagination, appropriately cultivated and encouraged during the kindergarten years, ensures that adult thinking will be infused with strong, creative forces which will enable adults to work responsibly into the future for the benefit

of humankind. Meanwhile, with the change of teeth in the seventh year, the indication is there that the child's memory and imagination are now ready to be cultivated formally. Alwyn (1997: 18) describes it well in the following passage: "It is time to leave kindergarten; because the garden of the child's soul should now be well prepared for the class teacher, who will work directly on those vital forces of imagination and memory, to help that garden grow beautifully..."

In Waldorf schools, formal learning usually commences in the year in which the child turns seven (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17). With the change of teeth, when the etheric body lays aside its outer envelope, the time is ready for it to be worked on through external education (Steiner, 1996: 23). Steiner (1994b: 131, 132) describes the etheric body as being about the same size and shape as the physical body. It is extremely delicate and has a finely-organized structure. Its basic colour can best be described as "peach blossom". As pointed out before, at every seven-year developmental phase, the teacher works intensively with one of the child's higher bodies, slowly weaving its activities together with the member worked on in the previous stage of development (Schwartz, 1999: 180). The formation and growth of the etheric body mean the moulding and development of the child's inclinations and habits, memory, and temperament (Steiner, cited in Seddon, 1993: 187). The intellectual development of the child is cultivated through the establishment of basic learning skills and the development of memory in a way that is firmly rooted in practical life (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17). Learning in the primary school seeks to engage the feelings of the child so that a strong personal identification with the subject matter may occur. Learning is essentially experiential, and a strong, continuous narrative structure is used to enhance direct experience (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17). The etheric body is worked upon through pictures (Steiner, cited in Seddon, 1993: 187) by constantly engaging the imagination of the child. Pictorial imagery is therefore a vital factor in rendering learning a personal inner experience (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17).

In this second seven-year period, the child's etheric body has been liberated as the child's growth slows down, and the internal organs attain greater stability in relation to

one another (Schwartz, 1999: 181). In the kindergarten years, the teachers left the etheric forces alone so that they could work on building a framework for the child's future health (Schwartz, 1999: 181). These liberated etheric forces must now, in the second seven-year phase, be directed by the class teacher. Waldorf education proposes that we must now bring into the child's environment content which has the proper inner meaning and value. The etheric body will unfold its forces if a well-ordered imagination is allowed to develop from the inner meaning it discovers for itself in pictures and allegories (Steiner, 1996: 23). In other words, abstract concepts are avoided in favour of what can be seen and experienced (Steiner, 1996: 23). Art and music also play a prominent role in the primary school curriculum in order to engage the child's feelings (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17).

Steiner proposes that the child's feelings must be engaged in all the learning processes in the primary school years (Childs, 1991: 90). The training of the child's memory must therefore be accompanied by the engagement of his feelings (Childs, 1991: 90). According to Steiner (Schwartz, 1999: 181), the liberated etheric forces become the power of human memory. Just as the cultivation of habit is of primary importance in the kindergarten years, so is the cultivation of the memory of utmost importance in the primary school years (Schwartz, 1999: 181). It is essential that adults answer children's questions in such a way that they appeal to their feelings, and reserve any overly-intellectual and abstract explanations for the next phase of development (Schwartz, 1999: 184).

Childs (1991: 90) explains that Steiner argued that an act of perception must take place before concepts can be formed. Usually such acts of perception are directed outwards, towards the outer world. Although an act of remembering also involves perceptive activity, it is directed inwards. Therefore, the function of memory involves the perception of concepts rather than the perception of objects. Steiner (Childs, 1991: 90) now argues that when we remember we perceive something that is going on inside us, just as at other times we perceive things that are outside of us. He further states that the processes which eventually lead to memory take place in the same region of the soul in which the life of

feeling is present (Childs, 1991: 90). Steiner (1996: 31) continues to state that “it is necessary for human beings to remember not only what they already understand, but to come to understand what they already know”, that is, what they have acquired by memory in the same way they acquire language. He explains that, for instance, there should first be an assimilation of historical events through the memory, and then the apprehension of these facts in intellectual concepts. Understanding through concepts should proceed from the stored-up treasures of the memory (Steiner, 1996: 31). Therefore, the teacher should not educate purely out of the intellectual realm. Teaching should be accompanied by feeling permeated by artistic elements. Concepts acquired in this way remain alive and capable of further development and metamorphosis (Childs, 1991: 90). The child’s thought is of an imaginative, artistic nature (Blunt, 1995: 73), because the etheric body creates thought of a pictorial character which is bound up with the child’s feeling life, which is in turn dominated by the rhythmic system (Blunt, 1995: 73).

The primary school years comprise distinct sub-phases which are characterized by specific cognitive developments and the changing relationship of the self to the world. These sub-phases are seven to nine years, nine to twelve years, and twelve to fourteen years (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17). The time between seven and nine years is still characterized by strong forces of imitation and situational memory (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17). Lessons therefore involve many instances for learning through direct experience, and memory, imagination, enjoyment of rhythmical repetition, and the presentation of universal concepts in picture form, form an integral part of this period of childhood (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17). The child needs the teacher to be an authority, guiding him from the comfort of the home to the complex world outside (Schwartz, 1999: 181). According to Steiner, the child must be allowed to remain as long as possible in the peaceful, dreamlike condition of pictorial imagination (Blunt, 1995: 75). If the child’s organism is allowed to grow strong in this non-intellectual way, he will rightly develop in later life the necessary intellectuality (Steiner, cited in Blunt, 1995: 75).

Waldorf pedagogy recognizes the first experience of separation between the child and the world at the age of nine (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 17). The child wakes up to the world, so to speak, and experiences his inner separation from the world in the form of a feeling of astonishment and wonder for the world (Blunt, 1995: 75). He begins to question the authority of the teacher, albeit unconsciously, which he has up to now accepted unquestioningly. Children now need to be supported in the appropriate way in order for them to step out of the golden years of childhood into the reality of a world differentiated by a new perspective (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18). The child now becomes capable of conceptualizing the world as a separate reality (Blunt, 1995: 75). He no longer needs only pictures of the world, but is receptive to simple descriptions of it. Steiner suggests that the child, however, cannot yet distinguish between what is living and what is dead in the world, and even inorganic nature is alive to the child (Blunt, 1995: 75). Education must respond to this by bringing to the child an anthropomorphic view of the world (Steiner, 1982: 129).

By the age of twelve children have usually lost their harmonious physical proportions, and psychologically one notices the development of a critical attitude. Their newly-won capacity to think causally, must be taken into account (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18). From the age of twelve onwards, accompanied by the symptoms of puberty, children are increasingly capable of forming abstract concepts and understanding causal relationships (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18). This is brought about by the etheric having penetrated right through to the child's skeleton. The skeleton, which is of a more mineral, dead nature than the muscles, awakens in the etheric body an awareness of what is dead and mineral in the world (Blunt, 1995: 76). This enables the child to look at the world of nature more objectively. The child's growing awareness of the laws of mechanics provides the foundation for his awareness of the laws of causality (Blunt, 1995: 76). However, Steiner states that the child is not yet ready to understand abstract rules and definitions (Blunt, 1995: 76). These changes must be taken into consideration by the teacher in his methods and teaching approach (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18).

2.3.5 Reading and writing

It is necessary to mention here two distinct features of Waldorf education, namely the teaching of reading and writing, and teaching out of the four temperaments. Rudolf Steiner emphasized that children should not be forced to learn to read and write before they are really ready for it, i.e. before the eruption of the second set of teeth. The process to be followed in teaching children to read and to write should be the same process that is to be found in the old Egyptian, Babylonian, and Chinese cultures, namely the transition from the picture-element to the sign (Carlgren, 1972: 81). In Waldorf education a bridge is created by engaging the child's imaginative faculties and presenting the letters at first through familiar pictures and stories. In this way, the letter arises from the picture, and reading is derived from the activity of writing (Carlgren, 1972: 81). A distinction is made between vowels and consonants from the beginning. Consonants, or "outer" sounds, arise out of the outer form of the most archetypal picture the teacher chooses with which to introduce a particular letter, e.g. the letter "P" will arise out of the figure of a prince with outstretched arms (Carlgren, 1975: 81). Vowels, or "inner" sounds, arise out of bodily features expressing the mood of, for instance, the prince. All the letters are gradually introduced in the first year of school. The children learn to read only what the teacher and the child himself have written. Only during the second school year is reading practised in a more systematic way, and are the children introduced to their first reader (Carlgren, 1975: 81), usually handwritten by the teacher.

2.3.6 The four temperaments

Steiner considered knowledge of the temperaments of a teacher's students of paramount importance (Carlgren, 1972: 61). In many cases it is the temperament of the child that is the key to understanding and treating a child (Carlgren, 1972: 61). A knowledge of the temperaments is also of great assistance to the teacher when preparing lessons, as this can aid the teacher in keeping all the children in his class engaged (Harwood, 1992: 166). Temperament is very deeply rooted in the human being, and Steiner described how the four members of the human being (physical, etheric, astral and ego), become manifest in

the different temperaments, i.e. choleric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic (Carlgren, 1972: 66). The human being's temperament become apparent according to the way in which his physical body, his life-forces, soul life, and ego predominate (Carlgren, 1972: 66). Individuality develops from two directions, the spiritual and the earthly (Staley, 1996: 49). Temperament stands between that which we have inherited from our ancestors, and those that we bring with us from previous incarnations (Steiner, 1987: 4). Steiner (1987: 4) writes that temperament strikes a balance between the eternal and the ephemeral. The way the four members of the human being combine is determined by the manner in which that which we inherited and that which we brought with us from previous incarnations, combine when we enter into a new physical body (Steiner, 1987: 5). Each person possesses aspects from all the temperaments, although one of the four members usually predominates and gives the child his peculiar characteristics in terms of temperament.

A melancholic temperament emerges when the ego predominates; when the astral body predominates, we find a choleric temperament; the predominance of the etheric body results in a sanguine temperament; and a phlegmatic temperament is caused by the predominance of the physical body (Steiner, 1983: 12). The predominance of these four members changes somewhat in adulthood, as Steiner describes in his lecture on the temperaments (1987). The four members of the human being also express themselves in various physical ways, which in turn finds expression in the temperaments. The ego expresses itself in the circulation of the blood, and therefore the blood is the predominate system in the melancholic child. . The astral body finds its expression in the nervous system, and the nervous system therefore holds sway in the choleric. The glandular system predominates in the etheric body, which in turn dominates the sanguine. The outwardly most important feature in the phlegmatic is that of the physical body (Steiner, 1983: 12; Steiner, 1987: 5).

One's temperament also changes from one stage of development to the next, for instance, the adolescent's temperament will gradually change to a different one from that which predominated in childhood (Carlgren, 1972: 66). The temperaments become recognizable

with the change of teeth and the awakening of the etheric body around the age of seven, as the temperaments are rooted in the etheric (Benians, 1990: 11). The four fundamental types of temperaments never manifest themselves in pure form. The human being has one basic temperament combined with the other three in varying degrees (Steiner, 1987: 9). The task of education is to bring about the harmonizing of these four temperaments in the human being (Steiner, 1983: 12). Steiner states (1983: 15) that the worst way in which a teacher can deal with a particular temperament is to try to foster the opposite qualities in the child. The way adults react to a child's temperament strongly influences the child's self-image (Staley, 1996: 49). The work of the teacher is to understand the temperament and then to go out and meet it. Steiner (1983: 15) gives the example of a choleric child who might for instance fling a pot of ink to the floor in a fit of temper. Steiner recommends that the teacher simply observes quite coldly and calmly what the child is doing. The teacher should deal with the situation as serenely as possible. Only later, when the child has calmed down, should one talk to the child, in a sympathetic manner, about his behaviour, and about the consequences thereof. Harwood (1992: 162) recommends that a child with a temper should be allowed to give full reign to it and to play it out. It is not wise to try to force him to be the opposite of what he is. He will simply fall deeper into his temperament (Harwood, 1992: 162). Steiner states (1983: 17) that it is the inner life of the child that is of the greatest importance, and teaching and education depend on "what passes from the soul of the teacher to the soul of the child."

The choleric temperament manifests as aggression and forcefulness in the human being (Steiner, 1987: 6). Choleric children express their will strongly in a kind of "blustering way" (Steiner, 1983: 13). As a rule, choleric children are short and stout, and their heads almost sunken down into their bodies (Steiner, 1983: 31). When a choleric child takes up a task he likes to see it through to the end (Harwood, 1992: 162). Choleric children are natural leaders and abound with energy. However, they must be given scope and direction. In general, the choleric child should be given difficult work and left to get on with it by himself. Choleric children usually long to achieve things themselves and will admire achievements in others (Harwood 1992: 163).

Sanguine children are influenced by constant sensations, pictures, and ideas, and appear to be restless and constantly moving from one idea or project to another (Steiner, 1987: 6). The sanguine child is interested in all kinds of things, but only for a short time, quickly losing his interest again (Steiner, 1983: 13). They often have blue eyes, a long neck, and a dance-like walk (Harwood, 1992: 163). A sanguine child will be distracted by the smallest noise and will find it difficult to complete a task (Harwood, 1992: 163). Harwood (1992: 164) therefore recommends that the teacher gives the sanguine child a great variety of tasks, consequently working with the child's temperament.

The phlegmatic appears to be slow since he lives in the comfort of his inner processes as his attention is directed inward (Steiner, 1987: 7). Phlegmatic children tend to show no interest in the outer world (Steiner, 1983: 13). The phlegmatic child usually has protruding shoulders (Steiner, 1983: 31), and can appear over-weight and has a rather expressionless face (Harwood, 1992: 165). Phlegmatic children are quite content to be left alone, and seem to display very little interest in the lessons, seldom contributing in class (Harwood, 1992: 165). The teacher needs to outdo this child at his own game by for instance telling him a story that is drawn-out with many pauses in between, and in a monotonous voice (Harwood, 1992: 166).

Pain continually wells up in the melancholic (Steiner, 1987: 7), and they show a leaning towards inward reflection and are inclined to brood quietly within themselves (Steiner, 1983: 13). The melancholic child is as a rule tall and slender (Steiner, 1983: 31), with long fingers, smooth hair, a graceful walk, and controlled movements (Harwood, 1992: 164). Melancholic children are usually very tidy, and they prefer their own company to the company of others (Harwood, 1992: 164). These children are receptive, reflect on what they learn, and do their work carefully (Harwood, 1992: 164). However, melancholics are shy children and are hypersensitive to slights and injuries (Harwood, 1992: 165).

There are some combinations of temperaments that usually occur together. The sanguine and phlegmatic temperaments are frequently in conjunction, and the choleric and melancholic temperaments often manifest together in the human being (Steiner, 1983: 17).

2.3.7 Adolescence and upper school education

With the onset of adolescence, usually at around the age of fourteen, the astral body is released from its protective envelope (Steiner, 1996: 37). Children now learn through the intellect, and proceed from picture-thinking to abstract-thinking (Staley, 1996: 5). Only now can we approach the child with all that opens up the world of abstract ideas, the faculty of judgment, and independent thought (Steiner, cited in Seddon, 1993: 189). Steiner (cited in Seddon, 1993: 189) states that nothing is more harmful to a child than to awaken too early his independent judgment. He says that man is not in a position to judge until he has collected in his inner life material for judgment and comparison (Steiner, cited in Seddon, 1993: 189). Joseph Chilton Pearce, the eminent author and lecturer on human development and the changing needs of children, states (cited in Staley, 1996: 20) that “Forcing the early child to deal prematurely with adult abstract thought can cripple the child’s ability to think abstractly later on...Without a full-dimensional worldview structured in the formative years, no earth matrix can form, no knowledge of physical survival can develop, and no basis for abstraction and creativity can arise.” He continues to say that premature intellectual stimulation will result in permanent anxiety and obsessive-compulsive attachment to material objects. According to Pearce (cited in Staley, 1996: 20), anxiety cripples intelligence, the effects of which are devastating.

With puberty is born a new soul force, the force of the intellect, which enables adolescents to form independent opinions based on their experiences of life (Staley, 1996: 25). Adolescence also brings about awakening feelings for the opposite sex, the ability to judge, as well as the capacity to form personal opinions (Steiner, 1996: 61). Steiner (1996: 61) states that only now should one appeal to the child’s reasoning faculty, the critical intellect’s ability for approval and disapproval. With the onset of puberty

human beings are ready for the formation of their own judgments about what they have learnt (Steiner, 1996: 37). In adolescence young people are developing their powers of independent judgment and are interested in the truth (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18). The emerging inner selves of adolescents need to be nurtured by ideals worthy of their attention. They should be encouraged to view the world from a range of different perspectives (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19). Steiner (1996: 37) states that “one’s ripeness for thought requires that one has learned to be full of respect for what others have thought.” Independent inquiry and self-directed tasks are encouraged, and the focus of education should now shift to a more analytical and self-determined approach (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18, 19). According to Steiner (1996: 61) a youth under the age of twenty still has an undeveloped astral body and is not capable of sound judgments. Just like the young child under the age of seven needs an appropriate model to imitate, he needs an authority to emulate between the ages of seven and fourteen, and in adolescence he should have rules of conduct, principles, and axioms. The newly formed intellect still lacks discrimination (Staley, 1996: 25). Young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one are gradually awakening to a fully cognitive perception of life, eventually approaching a mature adult “awake” consciousness fully aware of itself (Curriculum: Waldorf schools in South Africa, 1995: 6). Steiner (1996: 38) proposes that thought should take hold in a living way in children’s minds by first learning and then judging.

The astral body’s activity can be perceived in the child’s likes and dislikes (Schwartz, 1999: 180). Parents are usually well-aware of which foods, colours, fabrics, and sounds their children like and dislike (Schwartz, 1999: 180). Parents are often taken aback at how different their children’s likes and dislikes can be to their own. Schwartz (1999: 180) states that these are matters that clearly go beyond hereditary predispositions and environmental influences. In fact, as the child enters puberty and adolescence, he seems almost willful in his need to dislike all that his parents like, and vice versa. This is the time when the astral body has its most direct and unmitigated affect on the child’s soul life (Schwartz, 1999: 180). The astral body is the vehicle for human passions and desires, sympathies and antipathies, and the entire life of feeling (Childs, 1991: 156). Steiner (1983: 64) tells us that the astral body is the outer form for the entire content of the soul.

He describes it as an oval form surrounding the etheric body. It has an underlying blue colour within which moves the fluctuations of the individual's astral activities (Steiner, 1983: 64).

Staley (1996: 7) writes that adolescence is a new territory for the child, uncharted and unexplored. Parents also often feel "as if they are trying to navigate this unknown territory without a map" (Staley, 1996: 7). Adolescence is not a stable time. It is characterized by impermanence, and new ideas being tried out and discarded. It is one of the most difficult periods of a child's life and needs all the preparations of the previous years if it is to be passed successfully (Benians, 1990: 121). Adolescents do not fully experience objective reality (Staley, 1996: 15) and they therefore need adults to be firm, understanding, patient, and loving, in order to help them through this transitional time (Staley, 1996: 15).

Staley (1996: 7) divides adolescence into two recognizable phases, the phase of negation and the phase of affirmation. In the first phase, adolescents want to oppose everything, refuting and criticising the world. In the second phase, they try to find their way into the life of the outer world (Staley, 1996: 7). This polarity expressed during adolescence is similar to the polarity expressed in early childhood. It is the very nature of confrontation that gives young people their sense of self (Lievegoed, 2005: 102). Similarly, when the three-year old says "no" to everything, he experiences his selfhood. This is followed by the four-year old embracing the world with a more positive expression (Staley, 1996: 7). The new ability to criticize, analyse, and make adult judgments is accompanied by emotional turmoil and disorientation (Clouder, 2003: 95).

Adolescents experience an undefined inner longing, which is really a search for their spiritual home (Staley, 1996: 7). When they discover that the world is not beautiful and wonderful, and that people are often not truthful, they feel let down and disappointed (Staley, 1996: 8). Disappointment intensifies the loneliness of adolescence. Teenagers become defiant, test everything and everyone, especially any adult who might represent authority, making life very difficult for the adults around them (Staley, 1996: 8). This

requires much sympathetic understanding from adults, open-hearted humour, and clear explanations (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 49). They oppose much that is out in the world, often siding with the underdog. They long for a real friend out there, and this search can become an overwhelming priority for them (Staley, 1996: 8). The adolescent longs to meet a kindred spirit who comes out of the spiritual world (Staley, 1996: 9). A deep longing for the spiritual world is experienced by teenagers, because their souls have become free and their feelings are more active (Staley, 1996: 9). Many young people have religious experiences, but these are often kept private, or shared only with a trusted friend (Staley, 1996: 9). They yearn for someone who will help them feel whole again, because their souls realize that they do not yet fit into the physical world (Staley, 1996: 9). This search for the spirit expresses itself in what Staley (1996: 9) calls “the crush”. The crush reaches its greatest intensity between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, although it may continue into late adolescence (Staley, 1996: 9). The crush is characterized by the adoration of someone else. This can be a teacher, a film star, a sports hero, a rock star, or even a friend. The adored one is held in great esteem, even worshipped, and is often someone who can be venerated at a distance (Staley, 1996: 9). Godlike qualities are often ascribed to this personality, and teenagers try to model themselves on this person. The adored role-model represents perfection, helping the teenager come to terms with the disappointment that the world is not perfect (Staley, 1996: 9). The crush may also express itself in an activity like fanatical devotion to a sport or a religion (Staley, 1996: 9). The crush is often the bridge from the stage of negation to the stage of affirmation (Staley, 1996: 10).

The fifteen-year old reaches a point in his development when the inner life of feeling in its search for independence can manifest in extreme forms (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 49). It can be expressed in great clarity in intellectual arguments and at the same time an inability to act out of the consequences of those ideas (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 49). A fierce assertion of emotional independence can be coupled with an almost childlike dependency and need for emotional comfort (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 49). There is also a strong impulse to engage in life, and this is accompanied by passionate ideals (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 49). Rawson & Richter (2000: 49, 50) characterize the Class 9, fifteen-

year old student as experiencing the awakening of a stringent logic and thinking potential that requires distance from one's own self and other people. There is also a search for balance between intellectuality and the realm of passion and urge-driven will. Higher ideals for humanity emerge, and the teenager at this stage searches for a new harmony with the world (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50).

Adolescents come into their own in the fifteenth/sixteenth year as they begin to accept the world as they see it (Staley, 1996: 10). They start to come out of the extremes of either being too withdrawn or being too aggressive. Teenagers become more communicative and friendlier. They become more accepting and start to feel more accepted. This results in improved relationships with parents and other teenagers (Staley, 1996: 11). However, peer pressure can become quite pronounced at this time. Although boys still largely fraternise with each other, they are now deeply interested in girls, albeit only by observing them carefully (Staley, 1996: 11), and vice versa. They spend hours on the phone, laughing and talking to each other (Staley, 1996: 11). Intellectually there is also a maturation that takes place. The sixteen-year old now has a desire to acquire facts, information, and details (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). They want to know how we know how it is, seeking not only information but also insight (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). Teenagers of this age also need to know how facts relate to them personally (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). The Class 10 student can be quite harsh in his judgments of sympathy and antipathy, especially of the predictable world of teachers, parents, rules, and authorities (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). A perceived injustice will be especially meticulously pursued (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). The sixteen-year old experiences a heightened consciousness in terms of his own vulnerable identity, and often tries to hide this by elaborate rituals in his behaviour and clothing (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). The fundamental question of the sixteen-year old, is "who am I?" (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50).

The stage of affirmation takes place in the sixteenth/seventeenth year (Staley, 1996: 11). Rawson and Richter (2000: 50) say that "life begins at 17." It is characterized by love for someone else as well as for the world (Staley, 1996: 12). Teenagers search for ideas and

for a picture of the world that resonates with them. The real search for truth now begins, and they look for religious answers, and ideal political systems, and become concerned about career choices (Staley, 1996: 12). Sixteen-year olds may lack wisdom, but they are capable of abstract thinking and making generalisations, comparing, contrasting, analyzing, and synthesizing information (Staley, 1996: 26). Gradually, their distrust and hostility towards the world are replaced by a longing to do great deeds for humanity and the world (Staley, 1996: 12). They become more realistic about life as they start to feel more confident about themselves. A sense of humour, and patience with their parents and siblings, also now start to manifest (Staley, 1996: 12). As the emotional chaos of adolescence begins to subside and physical changes slow down, the teenager starts to experience a subtle feeling of discomfort brought about by the process of coming to terms with mortality and feeling spiritually separated from the world (Staley, 1996: 21). A synthesis starts to take place between an interest in the outer world and an internal focus (Rawson & Richter 2000: 50). Teenagers at this stage wish to understand the inner principles that determine a human being's inner life, as well as those of the outer world (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). Some teenagers battle with questions like: Is there a God? Can the existence of God be proven? Is there life after death? Are there spiritual beings? What happens if there is nothing? (Staley, 1996: 21). Others are not interested in philosophical questions and pursue activities which provide them with excitement beyond the uncertainty of their daily lives like, for instance, acts of speed and daring (Staley, 1996: 21). Teenagers also experience deep loneliness as they start to experience themselves objectively, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, realizing who they really are, setting down their own goals and values, and thinking about the consequences of their choices (Staley, 1996: 22). Socially they begin to awaken and an ability to empathise with others develops (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). What they have previously experienced within their own souls, they can now recognize in others (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50). Young people of this age have to find an inner orientation between appearance and reality, and between what is said and what is meant (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 50).

Teenagers begin to gain perspective by about the age of seventeen or eighteen (Staley, 1996: 27). They show an interest in comparative ideas and strive to formulate individual answers to life's questions (Staley, 1996: 27). Between eighteen and twenty one, adolescents experience thought more objectively than before, trying to figure out what is real and what illusion (Staley, 1996: 27). They also begin to distinguish between their own thinking and that of others, and between wisdom and cleverness (Staley, 1996: 27). Although they are still prone to indoctrination and dogmatism, they have more tools at their disposal with which to form their own judgments (Staley, 1996: 27). They become more actively interested in the world by asking themselves how they personally can influence the world in terms of economics, politics, science, and in social and personal issues (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 51). Steiner (cited in Rawson & Richter, 2000: 61) states that in "knowing the world, the human being finds himself, and [in] knowing himself, he finds the world revealed to him."

According to Staley (1996: 27), Steiner stated that if intense interest in the riddles of life is not awakened in young people, the energies released with the awakening of adolescence may transform itself into other, more undesirable tendencies, like for instance, a delight in power, and an unhealthy interest in eroticism. The new-found intellect should therefore be directed towards an interest in the world and other people (Staley, 1996: 28). Rawson and Richter (2000: 51) state that the task of education is to provide learning opportunities in which objective laws that are accessible to thought can be experienced and made conscious. The intellect develops gradually, and in early childhood it is connected to the will, while it is connected to feeling in middle childhood (Staley, 1996: 28). The intellect begins to separate from the feelings around the age of twelve, when the child becomes capable of understanding cause and effect (Staley, 1996: 28). This ability to experience phenomena through the intellect alone, appears at the same time as the child senses the skeletal nature of his body (Staley, 1996: 28). Just as the child begins to experience the bony structure of his body, so he begins to experience the structure of thought (Staley, 1996: 28). Balance in thinking now becomes important and pure, dry intellectualism should be balanced with enthusiasm, feelings, and imagination (Staley, 1996: 32). When teenagers gain control over their thinking, they penetrate it with

their will (Staley, 1996: 32), so that intellectual activity becomes enriched with the threefoldness of willing, feeling, and thinking.

During the middle period of childhood, between the ages of seven and fourteen, children live strongly in their feelings (Staley, 1996: 33). Most of their actions, experiences, and thoughts are encountered through their feelings. When children reach adolescence, their experience of their feelings change quite drastically. They can experience floods of emotions, moods, and desires, and they can feel quite overwhelmed by it (Staley, 1996: 34). Steiner (cited in Staley, 1996: 35) compared the freeing of the feelings and the development of an independent soul-life to a continued experience of pain. Teenagers are pre-occupied with this feeling of inner discomfort and often find it difficult to direct their interest outward. Healthy emotional growth therefore occurs when young people are encouraged to become interested in the world outside themselves (Staley, 1996: 35). Cole and Hall (cited in Lievegoed, 1979, 53) state that “the main business of the adolescent is to stop being one”.

Staley (1996: 24) states that man’s childhood consists of twenty-one years. These years of childhood is of the utmost importance since it provides us for the rest of our lives with clues to our physical and emotional health, our ideals and attitudes, our self-confidence, and self-image (Staley, 1996: 24). Often adults need to penetrate and resolve certain childhood experiences in order to be healthy and happy adults (Staley, 1996: 24). Waldorf education therefore aims to combine the training of the intellect with nurturing the imaginative qualities and character building (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 52). Artistic and practical activities are of equal importance to the provision of knowledge. Education is not only a matter of intellectual training, but is a holistic process, and the artistic, practical, and imaginative fields should be integrated with the intellectual (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 52). Waldorf education steers away from specialist knowledge, and seeks to engage the whole human being. Rawson and Richter (2000: 52) state that teachers would have succeeded in their task when they have fostered in their students a well-developed intellect, a rich emotional life, and a strong will, and if this has brought about

feelings for freedom, equality, and fraternity. “Education in this sense means teaching the right subject in the right way at the right time” (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 52).

2.3.8 Some key aspects of Waldorf education

It is important to deal with some key aspects of Waldorf education in order to create a further understanding of the practicalities of Waldorf education, which in turn would lead to a clarification of the research question.

2.3.8.1 The class teacher and the class guardian

In the Waldorf primary school, which runs from Class 1 to Class 8, the class teacher remains attached to the same class and progresses with that class through the various school grades (Carlgren, 1972: 75). The class teacher teaches the main lesson (see explanation further on), as well as various other subjects throughout the day. Specialist teachers are only employed for subjects such as foreign languages, music, Eurythmy (a special form of movement taught in Waldorf schools), and perhaps handwork (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19). This eight-year cycle provides stability in the educative life of the children, ensuring also a close relationship of the teacher with their parents. It provides the teacher with the opportunity of knowing the children really well, to be firmly committed to their care and education, and to be a figure of authority (Rawson & Richter 2000: 19). Steiner (1976: 163) states that the teacher should be the driving and stimulating force in the entire system of education. In the high school, which in a Waldorf school consists of Classes 9 – 12, and sometimes a Class 13 (to accommodate state exams), the class teacher is replaced by the class guardian and specialist teachers. The class guardian assumes responsibility for a particular class throughout its high school years, in regard to administration, communication with parents, and the pastoral care of the students in the class (Michael Mount Waldorf School Prospectus, 2007).

2.3.8.2 The main lesson

Each day begins with a two-hour lesson called the main lesson (Steiner, 1982: 88). It is an integrated, cross-curricular unit and includes various activities to awaken and focus the children's attention (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19). These activities include oral and written work, mental arithmetic (in the primary school), artistic activities, presentation of new material, recall and discussion of the previous day's work, individual working, and narrative (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19). The main lesson is a central feature of the Waldorf curriculum (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19). Subjects are taught in blocks of several weeks, usually three or four weeks (Carlgren, 1972: 37). Each day's main lesson is an integrated and organic whole. Connections are established across subject areas and between main lesson themes (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). Main lessons are carefully prepared and teachers choose material, presentation and activities according to the requirements of the curriculum, and the needs of the specific class (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). Each main lesson should form an artistic whole in which the parts relate to the whole (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). The whole is permeated with rhythm, structure and purpose, instead of being just a chain of events (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). The main lesson includes activities and content which address the children's intellectual, cognitive, aesthetic, affective, and practical modes of learning (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

Each main lesson is presented in a threefold rhythm:

First part: morning verse; recitation of poetry (in the primary school, this also includes singing, musical instrumental work, and mental arithmetic); and recall of the previous day's work.

Second part: narrative, presentation of new material, and discussion.

Third part: individual work, practise of basic skills.

The main lesson is followed by individual subject lessons of 40 – 45 minutes. At some Waldorf schools these lessons are also taught in block periods (Carlgren, 1972: 37). More academic subjects are taught in the morning, while arts and crafts, sport, and practical work, are timetabled for the afternoon sessions. Subjects that need regular practise like eurythmy, music, and foreign languages are spread evenly throughout the middle of the day (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19).

2.3.9 Conclusion

Steiner felt strongly that teaching is an art (Clouder, 2003: 23). Fundamental to the art of education is the perception of the child, and understanding childhood as an integrated physical and spiritual process (Clouder, 2003: 23). This will then lead the teacher to an understanding of what needs to be taught and when (Clouder, 2003: 23).

“It is essential that we develop an art of education which will lead us out of the social chaos into which we have fallen. The only way out of this social chaos, is to bring spirituality into the souls of men through education, so that out of the spirit itself men may find the way to progress and the further evolution of civilization.” (Steiner, cited in Childs, 1991: i).

2.4 PARSIFAL AND THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL

After them came the queen. So radiant was her countenance that everyone thought the dawn was breaking. She was clothed in a dress of Arabian silk. Upon a deep green archmardi she bore the perfection of Paradise, both root and branch. That was a thing called the Grail, which surpasses all earthly perfection. (Von Eschenbach, 1961: 129)

2.4.1 Introduction

Lievegoed (2005: 100) states that “puberty is a wonderfully dramatic event in the life of a child”. He refers to Wagner’s opera of *Parsifal* as a drama reminiscent of the drama of puberty (2005: 100). Parsifal is banned from the Grail Castle because he entered it in the innocence of his childhood, and as a “pure fool” failed to ask the right question. In the opera, Parsifal now finds himself in the magic garden of the magician, Klingsor. Parsifal breaks the enchantment and Klingsor throws a spear at him which he catches in his hand. At that moment thunder is heard and darkness descends upon the garden. The entire magic world collapses, and Parsifal finds himself standing alone in grey light, surrounded by a rocky wasteland. His task is now to find himself within this loneliness and to re-discover the way to the Grail Castle (Lievegoed, 2005: 100).

These events reflect the experiences of the beginning of puberty. The light, colourful, innocent world of early childhood is exchanged for a bare, grey world of naked facts (Lievegoed, 2005: 100). According to Lievegoed (2005: 100) loneliness is the leitmotif of puberty. He sights the example of typical comments that are often found in the diaries of teenagers: “No one understands me. Has anyone ever been as lonely as me?” The characteristics of adolescent imbalance are related to the experience of loneliness (Lievegoed, 2005: 101). Out of this loneliness a path is sought towards others, towards the world, towards the community of the Grail, to use the imagery of *Parzival*. After separation, and after what one could term a period of analysis, there follows a period of synthesis (Lievegoed, 2005: 101). Lievegoed (2005: 101) states that striving towards this synthesis is what dominates the last seven-year period before full adulthood. Querido (1991: iv) describes how in teaching *Parzival* to various Class 11 students in Europe and

the United States, he realised how important the universal relevance of this tale is to seventeen-year olds, when they start grappling with the questions of life and death.

2.4.2 The significance of *Parzival* within the Waldorf curriculum

It is for these reasons that *Parzival* is taught as a main lesson block in almost all Waldorf schools worldwide in Class 11, when students are sixteen/seventeen years old. The curriculum of the first Waldorf school, compiled by Caroline von Heydebrand, states “the literature course in Class X lays a good foundation for the Parsifal period in Class XI” (1983: 66). Karl Stockmeyer’s curriculum (1991: 36) quotes Steiner as saying that the teacher should “try by a preliminary cursory treatment to create a picture of the whole work, so that the children know the Parsifal legend, so that they look upon the passages which you read...as samples seen within the totality of the work.” The upper school curriculum for schools in the United Kingdom (Rawson, Burnett, & Mephram, 1999: 16) describes the Class 11 literature curriculum as including a study of the Arthurian and Grail legends of medieval Europe culminating in a comprehensive examination of Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Parzival*. Rawson, Burnett and Mephram (1999: 16) continue to state that the story is used to investigate many issues of significance to late adolescence, including the nature of love and marriage; the chivalric ideals of knighthood; illusion and temptation; the abuse of power; alienation and doubt; healing, reconciliation and atonement; the meeting of destiny; and, finally, the quest for the Grail and its symbolic and spiritual significance. The Rawson and Richter (2000: 58) curriculum suggests that the study of literature engenders questions about the individual and society in ways that often challenge the existing, conventional world view. They continue to say that great literature is always in some sense prophetic and innovative, although it rarely provides answers (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 58). It rather stimulates the individual to go beyond himself, to open himself up to extraordinary experience, which is exactly what the Class 11 student needs (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 58). Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Parzival* takes the reader on a journey through individual failure, pain and hurt, lost opportunities, guilt and disintegration, to atonement and redemption (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 58). *Parzival* is a unique story of a quest for selfhood which reflects the

adolescent's inner journey. The psychological archetypes in the story stand out precisely because it is set in an unfamiliar landscape (Rawson & Richter: 2000: 58).

Carlgren (1981: 185) states that the point of departure in Class 11 is a study of medieval literature, especially Von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. He continues to describe (1981: 185) Parsifal's journey through life, from his simple-minded childhood and youth, through uncertainty, defiance and doubt, to a spiritual rebirth and a deepened and satisfying experience of the self. The journey through life as depicted in Von Eschenbach's epic, has something which is valid for every person (Carlgren, 1981: 185).

In a faculty meeting at the Stuttgart school on 9 December 1922, Rudolf Steiner gave some indications about the teaching of *Parzival* in Class 11 (Steiner: 1998: 480–483). He emphasized the importance of how *Parzival* is presented to students, stating that the teacher should initially emphasise a certain kind of human guiltlessness, followed by the second stage of Parsifal's development which was that of doubt, and finally the third stage of inner certainty should be pointed out to the students. Steiner (1998: 481) suggested that it should be made clear to the students that one stage of development arises out of a previous one. Parsifal's childhood and youth symbolize the dullness of consciousness of the ordinary, uneducated people of the ninth and tenth centuries, who simply followed the priests' directives. Eventually, when Parsifal finds the Grail Castle again through a conscious search for it, it demonstrates the development of a dull consciousness into a more spiritual one (Steiner, 1998: 482). In this way, the story of Parsifal mirrors the awakening consciousness of the child and the adolescent.

The Grail scholar, W. J. Stein, who was a personal student of Rudolf Steiner and one of the first teachers at the original Waldorf school in Stuttgart, where he taught German Literature and History (Matthews, in Stein, 1991: i, ii), was one of the first teachers to teach the *Parzival* main lesson (Stein, 1991: 1–3) under the directives of Steiner. When he consulted Steiner about what he should teach to Class 11 students, Steiner asked him what he felt particularly connected to that might be especially suited to seventeen-year olds. When Stein answered that he felt a strong connection to the Grail sagas, Steiner

exclaimed that it would be most appropriate for Class 11 students (Querido, 1991: vi). Stein states (1991: 1) that it is the task of a Waldorf teacher to know what may be appropriately taught at any given age. He continues to say that the Waldorf curriculum forms the basis for this knowledge. The Class 10 student therefore requires different subject matter from, for instance, the Class 11 pupil, who is sixteen going onto seventeen (Stein, 1991: 1). The Class 11 student needs to “reconquer the world of the stars”, rising above his bodily nature (Stein, 1991: 2). It is to this end that the Parsifal story is appropriate to the Class 11 student, as it tells the story of the wounded Grail King, Anfortas, who is healed by Parsifal once he has expiated his guilt and achieved the Grail (Stein, 1991: 2). In other words, once Parsifal has risen above his bodily nature, he was capable of achieving spiritual insight. Stein (1991: 2) states that if the adolescent is deprived of this opportunity to “reconquer the world of the stars”, he is delivered over to all the suffering that comes from the forces of an ungoverned physical nature.

Rawson and Richter (2000: 12) write in their seminal curriculum for Waldorf schools that Class 11 students have reached a stage where they are interested in understanding more subtle psychological processes. Their social consciousness begin to increase, and they move away from merely condemning the world to starting to feel that they could perhaps contribute in one way or another to change events (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). The Class 11 student’s judgments now begin to include his own experiences. They also move away from the irritations that so often accompany puberty, and start to take a new interest in their own biographies, and in what is needed in order to develop their own individualities (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). Class 11 students begin to experience boundaries and develop an interest in “something higher” than themselves (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). They begin to search for their own task within the reality of society. Students of this age (sixteen/seventeen) now begin to develop an increased responsibility towards other individuals. The main lessons in Class 11, of which two are usually English main lessons, therefore focus on a more intensive confrontation with the human being’s inner world and the process by which he finds ego-awareness (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12).

Rawson and Richter (2000: 12) continue to describe the suitability of *Parzival* for Class 11. They state that the story of *Parzival* itself concentrates on inwardness and the individual's path through the stages of failure, guilt, atonement, and grace through several aspects of the story, including the encounter with the medieval courtly world, the limitations and possibilities of a society that is guided by external principles, and the Gawain sub-plot which reveals a whole universe of human abysses and tasks in connection with the relationship between "you and me" (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). *Parzival* is suitable in an educational context because it combines history with the general and the individual. The developmental progression is more easily seen than in a modern novel in that the medieval world picture is strictly formed and inward-looking (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). The story ends in an idealized conclusion with Parsifal's integration into the world. Furthermore, this work offers many opportunities, from a language-teaching perspective, for essays, exercises on language and structure, historical studies, and questions on literary form (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12).

Craydon (1994:14) writes that psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli, a student of Jung, describes how the curative power of myths and archetypal stories can unify and heal the fragmented modern psyche. They have the power to connect us with that new Self which is born at puberty. They can connect our hearts with that which is great within each of us (Craydon, 1994: 14). Joseph Campbell (cited in Sussman, 1995: 1) writes that medieval stories are "the founding myths of Western civilization...because there is no fixed law, no established knowledge of God, set up by prophets or priests, that can stand against the revelation of a life lived with integrity in the spirit of its own brave truth".

According to Francis Edmunds (1996: 257) *Parzival* is a saga of post-Christian times. The heroes of old were godlike, already equipped for their true tasks. However, Parsifal stands midway between old and new; between two loves, the one born of the senses and the other born of Christ (Edmunds, 1996: 257, 258). Edmunds (1996: 261) states that Parsifal is caught midway between the call of the senses and the call of the spirit; between the grace and beauty of Condwiramur, and the vision of the suffering Anfortas.

2.4.3 Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*

The text studied in Waldorf schools is the *Parzival* written by Wolfram von Eschenbach. In the English world, this text is studied in translation, and even in German-speaking countries (Mustard and Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xiv) in translations into a more modern German idiom. It was written in Middle High German (Querido, 1991: 1) and contained a complicated structure and diction (Mustard and Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xv). There are various versions of the Parsifal story, the most well-known being *The story of the Grail*, by the popular twelfth century French writer of courtly romances, Chrétien de Troyes (1991), sometimes also referred to as *Perceval the Welshman* (Querido, 1991: 1); Wolfram von Eschenbach's story; and the Wagner opera of the same name. Mustard and Passage (in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xiii) however, feel that the opera has a pretentiously moralizing libretto, alien in spirit to the literary work it claims to represent. Von Eschenbach's version is the complete story, recreated and adjusted from Chrétien's, as his tale was left unfinished (Hatto, in Von Eschenbach, 1980: 7). Chrétien's poetic version tells the story from a microscopic perspective, with minimum reference to names and heavenly occurrences (Querido, 1991: 1). Wolfram's tale, on the other hand, is macrocosmic, with almost every adventure linked to its corresponding stellar constellation (Querido, 1991: 1, 2), and involves over 200 characters (Querido, 1991: 70). Both tales, however, share the fundamental elements of an exciting story: spectacular battles, powerful love themes, heartbreaking sorrow, dramatic contrast between good and evil, and the search for the loftiest ideals of mankind. The action takes place against the setting of castles, forests, lakes, and mountains (Querido, 1991: 2).

Parzival was most likely composed between 1197 and 1211 (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xiii, xv). It seems to have been widely known in the medieval world, as seventeen complete manuscripts and more than fifty fragments survived (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xiii). However, most of the Grail stories were originally passed on by word of mouth, bards and minnesingers singing and reciting these stories (Querido, 1991: 2). Wolfram's *Parzival* was published in printed form for the first

time in 1477 with the development of the art of printing. (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xiii).

The events in *Parzival*, however, take place during the ninth century, as Von Eschenbach clearly indicates (Querido, 1991: 15). It was a time that marked a turning point in the development of Europe and the Middle East, with rising tension between the Christian Holy Roman Empire and the expansion of the Arab world (Querido, 1991: 15). Parsifal's father, Gahmuret, is very much attracted to the court of the Baruch, which has echoes of Harun al Rashid, under whose guidance the Arab world expanded (Querido, 1991: 15). Feirefis, Parsifal's half-brother, lives in the East, and his mother is a Moor. He is indeed a very powerful and wealthy Moorish general with an enormous army under his command (Von Eschenbach, 1961).

Mustard and Passage (in Von Eschenbach, 1961: vii) state that the scope of Wolfram's *Parzival* is greater than any medieval literary work, except perhaps for Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and that "tantalizing mystery besets every side of this poem" (in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xv). Wolfram includes in his story most of the important aspects of human existence, worldly and spiritual (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: vii). Von Eschenbach portrays so many highly individualized personalities in his story that there is room for almost every possible human circumstance. The world of childhood is represented by the young Parsifal, and by Obilot and her young friend Clauditte. The medieval man's world of battles and tournaments, disagreement with the enemy, and unwavering loyalty to friends and kinsmen are also represented here. The woman's world of joy and sorrow, and love for husband and children, can be found in this story. The experience of cruelty and suffering are seen in the scenes between Sigune and the dead Schionatulander, and in Herzeloide's grief at the loss of Gahmuret. Herzeloide in fact means heart-sorrow (Querido, 1991: 5). Parsifal's long search for the Grail represents man's search for that which is beyond human existence. Finally, the story also represents the concept of a devoted society serving the Grail and a sphere spiritually exalted above the normal realm of human life (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: vii).

The greatest ideals of knighthood are displayed in *Parzival*. The story tells of the courage and courtesy of the men, and the gentleness and modesty of the women. It reflects the respect for King Arthur's world of knightly virtues, as well as the reverence for the sphere of the Grail. Mustard and Passage (in Von Eschenbach, 1961: viii) writes that *Parzival* also contains much that is modern in the inner development of the hero. They claim that Von Eschenbach's tale is the first one in Western European literature to show the personal development of the main character. Wolfram's tale is moreover unique in its treatment of the relationship between the sexes (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach: 1961: viii). In traditional medieval romances, love was usually an extra-marital experience, but in *Parzival* love and marriage are synonymous. Extra-marital relationships in this story are usually light in tone, as in the relationship between Gawain and Antikonie, or it is associated with punishment and misery, as in the relationship between Anfortas and Orgeluse. The ideal relationship, which is love in marriage, is treated with great sympathy and tenderness by Von Eschenbach (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: viii).

Mustard and Passage (in Von Eschenbach, 1961: ix) further claim that Wolfram's treatment of children is also unique in medieval literature, and they find his interest in children quite modern. His portraits of children show a keen and sympathetic insight into their minds, and here one could mention in particular Parsifal as a young boy, little Obilot, and the child Lohengrin.

Wolfram's treatment of the Grail theme differs from the traditional medieval presentation of this subject (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: viii). Von Eschenbach does not ascribe any dualism and asceticism to it. The Grail King may marry and have children; the knights of the Grail carry out the calling of knighthood and may even leave the Grail castle for lengthy periods to become a lord of land left without a ruler. They may also marry and have children. The women in the service of the Grail are free to leave and to marry, although their children will be expected to return and to serve the Grail. Trevrizent urges Parsifal to continue the practice of knighthood even while he is

searching for the Grail. The world of the Grail is not set in opposition to life in the everyday world. Wolfram hereby confirms the goodness and meaningfulness of life, and illustrates that the sphere of the Grail is simply another aspect of human existence (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: vii, ix).

Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: ix) also claims that *Parzival* differs from other epics in that it is not a story about what happened in humanity's past, but about what can happen in its future. He continues to say that *Parzival* does not belong as much to literary tradition as to a body of initiation practices, in that it forms a guide by which the individual can find the way to spiritual worlds (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: ix).

Parzival is a carefully structured work (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: ix). It is a chivalric romance of 24 810 rhyming couplets (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xi) and is divided into sixteen "Books" or chapters. Each of these is subdivided into units of thirty lines each with almost mathematical precision. This meticulous external arrangement is paralleled by a carefully constructed inner structure (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: ix). Wolfram creates a balance between Grail circle and Arthurian circle, and between their two main representatives, Parsifal and Gawain. The main thread of the work is never completely forgotten, even in the chapters dealing primarily with Gawain's adventures. Von Eschenbach weaves many parallels between the Grail world and the Arthurian world into the story. Mustard and Passage (in Von Eschenbach, 1961: ix) mention the example of the Castle of Wonders and the Grail Castle for instance.

Little is known about Wolfram. He was probably born around 1170 (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xv), and possibly did not live beyond 1220 (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xvii). There were several towns named Eschenbach, but the one associated with Wolfram was a little village near Ansbach, which has been known as "Wolfram's Eschenbach" since 1918 (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xvii). There is no doubt that Wolfram was a knight (Mustard & Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xviii), as can be seen from the detailed descriptions in his book. Von

Eschenbach claimed that he could neither read nor write (Querido, 1991: 3). He tells us that he heard the story of *Parzival* from a man named Kyot from Toledo in Spain (Querido, 1991: 3).

2.4.4 Themes and symbolism in *Parzival*

Two versions of the name Parsifal indicate the essential character of the hero as well as the challenges he has to face (Querido, 1991: 5). Parzival (or Parsifal), originally from the Persian, means pure fool, one who lives in dullness within his physical surroundings, unaware of supersensible reality (Querido, 1991: 5). Perceval, originally from the French, means piercing the veil, and refers to one who seeks the light, piercing through the darkness of a dull consciousness (Querido, 1991: 5). Wolfram describes Parsifal in the beginning as being foolish and dull (Querido, 1991: 25). Through a number of agonizing ordeals, his dullness gives way first to doubt and vacillation and then to painful struggle as he searches for truth. Finally, he awakens to his true task and realizes the harm he has done to others. Wishing to atone for his deeds, Parsifal rises to an inner state of soul-fullness, where he is able to bestow love and healing on his fellow human beings (Querido, 1991: 25).

The theme of death plays an important role in Parsifal's evolution of consciousness (Querido, 1991: 5). Parsifal's mother, Herzloyde, gives birth to him after her husband, and Parsifal's father, Gahmuret, has deserted her and subsequently met his death in battle. She raises Parsifal in isolation in the Soltane forest. Here he grows up very interested in the physical world around him, but he possesses a dullness of soul which prevents him from participating in the joys and sorrows of those around him (Querido, 1991: 6). When Parsifal leaves the forest in search of Arthur's court, Herzloyde falls down dead, unbeknownst to her son. This is Parsifal's first experience of death, and he is indirectly responsible for his mother's death. Parsifal's subsequent adventures are coloured by dullness, guilt, and death, until an inner awakening occurs in his soul (Querido, 1991: 7).

Parsifal is also indirectly responsible for the death of his cousin Sigune's beloved, the knight Schionatulander, who is in fact in the service of Parsifal's household (Querido, 1991: 7, 8). Schionatulander runs after Sigune's dog, and in the process is killed by another knight called Orilus. Orilus is in pursuit of Parsifal, whom he believes has dishonoured his wife. He mistakes Schionatulander for Parsifal, and kills him. Later Parsifal comes across Sigune holding the dead Schionatulander in her lap, in the manner of the Pieta (Querido, 1991: 80).

Parsifal's third encounter with death involves killing the Red Knight by a stroke of good luck. He thereby usurps the knight's position without going through the necessary inner discipline and catharsis involved in acquiring knighthood (Querido, 1991: 9). At this stage of the tale, death holds no meaning for Parsifal, and his actions continue to reveal a profound lack of compassion (Querido, 1991: 9). Querido (1991: 10) states that many of Parsifal's adventures are archetypal images of soul experiences that are common today. The psyche of modern man is prone to dullness of soul, and an insensitivity to death and the suffering of others (Querido, 1991: 10).

The central chapter in the story is Parsifal's first visit to the Grail Castle (Querido, 1991: 11). It was not Parsifal's intention to go to the Grail Castle. He was led there by his horse. The castle stands on a mountain and is hidden from sight. The Fisher King, who is also the Grail King, invites Parsifal to spend the night at the castle. Upon entry, Parsifal realizes that the inhabitants of the castle are filled with sorrow because Anfortas, whose name means robbed of strength (Querido, 1991: 11), the Grail King, is ill and can no longer fulfil his sacred duties. It was known to the inhabitants of the castle that a "pure fool", should he ask the right question ("Uncle, what ails thee?"), would be able to heal the king. However, although Parsifal witnesses the dramatic events associated with the Grail, he remains dumb. The following morning he finds himself all alone in the castle, and is rudely ejected when the draw bridge is pulled up before he has crossed it completely. Querido (1991: 11) tells us that Parsifal is not yet ripe to ask the healing question. His former dullness is now replaced by a long period of doubt and suffering. Parsifal is destined to be the next Grail King, and his awakening is brought about by

suffering until he is eventually ready to receive the Grail teachings from the wise hermit, Trevrizent (Querido, 1991: 12).

Trevrizent tells Parsifal that partaking of the Grail is the basis for true spiritual communion among the living and the dead. However, it also feeds each one according to his own individual need (Querido, 1991: 13). In this way, harmony is established between the individual and the community, between the self and society. The process is a gradual one (Grail – gradalis – gradual) (Querido, 1991: 13), leading from dullness to doubt and finally to spiritual enlightenment.

Querido (1991: 13) points out that in recent decades humanity has experienced an astoundingly rapid progress in the areas of science and technology, as well as an ever more acute “soul-sickness” on an individual level. He states (1991: 13) that the modern soul cannot live anew in the spirit unless it consciously faces the “nothingness”, the “abyss” within his own being. Today it cannot be a matter of faith. It must be a question of experience, of consciously treading a path (Querido, 1991: 13). Parsifal’s quest for the Holy Grail therefore translates in strong images the experiences that each modern soul must go through along a course of inner death and resurrection (Querido, 1991: 13).

Querido (1991: 21) states that in the Grail sagas seven levels of understanding can be distinguished. Level one constitutes the plot, the action, the storyline, and the content, and can be appreciated by anyone. Level two consists of the language and, in the case of *Parzival*, the poetry of the text. Wolfram and Chrétien’s original works in Middle High German and Old French respectively, are regarded by scholars as examples of the exquisite poetry of the Middle Ages (Querido, 1991: 23). Level three deals with the psychological significance of the interplay of the characters. The fourth level pertains to the portrayal of the individual characters in the course of successive incarnations. Level five deals with the historical aspects of the stories. Level six involves the story’s symbolism, e.g. the spear, the chalice, and Anfortas’ sword, all carry symbolic significance. Finally, level seven represents the esoteric understanding of the Grail sagas (Querido, 1991: 23, 24). One would of course not touch upon all seven levels in the

classroom. However, *Parzival* is rich in symbolism, and from a language-teaching perspective is an ideal text.

Wolfram's story from the outset links the East with the West (Querido, 1991: 72). Gahmuret, Parsifal's father, marries a Moor called Belacane, who gives birth to Parsifal's half-brother, Feirefiz. Belacane, Feirefiz, and the Baruch, in whose service Gahmuret serves as a knight, represent the East. Parzsifal, and his mother, Herzeleide, represent the West (Querido, 1991: 72).

Parzival contains many references to certain birds which had symbolic meaning during the Middle Ages (Querido, 1991: 73). When Parsifal leaves the Grail Castle after his first unsuccessful visit, he hears a voice shouting after him, calling him a goose. According to Querido (1991: 73) the goose signifies the lowest rung on the ladder of development. The silly goose symbolizes an unawareness of the supersensible world, and is still fettered to those aspects which are visible and audible to the senses. Parsifal is therefore still at the beginning stage of his path of inner development (Querido, 1991: 73). The peacock appears often in connection with characters connected to the Grail family, e.g. the Grail King, when Parsifal first encounters him as a fisherman, wears a peacock feather in his hat. Kundry, who is beastly in appearance, but richly attired, also wears peacock feathers in her hat. The peacock's plumage, studded with hundreds of colourful eyes, symbolizes the attainment of Imaginative Consciousness, a state of consciousness which allows one to see into the spiritual world. This ability, often referred to as clairvoyance, no longer requires the use of the physical eyes, but the use of the spiritual organ of sight (Querido, 1991: 74). The swan is the symbol of Lohengrin, Parsifal's son. The grey, ugly signet grows into a stately, regal bird, a picture of elegance and purity. The swan provides its final symbolism when it sings its "swan song" just before death. Symbolically, this is an image of the next level of spiritual awareness, Inspiration, or in other words, clairaudience (Querido, 1991: 74). According to Querido (1991: 74), Intuition is the highest level of spiritual awareness. This is symbolized by the pelican, which is the root of Belacane's name. Belacane is the mother of Feirefis, Parsifal's half-brother. Intuition is a condition of being totally at one with the reality of spiritual manifestation, with its

essence (Querido, 1991: 74). It is believed that the pelican will sustain its young when there is a lack of food, by piercing its breast with its beak, and offering its blood to its young. In the Middle Ages, the pelican, as a symbol of ultimate sacrifice, was often used to represent the Christ (Querido, 1991: 74).

Parsifal is called a goose, a wolf, and a serpent at various stages in the story (Edmunds, 1996: 263). This signifies three stages of conquest that lay ahead of him, three battles that he needed to fight with himself (Edmunds, 1996: 264). As Parsifal leaves the Grail Castle on the morning after his first visit, having failed to ask the required question, the drawbridge is drawn up so fast that he almost falls off his horse, and he hears a voice shouting after him that he is a goose. Through the teaching of the hermit Trevrizent, Parsifal slowly begins to transform the goose into the dove, symbol and bearer of the Holy Spirit, and sign and symbol of the Templar Knights, the guardians of the Grail (Edmunds, 1996: 264). Trevrizent teaches Parsifal about the fall in Eden; the casting down of Lucifer; the descent of the Grail with the transmuted blood of Christ that flowed from his wounds at Golgotha; the destiny of Anfortas, and how he betrayed himself through his desire for the love of a woman (Edmunds, 1996: 264) thereby acquiring the wound in his groin that would not heal. Parsifal left Trevrizent filled with a new understanding and a resolve and patience to abide his time (Edmunds, 1996: 264). Parsifal confronts and overcomes in himself the goose in his thinking, the wolf in his feelings, and the serpent in his willing (Edmunds, 1996: 267).

2.4.5 The seven planets in *Parzival*

In Book xv of *Parzival* (Von Eschenbach, 1961: 406), Kundrie talks about the seven planets, listing them from furthest to nearest in relation to the earth, according to the traditional medieval concept of an earth-centered universe (Mustard and Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: 435). Kundrie uses the Arabic names (Von Eschenbach, 1961: 406) for the planets, which translated into English are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon (Mustard and Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: 435). The theme of the planets runs throughout *Parzival*, and each of the main characters represent

one or more planetary characteristic (Forward, 1995: 88). The story itself moves through a landscape, in which the various places correspond to a planet and influence the visitor accordingly (Forward, 1995: 88). W.J. Stein, the eminent Grail scholar, deals with this relationship between the planets and the story and characters in *Parzival*, in great detail in his seminal work on the ninth century and the Holy Grail (1991).

Traditionally, Saturn is the furthest from the Sun (Forward, 1995: 88). It is a planet of deep contemplation and memory, and also symbolizes the turning point of endings and new beginnings (Forward, 1995: 88). Parsifal displays quite a strong Saturnine quality when as a young boy growing up in isolation in the Soltane forest, he asks his mother, “Mother, what is God?” (Forward, 1995: 88). The Saturnine nature does not easily reach out to others, and Parsifal is a loner for quite a long time on his quest. He also displays the Saturnine quality of loyalty, and remains loyal to his wife, Condwiramur, throughout all his many adventures (Forward, 1995: 88).

The Moon, the polar opposite of Saturn, has reproductive and generating qualities (Forward, 1995: 89, 90). Anfortas, the Grail King, has a wound in the region of the body symbolized by the Moon, i.e. in the genitals (Forward, 1995: 89). The Moon is also associated with mirrors, and has the tendency to reflect (or mirror) everything back that comes towards it from the cosmos, and yet conceals behind its surface beings of mystery (Forward, 1995: 90). The Moon citadel, the Castle of Wonders, is the antithesis of the Grail Castle (Forward, 1995: 90). It is under the spell of Klingsor, who, like Anfortas, has taken a blow to the genitals, albeit self-inflicted.

Jupiter represents the thinker, symbolizing a gradual maturity in our thinking and understanding of life (Forward, 1995: 90). Parsifal has his most Jupiter experience in the cave of the hermit, Trevrizent (Forward, 1995: 92). Trevrizent educates Parsifal in the mysteries of the Grail, and everything he has experienced so far is placed into context for him (Forward, 1995: 92). Steiner (in Forward, 1995: 92) states that “when at the cosmic hour of destiny in the life of a human being, a certain relationship is established between

Jupiter and Saturn, there flash into human destiny those wonderful moments of illumination when many things concerning the past are revealed through thinking.”

Mercury represents a chaotic, flowing character and tends to react impulsively (Forward, 1995: 93). Gawain embodies the typical Mercurial characteristics in the story, and yet he also finds Mercurial solutions to seemingly intractable problems (Forward, 1995: 93). He manages to lift the siege of Bearosche, and he succeeds in bringing Parsifal out of his trance, covering the three drops of blood on the snow with a silk handkerchief.

Mars represents the talker, the agitator, the ruler of speech (Forward, 1995: 94). A typical example of this is the scene where Parsifal encounters the Red Knight outside Arthur’s court. Ither (the Red Knight) is a picture of rebellion (Forward, 1995: 94), making a claim on Arthur’s kingdom, and waiting outside on the jousting field for someone to take up his challenge. Parsifal, equally overconfident, albeit in ignorance, kills Ither for his armor with a javelin, a very Mars picture (Forward, 1995: 94).

The opposite of Mars is Venus, characteristic of the great listener, but also possessing the gift of speech and language, although different in quality from that of Mars (Forward, 1995: 95). The quintessential Venus moment in the story is when Condwiramur comes to Parsifal in the middle of the night (Forward, 1995: 95). She is moved to tears by the plight of her starving people. Parsifal is moved to compassion for her, which safeguards her from any other feelings developing in him while she is weeping in his arms.

Symbolically, the Sun moves in the realm of the soul, balancing and harmonizing the influence of the outer planets of Saturn, Jupiter and, Mars, which incline to free mankind from earthly limitations, with that of the inner planets of Venus, Mercury, and the Moon, which incline to bind us with the forces of earthly destiny (Forward, 1995: 96). Steiner (cited in Forward, 1995: 96) states that “no-one can understand what is contained in the flaming brilliance of the Sun unless he is able to behold this interweaving life of destiny and freedom in the light which spreads out into the universe and concentrates again in the solar warmth.” The cosmos within which the movement of the planets is integrated and

regulated by the Sun, is represented by the fixed constellations of the twelve signs of the zodiac through which the Sun moves (Forward, 1995: 97). In *Parzival* this is symbolized by the Round Table of King Arthur and his knights (Forward, 1995: 97). King Arthur and his court move from place to place, and every time Parsifal meets them it brings about major turning points in his life (Forward, 1995: 97). The first meeting with Arthur and his court launches Parsifal into knighthood. On their second meeting, Parsifal starts on his quest, and the third time they meet he leaves to take up his task as the Grail King (Forward, 1995: 97).

2.4.6 The Grail Castle and the Castle of Wonders

Another element of symbolism is the two castles. The Grail Castle stands high on top of a mountain. It is surrounded by a thickly wooded area and there is a clear lake at its foot. It is not easy to find, but it is easy to leave (Querido, 1991: 75). In contrast to the Grail Castle, is the Castle of Wonders. It is the home of Klingsor, the Black Magician. This castle is also on top of a hill, and is easily seen. It looks as if it is rotating all the time. According to Querido (1991: 75), the Castle of Wonders, is situated in southern Europe, in the desert region of western Sicily. Once one has entered this castle, it is almost impossible to leave. Hundreds of women are held prisoner here by Klingsor. Here Gawain, one of the story's main characters, confronts the forces of evil unleashed by Klingsor against the Grail Knights.

2.4.7 The heroes of the story

Querido (1991: 75) points out that the events in *Parzival* can be interpreted on different levels. The story should not be seen merely as a physical reality in the sense-perceptible world. Both Parsifal and Gawain are called upon to awaken from their dream-like consciousness (Querido, 1991: 76). The three heroes in the story represent three paths of cognition: Parsifal, representing the Western man, needs to awaken from dullness and doubt, to certainty and insight. Gawain represents the man of the heart, the healer, the man of the middle realm of feeling. In finding his balance, he is able to deal with the

forces of evil unleashed by Klingsor. Feirefis represents the wealth and wisdom of the East. He represents the man of action who is initially unable to see the Grail, but who falls in love with the Grail Bearer, Repanse de Schoie. Symbolically, these three characters are one, and represent the quest for the Grail, in thinking, feeling, and willing (Querido, 1991: 77).

2.4.8 The women of the Grail

The Quest for the Holy Grail is a pilgrimage on the path of love that leads eventually to the realization of the highest ideal (Querido, 1991: 81). The theme of love in its manifold levels weaves a golden thread throughout *Parzival* (Querido, 1991: 81). Seven women play archetypal roles in the story, and each of them is connected in one way or another with one or more of the three heroes, Parsifal, Gawain, and Feirefis (Querido, 1991: 81). According to Querido (1991: 82), these seven women, who can be said to represent the seven colours of the rainbow, are instrumental in bringing about the inner development of the three main male characters.

Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xv) states that the women of the Grail are representatives of the soul qualities necessary for transforming the self, for realizing that true individuality lies in coming to know ourselves as human spiritual beings. None of the female characters in *Parzival* are passive. They are all receptive, and bring about in the reader a realization of a new, active sense of the quality of radical receptivity (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xv).

Sigune is the woman whose special gifts allow her to read the cosmic script (Querido, 1991: 82). This script was inscribed in precious stones on the leash of the dog given to her by her beloved, Schionatulander. Querido (1991: 82) writes that Schionatulander's name implies that he was a messenger of Isis, the goddess who represents the Egyptian Cosmic Mystery Wisdom. It was his task to bring this cosmic knowledge to earth for Sigune to interpret (Querido, 1991: 82). Sigune therefore symbolizes the human soul seeking to learn the cosmic wisdom of the stars. When the dog escapes, Schionatulander

runs after him and is subsequently killed by Orilus. This prevents Sigune from fulfilling her task (Querido, 1991: 83), and we encounter her from here on in the story in a pièta-like gesture with her dead beloved in her arms. The ancient mystery wisdom represented by Sigune and Schionatulander had ebbed away since man was no longer able to interpret it. This is symbolized by the early death of both Schionatulander and Sigune (Querido, 1991: 83). However, it is also Sigune's task to help Parsifal to awaken to his true destiny (Querido, 1991: 83). She is the first one to tell him his real name, as his mother simply called him "bon fils, cher fils, beau fils" (good son, dear son, beautiful son). Sigune also tells him that he is of a noble and wealthy family, and that he is destined to wear a crown. Finally, she makes him aware of his insensitivity towards the Grail King, declining to ask the question that could have healed him.

Belacane, Gahmuret's first wife, and mother of Parsifal's half-brother, was a Moor, and a queen in her own right. She symbolizes fortitude, sacrifice, and faithfulness. She represents the intuitive wisdom of the East (Querido, 1991: 85). When her husband abandons her, Belacane devoted her life to the care and upbringing of her son, Feirefis. Feirefis is streaked black and white "like the magpie's plumage" (Von Eschenbach, 1961: 32, 33). Feirefis' destiny is realized when Parsifal chooses him to accompany him back to the Grail Castle (Querido, 1991: 86). As the mother of Feirefis, Belacane is the one who leads the intuitive wisdom of the East to meet the conscious path of the West (Querido, 1991: 86).

Condwiramur, whose name is derived from the French, "conduire à l'amour" (one who leads to love), lives up to her name. She becomes Parsifal's wife, and through her he comes to an inner experience of love (Querido, 1991: 86), despite being separated from her for long periods of time. Their relationship is almost idyllic in character (Querido, 1991: 86). They have two sons, Lohengrin, who becomes the Swan King, and Kardeiz.

Orgeluse de la Lande's name is also derived from the French, from "orgueilleuse de la lande", which means, the proud one on the heath (Querido, 1991: 870). She makes Gawain's life unbearable, but through compassion, tolerance, and love (Querido, 1991:

87), Gawain eventually makes her his wife. However, through his ordeals with Orgeluse, Gawain develops the strength of character to fulfil his true task of conquering Klingsor, the magician, and his Castle of Wonders (Querido, 1991: 87).

Répanse de Schoie, whose name is derived from the French, *celle qui répand la joie*, means the one who spreads joy (Querido, 1991: 88). She is the bearer of the Grail, and is described as a very beautiful woman. She eventually becomes the wife of Feirefiz. Her lineage is derived from many of the Grail's major personalities. Her father is Frimutel, who is also the father of Anfortas, Trevrizent, and Herzeloyde. Frimutel is the grandfather of Sigune and Parsifal. The unification of Feirefis, who represents the wisdom of the Orient, and Répanse de Schoie, the bearer of the Grail, epitomizes the gradual influence of the Christ Mysteries throughout the world (Querido, 1991: 88). Their son, Prester John, is said to have carried the Grail Mysteries to the East (Querido, 1991: 89).

Kundry, the messenger of the Grail, is torn between the extremes of her sensual and spiritual nature (Querido, 1991: 89). It is Kundry who seduces Anfortas, thereby bringing about his ruin. She symbolizes the battle of the torn, restless and impulsive soul who struggles to find well-being and harmony (Querido, 1991: 89). It is Kundry, as temptress, who makes it possible for the knights of the Holy Grail to confront and overcome evil (Querido, 1991: 90).

Querido (1991: 90) points out that we see in the seven central female figures the fullness of womanhood. The seven aspects of the eternal feminine are woman as reader of the cosmic script, woman as ideal wife, as priestess, as sorrowful widow, woman as noble sacrifice, as shrew, and as temptress striving for redemption (Querido, 1991: 91). These abilities to bring beauty to life, to struggle to overcome evil, to love unconditionally, to suffer, to encourage and inspire, to give birth, to nourish and protect, to lead, and to sacrifice, are all expressions of the archetypal feminine (Querido, 1991: 90).

2.4.9 Gawain

According to Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xvii) that which unites the individual soul with the World Soul lies in the realm of the heart, which in *Parzival* involves the adventures of Gawain. Gawain represents the heart aspect of Parsifal. The transformation of soul life from individual matters alone to a concern for the Soul of the World takes place through uniting cognitive capacities that are spiritually-oriented with the life of feeling, centered in the heart (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xviii). The heart is also where a commingling of the individual soul with the Soul of the World takes place (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xviii), and when Gawain first appears in the story we learn that he is a healer. He heals a wounded knight with herbs, and he is also responsible for healing on a deeper level, his beloved, Orgeluse. Gawain falls in love with Orgeluse from the moment he sees her, and continuous to love her, in spite of her constant and vociferous rejections (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xvii). He sees deeply into her soul and realizes that something is blocked. However, he does not try to persuade her to tell him what the matter is, and instead he acts in the world on her behalf in such a way that he brings about her healing (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xvii).

Gawain demonstrates through his actions how evil can be healed (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xvii). Gawain's trials in the Castle of Wonders are all pictures of coming face to face with the centre of the heart, which enables one to work in the right way with evil (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xvii). The Castle of Wonders is the epitome of evil (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xvii). It is a technological marvel (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xviii). In contrast to the Grail Castle, the Castle of Wonders can be seen by all. It appears to be rotating, the domed entrance hall is painted the colours of a peacock, in itself a significant fact, the floor is made of jasper and it contains a Bed of Wonders which moves around constantly on its four wheels made of rubies. Furthermore, in the tower is a magical pillar within which one can see for a radius of six miles whatever is happening around the castle. It is almost analogous to the present electronic technology which allows us to make telephone calls anywhere in the world (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xviii). However, imprisoned by the evil magician, Klingsor, to whom the castle

belongs, are four hundred women. There are men in the castle, but there is no relationship between them and the women. Furthermore, Klingsor's magical powers came about when he took up the study of the dark arts after being castrated by a cuckolded husband. He thus transformed his sexual energy into power (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xviii). Here is another image which we can relate to the present technological world (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xviii). According to Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xviii), the kind of technology prevalent today is not only excessively masculine, but of a deviated masculine character, lacking a healthy relationship to the feminine or soul element, which it nonetheless relies upon, and indeed feeds upon. Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xix) continues to say that it is as if a great deal of modern technology replaces what is supposed to be healthy relationships between the sexes, with materialistic comfort, i.e. a soul activity is in the process of being replaced by comfort.

Gawain shows how the imprisonment of the feminine can be released by entering into the realm of the heart (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xix). He undergoes a series of encounters in the Castle of Wonders that symbolize the coming to consciousness of desire, rather than simply acting out of desire (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xix). He encounters not only the Wonder Bed, but also attacks of arrows from unknown sources, a fight with a huge lion, as well as a man dressed in fish scales and carrying a club. Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xix) states that the closest we approach in ordinary life to becoming aware of desire rather than simply acting out of desire, is when we have obsessions of the heart. Obsessions, according to Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xix), take us into the heart of desire. This leads to the opening of the heart, and love is enlarged in such a way that love for another is never separated from love for the world (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xix).

2.4.10 Parsifal

Querido (1991: 78) states that sooner or later every modern human being has to face the abyss, and it might feel as if his soul forces of feeling, thinking, and willing are torn in three different directions. His thinking might not be in harmony with his feelings, and he might be unable to carry into action what he is feeling or thinking (Querido, 1991: 78). In

Parzival this is expressed pictorially when Parsifal, the thinking man, meets Gawain, the man of feeling, and a struggle ensues. However, Gawain knows how to deal with the conflict and the quarrel is resolved. Finally, when Parsifal has grown sufficiently wise, he is told that he needs to choose someone worthy to accompany him back to the Grail Castle. He chooses his half-brother Feirefis, and with this the story finds its resolution. The path from the individual to the community, from separateness and alienation to union and togetherness, is accomplished (Querido, 1991: 79). The powers of insight, the warmth of the heart, and the determination of the will are brought together in the service of the highest ideal, the service of the Grail (Querido, 1991: 79).

Parsifal has to do with the quest for spiritual knowledge through development of soul capacities; Gawain is concerned with the quest of soul to find heart through the right relationship with the feeling life (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xix). Feirefis, Parzival's half-brother, demonstrates the quest for a right relationship with the will life (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xix). Feirefis represents all those individuals who work in the world with great nobility, doing what they have to do, making significant contributions, but without any awareness of the spiritual world (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xx). Feirefis is a really splendid sight (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xix). His armor is covered with numerous precious jewels, his shield is made of asbestos, and on his helmet he displays a being called an Ecidemon, a dragon-like being, the inspiration for his action and noble work. Feirefis commands twenty-five armies. When Parsifal first encounters Feirefis, he does not see the individual spirit of this man, but instead he sees the Ecidemon, and meets Feirefis with hostility (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xx). Feirefis and Parsifal engage in a duel, which Feirefis wins. Parsifal's sword breaks, but instead of Feirefis killing Parsifal, now an unarmed man, they sit down to talk and discover that they are half-brothers. Feirefis stopped short of killing his own brother, albeit in ignorance of their true relationship.

According to Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xxi), it is precisely because of this event, this discovery of his half-brother and of his own humanity, that Parsifal is now able to return to the wounded Anfortas, and to ask him the healing question. He also takes his brother to

the Grail Castle where Feirefis discovers that initiation into the path of love is not for one's own sake, but for the sake of others (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xxi). Parzival can now speak out of the depth of his full being and not merely out of curiosity (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xxi). In Von Eschenbach's *Parzival* there is just the one question, "What ails thee?" Other Grail legends however, indicate that there are two more questions, namely "How can I help?" and "Whom does the Grail serve?" The first question expresses the capacity for true compassion; the second question reflects the action of love; and the third question deals with the nature of the Grail itself (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xxi, xxii).

2.4.11 The Holy Grail

There are various versions of what the Grail really is. One states that the Grail is the chalice of the Last Supper which Joseph of Arimathea used to receive the blood of Christ on the cross as the spear of Longinus pierced his side (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xii). Another legend tells us that during a great war in heaven, the Archangel Michael and his angels fought against the hosts of Lucifer. During the battle Michael struck the crown of Lucifer and from it a priceless precious stone fell to the earth. It was then fashioned into a vessel which eventually came into the possession of the Queen of Sheba (Querido, 1991: 54). In Von Eschenbach's *Parzival* the Grail is just such a stone (Mustard and Passage, in Von Eschenbach, 1961: xliv). Von Eschenbach also calls the Grail "lapsit exillis" (1961: 251). It is not clear however, exactly what the meaning of these words is. Mustard and Passage (in Von Eschenbach, 1961: 251) speculate that it is probably a contraction of various Latin words meaning "a stone fallen from heaven". Nevertheless, Von Eschenbach (1961: 251, 252) writes that the power of this stone enables the phoenix to rekindle its death-flame from which it rises into new life. He further claims that no-one will die within a week of beholding the Grail, and that old age and physical decay, except for grey hair, are suspended in those beholding the Grail (Von Eschenbach, 1961: 252). The Grail derives its greatest power from a small white wafer which a dove deposits on it every Good Friday and it has the ability to produce food and drink in any quantity for those in its presence (Von Eschenbach, 1961: 252). Mysterious messages and the names

of those called to the service of the Grail also appear around its edge which vanishes as soon as it has been read (Von Eschenbach, 1961: 252). Legendary origins of this sort have led to many quests for the literal object. A broader, more comprehensive view will perhaps show that the Grail, or the quest for the Grail, has to do, not with finding some mysterious relic, but possibly with finding a connection between the earthly world and the spiritual world (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xii). In many myths, the ongoing connection between the spiritual worlds and the material world is depicted as a miraculous vessel that provides abundant life (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xiii). It symbolises the transformation of the individual human being into a chalice, thereby making the individual responsible for maintaining the connection with the spiritual world, and this can be done only in completely individual ways (Sardello, in Sussman, 1995: xiii). Sardello (in Sussman, 1995: xiii) states that the many stories, myths, and sacred practices surrounding a holy vessel all anticipate and prepare the way for transferring cosmic responsibility to the individual.

2.4.1 The roots of the Grail tradition

The roots of the Grail tradition originate in ancient Western history but also contain elements of Eastern mysticism (Morgan, 2005: 9). It seems to possess a mirror-like quality that reflects the people and belief systems that have incorporated it into their world views (Morgan, 2005: 9). The Grail seems to be a metaphor for quest, struggle, ultimate achievement, and even sometimes failure (Morgan, 2005: 9). The Grail does not simply belong to the past. Its tradition is alive and continues to be active in the modern world (Morgan, 2005: 10).

Various English versions of the Grail sagas began to appear several hundred years after the French and German tales (Querido, 1991: 4). The most well-known is Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. It is an epic tale, first published in 1485 (Field, in Malory: 1986: i). Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, first appeared in 1859 (Kopito, in Tennyson, 2004: iii). Querido (1991: 4) writes that Tennyson's stories were not only read by Victorian audiences, but even today children in Britain are required to be familiar with

these tales. Several modern authors have incorporated various aspects of Grail imagery in their writings, notably T. S. Eliot, Solshenyzin, and John Steinbeck (Querido, 1991: 1).

Artists and composers were likewise inspired by the Arthurian romances and the quest for the Holy Grail. The German composer Richard Wagner's final masterpiece was the opera *Parsifal*, performed in 1882 (Morgan, 2005: 112, 113). The Pre-Raphaelites, an important and influential group of British artists of the 19th century, was influenced in their work by the literature of the Middle Ages, and in particular by Malory and Tennyson's publications (Morgan, 2005: 114 – 116).

Morgan (2005: 121 - 139) claims that the Grail became an obsession with many psychologists, writers, anthropologists, poets, mythographers, and film producers in the 20th century. The Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung, undertook a close examination of the themes and influences within the Grail tradition. It became a special area of study for his wife Emma, which culminated in the publication, posthumously, of a book (1986) she co-authored with Marie-Louise von Franz, a renowned Jungian analyst (Morgan, 2005: 128).

J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy has many undeniable parallels with the Arthurian romances (Morgan, 2005: 131). The central theme of this fantasy trilogy is the quest (Morgan, 2005: 131). The quest is dangerous and difficult, and can only be undertaken by one particular individual (Morgan, 2005: 131). Two of the titles in the trilogy have echoes of the Arthurian stories. *The fellowship of the ring* reflects the equality and sense of hope of the fellowship of the Round Table. *The return of the king* brings to mind the legend that King Arthur will eventually return to rule Britain (Morgan, 2005: 131). The mysterious wizard, Gandalf the Grey, most obviously resembles Merlin (Morgan, 2005: 131).

Two other books come to mind that has as its theme the quest for the Holy Grail. In 1982 Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln published a highly controversial book (1996: blurb on back cover). It was called "the shocking international bestseller" (1996: blurb on cover), and claimed to reveal "the most shattering secret of the last two

thousand years” (1996: blurb on back cover)! The authors set out to prove that the Grail really referred to the blood-line of Christ (Matthews, 2005: 155). They claim that a mysterious organization called the Priory of Sion’s members are the inheritors of the Holy Blood, i.e. the bloodline of Christ (Matthews, 2005: 155).

Dan Brown’s phenomenal bestseller (2003) is a fictional account loosely based on the book by Baigent, Lincoln, and Leigh (Matthews, 2005: 154). It was eventually made into a popular film.

The immensely successful children’s fiction series, *Harry Potter*, certainly also contain references which unmistakably echo elements found in the Arthurian quests (Novelguide: 2008). The heroic quest is the central theme in this series, and each of the novels contains an adventure that has as its outcome either the obtaining of some magical object, or the conquering of a dangerous foe. Dumbledore is a Merlin-like character, and the title of the first book, *Harry Potter and the philosopher’s stone*, clearly has a reference to the philosopher’s stone of the medieval alchemists (Novelguide: 2008). Harry’s scar is reminiscent of Anfortas’ (the Fisher King’s) wound (Novelguide: 2008).

There have been many films based on the Arthurian romances and other Grail quests. Some early examples are *Perceval le Gallois* (1978), *Excalibur* (1981), and *The Fisher King* (1991) (Morgan, 2005: 139). Of particular interest is George Lucas’ fantasy epic *Star Wars* (1977). The narrative has clear parallels with Arthurian legend (Morgan, 2005: 140). It is fundamentally a film about the sacred quest; Obi Wan Kenobi is a Merlin-like wise man; and “the force” can be likened to Excalibur (Morgan, 2005: 142).

Reference can also be made to Steven Spielberg’s *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). The themes of quest and healing run through the film, and it focuses on the more far-fetched and exotic theories connected with the Grail (Morgan, 2005: 145).

There can be no end, it seems, to novels, poetry, films, and such based on the quest for the Grail. A vast number of books are available dealing with the Grail in fiction and non-

fiction (Matthews, 2005: 147). *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* have been filmed and have been enormously popular. No wonder then that teenagers find the Grail-sagas and its related themes, of interest.

2.4.13 *Parzival* in America

Barbara Francis (1995: 99) writes that two themes in particular stand out as of profound value in the *Parzival* main lesson block for Class 11 students in New York City. The first theme is that of the single mother raising a child in an over-protected manner, and the pain that follows when the child needs to spread his wings and asserts his own independence (Francis, 1995: 100, 101), as reflected in the relationship of Herzeloide and Parsifal. Francis (1995: 101) writes that many students in her classes are familiar with families consisting of a single mother and an only child. They sympathize with Parzival because they are aware of the overprotective gestures of the mother, and the difficulty in finding their own independence without causing their mothers pain. The second theme is that of Parsifal proceeding with his life in such a way that he unwittingly causes distress and destruction in the lives of those around him (Francis, 1995: 102). The students point out this phenomenon in their own smaller social circles as well as in the context of New York City (Francis, 1995: 102). They cite the deaths of unintended victims during gang and drug wars, when innocent women and children are caught in the crossfire; as well as the simpler ways in which we hurt those around us unintentionally in what we do or say (Francis, 1995: 103). Francis (1995: 104) continues to say that students are often shocked when they realize that harm to another human being is just as devastating when it is unintentional as when it is intentional.

A survey conducted at twenty Waldorf High Schools in America in 2003 and 2004 reveals that the top five choices for the most positive academic experience include the *Parzival* main lesson (Gerwin, 2005: 61). Students singled out the *Parzival* main lesson in nearly every school that offered it (Gerwin, 2005: 61). It ranks as number five on the list, preceded by the humanities, especially history and English; Science, especially biology and chemistry; Mathematics, especially geometry; and the senior research project

(Gerwin, 2005: 61). Students were asked to list those subjects that had most influenced their thinking. The responses focused overwhelmingly on the main lessons taught in Classes 10, 11, and 12, especially the literature main lessons. Here again the *Parzival* main lesson in particular was mentioned (Gerwin, 2005: 62).

2.4.14 Conclusion

What then is the Holy Grail, and why is the *Parzival* main lesson so significant for Class 11 students? Joseph Campbell, probably the greatest mythographer of our age (Matthews, 2002: 299), turned to Wolfram's *Parzival* for an understanding of the Grail as a symbol of a metaphysical truth. He comes to the conclusion that the Grail stands for that sacred path that is between pairs of opposites, between fear and desire, black and white, good and evil (Matthews, 2002: 299). The Grail is to be found between these opposites, and it is here that we find the spontaneous natural impulse of a noble heart (Matthews, 2002: 299). For Campbell, the Grail is the inexhaustible vessel, the centre of life endlessly coming into being, energy pouring into creation, out of which civilizations arise (Matthews, 2002: 299). This image, related to ourselves, is then the place in us where life comes into being inside us (Matthews, 2002: 299). T. S. Eliot calls it "the still point of the turning world" (cited in Matthews, 2002: 299).

The study of mythology was for Campbell a sacred task (Matthews, 2002: 308). It allows one to move out of the dogma of formal religion into the spontaneous nature of one's own inner drama and vitality of being (Matthews, 2002: 308). Campbell (cited in Matthews, 2002: 308) says that the Grail represents "the fulfillment of the highest spiritual possibilities of the human consciousness". He continues to state that "the adventure of the Grail – the quest within for those creative values by which the Waste Land is redeemed – has become today for each the unavoidable task; for, as there is no more any fixed horizon, there is no more any fixed centre, any Mecca, Rome, or Jerusalem" (cited in Matthews, 2002: 308).

The striving quality of the search for the Holy Grail is embodied in the following verse by Rudolf Steiner:

**We are not granted
A rest on any step;
The active man
Must live and strive
From life to life,
As plants renew themselves
From spring to spring,
So man must rise
Through error to truth,
From fetters into freedom,
Through sickness and through death
To beauty, health and life.** (cited in Querido, 1991: 26)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A system of teaching which lays down beforehand the teacher's timetable and every imaginable limitation, actually, and moreover completely, excludes the teacher's art (Steiner, cited in Childs: 1991: 164).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This investigation intended to determine how the *Parzival* main lesson was interpreted and presented by two different teachers within the context of the wider Waldorf curriculum. The research was qualitative in nature and was conducted as a multiple case study at two South African Waldorf schools. In addition I also referred briefly to my own practice at the only other Waldorf school in South Africa where the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. The study focused on classroom observation, interviews with the teachers concerned, and classroom artifacts. The research was conducted from an interpretive orientation.

Steiner's expectations of teachers sometimes appear to be something of a paradox (Childs, 1991: 165). He stressed that the curriculum must be approached in such a way that the teacher should be able to recreate it himself and not regard it as dogma (Childs, 1991: 165). Steiner nevertheless expected the basic indications to be strictly observed and that teachers should not just do as they pleased (Childs, 1991: 165). According to Childs (1991: 165), Steiner stressed over and over again that the teacher should be able to "read" both the child and the particular situation, and should be able to act accordingly within the spirit of the Waldorf curriculum.

On the one hand, therefore, Waldorf teachers are required to work within a specific educational philosophy, curriculum, and didactic method (Childs, 1991: 166). On the other hand, they are encouraged to be free agents, albeit within the constraints of Waldorf methodology (Childs, 1991: 166). Childs (1991: 166) maintains that Steiner emphasized that teachers must have passion, inner mobility, be fired with enthusiasm for their task, and possess liberal proportions of inventive ability, resourcefulness, and imagination, as

well as a sense of humour. Above all, they must not be pedants, stiff and rigid in their thinking (Childs, 1991: 166). Rudolf Steiner wished the spirit of the curriculum rather than the letter to be maintained (Childs, 1991: 166). This research shows that it is indeed possible for the teacher to maintain freedom within the constraints of the Waldorf curriculum.

3.2 GOALS

The goal of this study was to investigate how the *Parzival* main lesson was interpreted and presented by selected teachers at two South African Waldorf schools. A sub-goal of this research was to examine the extent to which the interpretation and presentation of the *Parzival* main lesson linked with the broader goals of the Waldorf Curriculum.

3.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The Waldorf school movement is currently one of the fastest growing international school movements (What is a Waldorf school?, 2006; Trostli, 1998). There are approximately 1 200 Waldorf schools and about 1 600 kindergartens worldwide (Waldorf Education: a growing school movement, 2003), as well as 50 international full-time teacher training facilities (What is a Waldorf school?, 2006). There are presently 17 Waldorf schools in South Africa. My hope is therefore that this research will bring about a greater awareness of the existence of Waldorf education, and a clearer understanding of its principles, within the wider South African educational community.

This research is also significant for teachers within the Waldorf school movement because it provides a multiple case study, which includes two different South African Waldorf schools, of a specific section of the Waldorf curriculum. It highlights the different ways in which teachers can interpret the Waldorf curriculum, and reinforces Steiner's wish for the *spirit* of the curriculum rather than the letter to be maintained (Childs, 1991: 166).

3.4 METHODOLOGY

3.4.1 The Interpretive Paradigm

My research was conducted from an interpretive orientation. It investigated the way in which selected teachers interpreted and presented the Parsifal story, and how this manifested in classroom artifacts. According to Henning et al. (2004: 20), the researcher looks at different places and different things in order to understand a phenomenon, and this therefore made the interpretivist model ideally suited to my research, since I included two different schools in my research, and used classroom observation, interviews, and classroom artifacts in order to understand the interpretation and presentation of the Parsifal legend by these teachers. According to Henning et al. (2004: 20), interpretivist research is a communal process involving participating practitioners. They further state that unstructured observation and open interviewing therefore form an integral part of interpretivist research (2004: 20).

Over the last fifty-five years or so, a new research paradigm has emerged in the social sciences aiming to break out of the limitations imposed by positivism (O'Brien, 1998). This new paradigm is often referred to as the interpretive paradigm, and emanated from arguments against the traditional positivistic model (Schachinger, 2008). Theorists such as Blumer and Mead argued that the positivist approach took the meaning out of the analysis, and that the positivists looked at the how, but not the why (Schachinger, 2008). Schachinger (2008) further states that while positivism seeks to discover patterns at the macro-level, interpretive researchers look for meaning at the micro, or individual, level. Positivist analysis states that research is objective and that social realities exist if we would only strive to uncover them, whilst interpretive analysis claims that research is not objective in nature but is effected by the subjective viewpoints by which social realities are constructed (Hausbeck, cited in Schachinger, 2008).

The interpretive paradigm's emphasis is on the relationship between socially-engendered concept formation and language (O'Brien, 1998). It contains such qualitative

methodological approaches as phenomenology, ethnography, and hermeneutics (O'Brien, 1998). O'Brien (1998) continues to state that the interpretive model is further characterized by a belief in a socially constructed, subjectively-based, reality which is influenced by culture and history.

Interpretive inquiry aims at describing how people experience the world, the ways in which they interact, and the settings in which these interactions take place (Packer, 2008). This made interpretive inquiry an ideal model for my research, since my investigation focused on two classroom situations and the selected teachers' interpretation and presentation of a certain aspect of the Waldorf curriculum within the classroom. Cohen et al. (2007: 20, 21) state that an interpretive approach embodies particular distinctive characteristics: situations need to be examined through the eyes of the participants rather than those of the researcher; "thick descriptions" are essential as they highlight the complexity of situations; reality is multilayered and complex; multiple interpretations and perspectives are possible on single events and situations; events and individuals are unique and largely non-generalisable; and situations are fluid and changing, evolving over time, and are affected by context. Accordingly, I interviewed selected teachers in order to understand their actions within the classroom and their interpretation and implementation of the Parsifal story. The classroom artifacts added richness to the data, and the involvement of two South African Waldorf schools highlighted the uniqueness of each situation.

The interpretive paradigm is furthermore characterized by its concern for the individual (Cohen et al., 2007: 21). The fundamental concern of the interpretive paradigm is to comprehend the subjective world of human experience (Cohen et al., 2007: 21). According to Cohen et al. (2007: 21) efforts are therefore made to get "within" the person and to understand from inside. Packer (2008) states that an interpretive researcher wants to know how people take hold of, understand, and interpret events and artifacts.

Interpretive researchers begin with the individual and endeavour to understand his world (Cohen et al., 2007: 22). Theory should arise out of data generated by the research, and

should not precede it (Cohen et al., 2007: 22). Theory is built on experience and understanding of a given situation, and the emergent theory should make sense to those to whom it applies (Cohen et al., 2007: 22). In this way multifaceted descriptions of human behaviour are produced (Cohen et al., 2007: 22)

3.4.2 Auto-ethnography

Although I did not adopt an auto-ethnographic position I do refer anecdotally to my own teaching in this research. Auto-ethnography is a genre in which the researcher becomes the phenomenon under investigation (Duarte, 2007). According to Humboldt (2008), auto-ethnography is a demonstration of critical self-understanding, and of the self as influenced by the convergence of innumerable social and natural forces. Ellis and Bochner (cited in Duarte, 2007), state that auto-ethnography displays multiple layers of consciousness which connect the personal to the cultural. The researcher's personal experience becomes the focus of inquiry, clarifying the culture under investigation (Ellis and Bochner, in Duarte, 2007). Although my own practice was not the focus of this research, auto-ethnography does situate the self within the context of a culture or group, and makes it possible to study one's practice along with that of other members of the group (Duarte, 2007). Auto-ethnography aims at enabling the researcher to view and focus the self within the framework of a particular experience, in order to confront, understand, and move towards resolving possible contradiction between one's vision and actual practice (Johns, cited in Duarte, 2007). I therefore felt it necessary to refer anecdotally to my own practice in Chapter four as it added another perspective to the sample of the only two other schools in South Africa where the *Parzival* main lesson is taught.

Auto-ethnography has no pretence of objectivity since the researcher's own practice becomes the object under investigation (Duarte, 2007). As such, auto-ethnography has attracted a considerable degree of academic suspicion because it seems to breach certain qualitative research traditions (Holt, 2003). However, Coffey (cited in Holt, 2003) states that auto-ethnography can be justified as appropriate research since ethnographers have

acted autobiographically before without necessarily being aware of it, and had thus taken the genre for granted. Auto-ethnography not only helps the researcher to make sense of his individual experience, but may also provide additional insight into problems that might ordinarily be overlooked by the objective researcher (Autoethnography, 2008). As an experienced Waldorf teacher of fifteen years' standing, referring to my own practice added to my comprehending of the two other teachers' experiences, which perhaps would not have been possible by an outsider.

3.4.3 Method

The research was conducted as a multiple case study (Stake, 1988: 255) involving two Class 11 groups in two different Waldorf schools in South Africa. According to Stake (1988: 255), a case study is the investigation of a "bounded" system which usually involves any social entity that is circumscribed by parameters. This group or social entity presents a specific dynamic and relevance which may reveal information captured within these boundaries. Henning et al. (2004: 32) state that the boundaries are determined by the unit of analysis. They furthermore state that the aim of a case study is not simply to describe the unit, but to try to establish patterns and relationships, and the dynamic which warrants the inquiry. Therefore, a case is studied because the researcher hopes to unravel these patterns, relationships, and dynamic.

I consequently looked at two Class 11 groups as separate social entities bounded by similar parameters, i.e. Waldorf education and the *Parzival* main lesson. My aim was to describe these two units and to determine patterns and relationships which may have emerged in the course of my observation and investigation of these groups.

3.4.4 Participants

There are three Waldorf schools in South Africa that continue up to Class 12. In fact, at two of these schools there is a Class 13 so that the twelve-year Waldorf curriculum can be taught in its entirety, and matric is then added on as a thirteenth year. My research involved each Class 11 from two of these schools since I teach at the remaining school. There is only one class per grade in all three of these schools, and consequently all the students in Class 11 were involved. Group one had 18 students, consisting of 12 boys and 6 girls. Group two had 35 students, consisting of 20 boys and 15 girls. In the following chapter I describe shortly my own practice simply as a point of interest. This group had 26 students, with 10 girls and 16 boys. All the classes were of mixed gender and race. I had no choice in the selection of teachers, since the teachers at these schools were longstanding teachers who had been teaching the *Parzival* main lesson for a number of years already.

The two teachers were observed, videotaped, and interviewed.

3.4.5 Research design

The research consisted of three inter-related phases, i.e. observation, interviews, and artifacts.

- **Phase 1: Observation**

Merriam (1998: 94, 95) states that observation is a useful research tool provided that it involves a formulated research purpose, is carefully planned, is recorded systematically, and that checks and controls on validity and reliability are carried out regularly. She (1998: 95) further states that an outside observer might notice things that the participants are no longer aware of. Observation makes it possible to record behaviour as it is happening. What is observed is the researcher's version of what is "there" (Henning,

2004: 81) and therefore seems to be the best technique to apply when an activity or situation can be observed firsthand (Merriam, 1998: 96).

I observed the first five two-hour main lessons in the first week of the three-week *Parzival* main lesson block in the schools involved in this research. One of these two-hour lessons was also videotaped in both schools. Personally, I have taught this main lesson for the past eight years and so could also describe my own experience in the classroom in Chapter four. One of my own lessons was videotaped as well. I was particularly interested in observing the unfolding of Waldorf pedagogy in the classroom, and used an observation schedule for this purpose. The observation schedule is discussed further on in this chapter. My observational findings were triangulated with interviewing and artifact analysis.

- **Phase 2: Semi-structured interviews**

The observational phase of my research was followed by interviews with the two teachers concerned. Interviewing is one of the most common methods of collecting data in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998: 71). Obtaining specific information is the main purpose of the interview, i.e. trying to determine what is “in and on someone’s mind” (Patton, cited in Merriam, 1998: 71). Patton (in Merriam, 1998: 72) states that you can obtain information in an interview which you cannot directly observe, e.g. feelings, thoughts, and intentions. An interview can also lead you to an understanding of how an individual has organized his world, as well as the meanings people attach to what goes on in the world. The purpose of an interview is therefore to allow the interviewer to enter into the interviewee’s perspective (Patton, in Merriam, 1998: 72).

I wanted to determine how the two teachers interpret the *Parzival* material, and why they introduced it into the classroom in the way they did. It was for this reason that I observed the lessons first, before interviewing the teachers, as some of my interview questions were based on what I observed. I determined some essential questions (see questions

further on in this chapter) which I wanted to ask and added to these when I needed clarification on what I observed in the classroom.

- **Phase 3: Artifacts**

Lastly, I analysed classroom artifacts in the form of main lesson books. According to Merriam (1998: 112) documents are a “ready-made” source of data which is usually easily accessible to the researcher. Documents can contribute to uncovering meaning, developing understanding, and discovering relevant insights (Merriam, 1998: 133).

Main lesson books are the chief source of recording classroom work as well as the students’ own observations and opinions about the *Parzival* main lesson. By analyzing these books I had hoped to find patterns as well as the manifestation of Waldorf pedagogy in the way in which the teacher allowed the transfer of the material surrounding the *Parzival* main lesson.

3.4.6 Data generation

- **Classroom observation:**

Of particular interest here was the teachers’ presentation of the content in terms of Waldorf methodology and the required rhythm of the main lesson, as well as the manifestation of the teachers’ interpretation of the *Parzival* story in classroom practice.

The rhythm of the main lesson is usually divided into three phases (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). In the high school the first part consists of the morning verse, movement, speech exercises, and recall of previous material. The morning verse is a verse given by Rudolf Steiner specifically with which to start the day, and this same verse is used throughout the world in various translations. There is a morning verse for Classes 1 – 4, and another one for Classes 5 – 12. The morning verse is memorized by all students and teachers. The verse used in Classes 5 – 12 reads as follows:

**I look into the world,
Wherein there shines the sun,
Wherein there gleam the stars,
Wherein there lie the stones.
The plants they live and grow,
The beasts they feel and live,
And man within his soul
Gives dwelling to the spirit.**

**I look into the soul,
In inner depths it lives,
God's spirit lives and weaves,
In light of sun and soul,
In space of world without,
In depth of soul within,
To thee, oh spirit of God,
Will I seek in turn to ask –
That strength and blessing may
For learning and for work,
Within me live and grow** (Steiner, 1995: 47).

Traditionally, teachers greet each student by hand and by name as they enter the classroom. The teacher then lights a candle in reverence for the morning verse which is recited together by the teacher and students.

A main lesson should engage the student's willing, feeling, and thinking (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). Maher and Bleach (1996: 36) state that unless all three parts of the student's inner being, i.e. the thinking, the feeling, and the willing, are fully engaged, we are not educating the whole child.

Each main lesson therefore also consists of a rhythmic part, engaging the student's will. This serves to warm up the students, creates inner movement, and arouses interest in the activities of the classroom (Maher & Bleach, 1996: 36). In the high school, teachers often start with a couple of stretching exercises and even ball games from the Bothmer Gymnastics, or Spacial Dynamics, syllabus. Count Fritz von Bothmer was the gymnastics teacher at the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart (Childs, 1991: 196). He was asked by Rudolf Steiner to develop a system of gymnastics with the aims of imparting an enhanced experience of space, and of cultivating greater strength of will (Childs, 1991: 196). Steiner claimed that purposeful movements have a stimulating effect on the student's will (Childs, 1991: 107), and require a fair degree of alertness and concentration (Childs, 1991: 107).

This first phase of the main lesson includes speech exercises like tongue twisters and the memorization of a poem pertaining to the content of the main lesson. Practising individual sounds through tongue twisters at the beginning of the lesson enables the students to take hold of their speech organs in a more conscious way before continuing to recite poetry or prose (Jaffke & Maier, 1983: 5). The recitation of poetry also engenders in students an appreciation for the beauty of language (Schwartz, 1999: 285). The recitation of the morning verse, as well as the memorization of a poem or prose extract, trains the student's will, memory, and feelings (Childs, 1991: 107).

The speech exercises are usually followed by the recall of previous material. The activities involving repetition, practice, and habit are essentially will-activities, and these build up the powers of memory (Childs, 1991: 106). Steiner determined three golden rules for the development of memory: concepts load the memory; artistic activities build it up; and exercises of will strengthen it (Childs, 1991: 107). Recall of previous material is not simply a "retelling of yesterday's lesson". The review is primarily oral in nature, and is similar to what can be called the "Socratic dialogue" (Schwartz, 1999: 232). Bernard and Brogran (cited in Schwartz, 1999: 232) state that the Socratic dialogue "focuses on neither the teacher nor the student, but rather on a dialogical method of interactive learning". They conclude that the Socratic conversation offers a useful

structure for educational transformation and provides valuable insights into the nature of learning (Schwartz, 1999: 232). Waldorf teachers believe that a real conversation between the teacher and the student is an invaluable educational tool. Active recapitulation is therefore a major skill practised daily in the main lesson, and may even be done in other lessons (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

The second phase of the main lesson constitutes the introduction of new material and discussion thereof (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

The third phase usually occurs towards the end of the main lesson, and constitutes individual working (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20), either on a task set specifically for the classroom or on homework. These may include tasks such as clay modeling, drawing, painting, or written work. Students can work in groups or individually on their own.

A main lesson should also show a progression from willing, to feeling, to thinking (Blunt, 1995: 167). The main lesson structure and rhythm are the clearest and most systematic way of putting Steiner's educational thought into practice (Blunt, 1995: 168, 169). Teachers are not always successful in integrating this progression from willing, to feeling, to thinking, in a single main lesson (Blunt, 1995: 169), but it remains an ideal to be striven towards.

Steiner claims that until the age of about twenty, the will is bound up with man's body within the limbs and metabolism, i.e. the legs, arms, hands, muscles, blood, and breathing (Blunt, 1995: 93). In the adult, "the will relates itself to the outside world in that it realizes itself in external actions" (Steiner, cited in Blunt, 1995: 93). In the child, the will is connected with the very means of action, the limbs. It is therefore through action that the will is cultivated (Blunt, 1995: 93). Steiner pointed out many times that repeated action strengthens the will (Childs, 1991: 72). The will is not simply developed by haphazard action, but by carefully planned, daily repetition (Blunt, 1995: 93) of such activities as the recitation of the morning verse, speech exercises, and the daily recall. Steiner claims that fully conscious repetition cultivates the true will impulse because it

enhances the power of resolution and determination (Childs, 1991: 105). Steiner therefore recommended that teachers purposely set out to strengthen the will-forces of the students by daily repetition of certain tasks (Childs, 1991: 105). The performance of these daily actions makes the students inwardly firm and strong, as the powers of determination which are dormant in the subconscious are aroused by the conscious repetition of such actions (Childs, 1991: 106).

It is important to realise that while exercising the will, consciousness should be drawn into it in the form of feeling and thinking (Blunt, 1995: 94). Thinking and feeling must be vitalized by the will, and the will must be cultivated by feeling and thinking (Blunt, 1995: 94). Artistic activities are especially beneficial in this regard (Childs, 1991: 106).

Finally, Rudolf Steiner made certain suggestions for the colour of classroom walls. For the upper school Steiner suggested that walls should be painted in violet or lilac shades (Stockmeyer, 1991: 174-175). Kaller (in Glöckler et al., 2006: 289) suggests that architecture and design should ideally represent a functional image of life processes and serve people's needs. Since children are usually more susceptible to moods and colours than adults, the moods and colours which surround the child influence the way he acts (Kaller, in Glöckler et al., 2006: 289). According to Kaller (in Glöckler et al., 2006: 289), each age group has its particular fundamental soul mood, and therefore the colour design should resonate with the inner development of the child.

I consequently looked at some aspects of classroom practice that are Waldorf specific, as well as at how the teachers' interpretation of *Parzival* translated into classroom practice.

My observation schedule considered the following:

Baseline information:

1. Setting:

- Shape of classroom
- Colour of walls
- Seating arrangement
- Teaching aids, e.g. posters, illustrations, etc.

2. Participants:

- How many students?
- How many boys and how many girls?
- How long have these students attended a Waldorf school?

Interaction and activities:

1. Is there a sequence of activities?

- Greeting of students
- Morning verse
- Recall
- Introduction of new material
- Students working on their own
- Closing verse/ finish

2. Main lesson rhythm.

- Willing, feeling, thinking – is this reflected through various activities in the main lesson?

3. Teacher's interpretation.
 - How does this translate into the main lesson?
 - Does the teacher read or tell the story?
 - Does he point out the symbolism?
 - What is the main focus of the main lesson?
 - Artistic activities
 - Written work

- **Semi-structured interviews:**

I compiled the following questions, which were used as a basis in all the interviews. I added some additional questions as well, depending on what I observed during my classroom observation.

Interview questions:

1. What is the significance of *Parzival* within the Waldorf curriculum?
2. How many years have you taught this main lesson?
3. Do you work directly from the text, or do you simply tell the story?
4. How do you introduce the story in the first lesson?
5. Do you put the story within a historical context, or do you simply teach it as a myth?
6. What kind of written work do you usually give the students? Do they write summaries of the story? Do they do any other written work, e.g. compose their own myth; relate events to their own life's journey, or to modern, contemporary life? Do they write any poetry related to the story?
7. Do you give them any artistic activities, e.g. drawings, paintings, to do relating to the story?
8. Do you refer to the four temperaments and the seven soul types in relation to the characters in the book, as well as to the students' own characters?
9. What is your main focus in this main lesson?
10. Do you ever refer to other texts about Parsifal, e.g. the Chrétien de Troyes text?

11. What kinds of demands do you impose in terms of main lesson book presentation, e.g. contents page, borders, front cover.
12. How does the classroom work manifest into the main lesson books?
13. How do you proceed with the main lesson after the first week?
14. Did you have a connection with the Parsifal story before you started teaching it?
15. How do your personal beliefs about Parsifal as well as Waldorf education inform your teaching?
16. Biographical details: Any formal Waldorf training? How long have you been a teacher at a Waldorf school?

- **Classroom artifacts:**

A sample of main lesson books, in each case five main lesson books, representing more than ten percent of the class, was voluntarily obtained from the students. These were analysed in terms of content and artistic presentation. I was particularly interested to see how the teacher's pedagogy was reflected in the books, as well as the central theme of *Parzival*. All the books were photocopied with the permission of the students. Some parts of the books were also data-captured in colour. Colour copies were necessary in order to fully appreciate the artistic presentation of the content.

The artistic presentation of main lesson books forms an integral part of Waldorf methodology (Trostly, 1998: 272), since a minimum of textbooks is used in the main lesson, and students therefore create their own "textbooks" so to speak (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 22, 23). (See Appendix B.) Every subject in a Waldorf school should be permeated with artistic activity (Schwartz, 1999: 284). The ability to create something artistic is understood to be a perfectly natural endowment, and the assumption is there that every student is capable of drawing, painting, sculpting, carving, knitting, and dancing, in the same sense that students are expected to read, write, and work with numbers (Schwartz, 1999: 284). This makes it possible for a significant synergy to occur when subjects generally regarded as "academic" are approached with an aesthetic

sensibility, e.g. when a physics demonstration must be sketched beautifully as well as accurately (Schwartz, 1999: 284).

Although there is very little material available in terms of literature on how students should work in main lesson books, a tradition has developed in Waldorf schools worldwide in terms of what a main lesson book should “look” like (M. Rawson, personal communication, August 14, 2008). (See Appendix B.) A main lesson book is usually a softbound book with twenty-four to sixty blank A4-size pages. Some Waldorf high schools allow students to work on loose sheets of blank paper which are then filed in a display file (Schwartz, 1999: 228). Main lesson books are instantly recognizable anywhere in the world, because they look alike in so many ways, i.e. unlined pages filled with handwritten notes, and colourfully illustrated with coloured pencils or even water colour paint and pastel crayons; usually pages have artistically designed borders and strikingly illustrated front covers (Carlgren, 1981: 174, 183; Roseway Recorder, 2005: 4, 5; Roseway Recorder, 2006: 7, 8, 9). Teachers are therefore free to develop their own preferred way of how they would prefer students to work in main lesson books, but still within the parameters of the Waldorf “tradition” (Appendix B).

A main lesson book is blank when the student receives it. The student then fills it with content, e.g. compositions and illustrations drawn from the content of the main lesson (Schwartz, 1999: 228). The main lesson book serves as a text and an assessment tool. It forms the keystone to the Waldorf evaluative process (Schwartz, 1999: 228) in that it contains knowledge and skills imparted by the main lesson process, as well as serving as an evaluative tool for assessing to what degree the student has mastered that knowledge and skills (Schwartz, 1999: 228). The main lesson book is a text that is created together by the teacher and the student. It represents the quintessence of all that the student has learned in a main lesson block (Schwartz, 1999: 228). These books are collected by the teacher at the end of the main lesson block for assessment. Schwartz (1999: 229) recalls that he knows individuals who had kept their main lesson books and subsequently had shown it their grandchildren!

The main lesson book is a tool through which the student's will is able to be as involved as the student's life of thinking and feeling (Schwartz, 1999: 228).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Cohen et al. (2007: 183), data analysis involves organising, accounting for, and explaining, the data. In other words, making sense of the data, highlighting patterns, themes, and categories. Furthermore, they (Cohen et al., 2007: 184) state that data analysis already starts during the data collection stage.

As the intention of this research was to determine how the *Parzival* main lesson was presented and interpreted, within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum, the most important data came from classroom observation. I therefore presented the data in such a way that it mainly reflected the classroom situation. This was then supported and clarified by the interviews and classroom artifacts.

3.6 ETHICS

A concern for ethics is essential to all research. As a researcher one has a responsibility to ensure that one's research is ethical (Murray, 2006). Bassey (cited in Murray, 2006) suggests that research should be carried out within an ethic of respect for persons, respect for knowledge, respect for democratic values, and respect for the quality of educational research. The researcher must keep in mind that he is engaging in a social relationship with the participants. Good communication and mutual trust are therefore essential (Murray, 2006). Consequently, all participants in my research, i.e. the schools, teachers, and students were informed of the nature of my research. I obtained written consent from the two schools' College of Teachers, which is the governing body in a Waldorf school. I also had telephone conversations with the respective teachers confirming the dates and nature of my visits to their schools. Murray (2006) states that a central principle of ethical research is that of informed consent. The participants in my research therefore agreed voluntarily to participate in this research. The samples of main lesson books were

obtained voluntarily as well, as the students were asked to volunteer their books, as opposed to the teachers simply asking specific students for their books. Written consent was obtained from all the parties involved. Participants were given the option of withdrawing from the research at any time, and were assured of anonymity. There is a risk however when using video-cameras, namely that participants' identities may be revealed (Murray, 2006). Consent was consequently obtained from the teachers and students to video-tape some of the lessons. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and video footage were made available for comment, and member checking was encouraged.

3.7 VALIDITY

Triangulation involves collecting data from a wide range of sources using various methods (Arksey & Knight, 1999: 21). Arksey and Knight (1999: 22) state that approaching research questions from various angles has the possibility of engendering alternative explanations. Triangulation is one way to sustain confidence in the results of the research, and brings the researcher nearer to the research situation, which may contribute to a better understanding of the focus of the study (Arksey & Knight, 1999: 23, 25). I therefore used a triangulated, three-stage approach in my research: classroom observation, interviews, and artifacts. Member checking was encouraged and critical friends were asked to confirm the accuracy of the content of this thesis.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This investigation intended to determine how the *Parzival* main lesson was interpreted and presented by two different teachers within the context of the wider Waldorf curriculum. The research was qualitative in nature and was conducted as a multiple case study at two South African Waldorf schools. In addition I also referred briefly to my own practice at the only other Waldorf school in South Africa where the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. The research consisted of three inter-related phases, i.e. observation, interviews, and artifacts. The study focused on classroom observation, interviews with the teachers

concerned, and classroom artifacts. The research was conducted from an interpretive orientation.

The following chapter describes the data gathered from my observation of the first week of a three-week main lesson block at each of the two schools where my research was conducted. I also refer briefly and anecdotally to my own practice.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF DATA

By fixing these things in writing, anyone involved in the living flow of teaching cannot help experiencing the limitations of a project that by its very nature inhibits and restricts what ought to remain fluid (Richter, in Rawson & Richter, 2000: 6).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this study was to determine how the *Parzival* main lesson was presented and interpreted, within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum, at two different Waldorf schools in South Africa. In addition, I referred briefly to my own practice, since I teach at the only other Waldorf school in South Africa at which the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. The data was triangulated by using classroom observation, interviews, and artifacts. The most important data emanated from classroom observation since this study was interested in the presentation and interpretation of the *Parzival* main lesson, which necessarily take place mainly in the classroom. This was supported by interviews with the two teachers, and by looking at how the classroom work translated into the main lesson books. I therefore structured the data in such a way that it mainly reflects the classroom situation. This is then supported and clarified by the interviews and artifacts.

4.2 THE *PARZIVAL* MAIN LESSON

4.2.1 Introduction

In order to maintain the anonymity of the participants, I refer to the schools as School A and School B. The interviews with the respective teachers are referred to as Interview A (with the teacher at School A) and Interview B (with the teacher at School B). In all cases *School* refers to the Class 11 classes in these respective schools.

School A combined the *Parzival* main lesson with the Medieval History main lesson for the first time in 2007. The previous week the teacher had given the students a brief

outline of medieval history, and so they had some historical background before he introduced the *Parzival* story (Interview A, June 2007).

School B went on a camp the week before the start of the *Parzival* main lesson. It is customary in this school to take Class 11 on a camp, which they call the Parsifal journey, before teaching the *Parzival* main lesson (Interview B, March 2007). During the camp the students cycled and walked a certain route from Cape Point to the top of Table Mountain. The aim of the camp was to create a parallel between the students' experience on the camp and Parsifal's journey in the story. The teacher confirmed that often there were "beautiful synchronicities". There was for instance -

a bridge which you have to walk across, but it's got no stability. It's just a wobbly thing made of planks and it's quite long...about 20 metres...and it's very difficult to walk across without falling off...on the same day they [heard how] Parsifal has to move his horse across the rope bridge.

During the week of the camp a teacher (in this case it was not the teacher who would eventually teach the main lesson) recounted a part of the *Parzival* story every day, so that by the end of the week the students had heard the entire story. The teacher who took on the main lesson the following week was also on the camp. The students kept daily journals of the camp.

At my own school there is no such preparation for the *Parzival* main lesson. The students simply arrive for the main lesson with no prior knowledge of Parsifal. I usually spend the first day of the main lesson retelling the story of King Arthur, which many of the students would be familiar with if they attended a Waldorf primary school since King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table form part of the Class 6 curriculum. I also explore the phrase "the Quest for the Holy Grail". We look at the connection between the words "quest" and "question" which may lead to a discussion about what the ultimate question/s is/are that we may ask ourselves about the meaning of life and our individual destinies. I alert the students to the different manifestations of the Grail, i.e. a cup, a sword, a stone, a spear, and a dish. There may be a discussion of the controversial claims made by Baigent

et al. (1996) in their book which claims that the Grail is actually the bloodline of Jesus. The students take notes and write it up in their main lesson books for homework.

4.2.2 Classroom observation

Baseline information

- **Setting**

School A's classroom was rectangular with a tongue-in-groove ceiling that slopes slightly around the edges (Observation notes and Interview A, June 2007). The school was designed by Brian Johnson, an anthroposophical architect (Interview A, June 2007), who followed Rudolf Steiner's architectural indications. The walls were painted lilac, and the curtains matched the colour on the walls. The teacher indicated in the interview (June 2007) that this colour was chosen as it was suggested by Steiner as a suitable colour for high school classrooms. The wooden desks were arranged in a horse shoe formation, and on the wall next to the blackboard was a drawing depicting some aspects of the Class 11 main lessons.

School B's classroom was square and painted a very pale shade of blue. The curtains were a slightly darker shade of blue, almost baby blue. The teacher explained that Steiner's indications for the walls of the classrooms in the upper school were pale blues and violets. The teacher confirmed that this seemed to calm the students down. When this school was first started years ago, an old government school building was purchased, hence the square shape of the classrooms. The desks were loosely arranged in rows. There were students' drawings and paintings on the pin boards around two sides of the classroom. None of them related to the *Parzival* main lesson.

At my school, the high school classrooms are rectangular with tongue-in-groove ceilings that slope around the edges. The walls are painted lilac, and the curtains match the colour on the walls. The high school block was designed by an architect familiar with Rudolf Steiner's indications. On a pin board I display copies of illustrations by David Newbatt (2004) of various scenes from *Parzival*.

- **Participants**

School A had 18 students in the class: twelve boys and six girls. About a third of the students came up from the primary school into the high school. The rest of the students joined from other schools later on (Interview A, June 2007).

School B had 35 students in the class: twenty boys and fifteen girls. About a third of the class joined the school from other schools (Interview B, March 2007).

Class 11 in my own school had 26 students: ten girls and sixteen boys. Here again, about a third of the students joined from other schools.

Interaction and activities

- **Sequence of activities**

- (i) *Greeting and morning verse*

At School A the students lined up outside the classroom every morning. The teacher greeted them by hand, calling each student by name, and enquired here and there how they were. The students entered the classroom and remained standing behind their desks to say the morning verse. On two of the mornings the teacher lit a candle before the morning verse was said.

School B followed a different procedure. The class guardian took the register each morning, greeting the students casually as she entered the classroom. Once she had taken the register and made some announcements, she asked the class to stand and say the morning verse. She would then leave the classroom and the main lesson teacher would take over, greeting the students casually as they remained seated.

At my school I follow a similar sequence to School A. My students also line up outside the classroom. I greet them by hand and by name as they enter the classroom. Inside, they remain standing behind their desks. As soon as they come to order, I light the candle for the morning verse. We say the verse together, after which I give them permission to be seated.

At all three schools, the same morning verse, as was given by Rudolf Steiner, was used.

(ii) *Speech exercises*

No speech exercises were done in the week that I observed the *Parzival* main lesson at School A.

School B did speech exercises on two days during the week of my observation. On both occasions the teacher gave them some loosening up exercises to do, e.g. shaking their hands, rolling their shoulders, and lifting their heels slightly off the ground while leaning forward with their bodies. The one speech exercise was the singing of a song which they had sung during the camp, and the other exercise involved the teacher reading some phrases from chapter 10 of *Parzival*, which the students had to repeat after him.

I give my students daily some breathing exercises and loosening up exercises like rolling their heads to the right and then to the left, and stretching up towards the ceiling with their arms above their heads. I vary the breathing exercises so that they do not do the same exercise every day. The one exercise goes like this: breathe in for four counts, hold the breath for four counts, and then breathe out for four counts. Another, more difficult

breathing exercise that I use, which is one given by Steiner (1972: 25), is to let the students breathe in for three counts, then breathe out for six counts, and then hold the breath for nine counts. The stretching exercises are also varied daily. Sometimes I ask them to roll their bodies down very slowly until they can touch the floor, and then come up slowly, vertebra by vertebra, until they bring up their heads last. On other days, especially if they seem rather lethargic, I ask them to jog on the spot for twenty counts. We then proceed with the speech exercises, which start with some tongue twisters, before going on to the poem. For the *Parzival* main lesson I work with a poem by Steiner (cited in Querido, 1991: 26) every day, which the students eventually memorise by the end of the main lesson. We work on it line by line, paying careful attention to clear pronunciation. There are various translations in English of this poem. The translation that I prefer, is this one:

**We are not granted
A rest on any step;
The active man
Must live and strive
From life to life
As plants renew themselves
From spring to spring;
So man must rise
Through error to truth,
From fetters into freedom,
Through sickness and through death
To beauty, health and life.**

(iii) *Recall*

The teacher at School A used various ways in which to do the recall of the previous day's work. On the Monday morning he asked them to try and remember anything interesting or amazing from the previous week's study of Medieval History. He wrote the subjects on the board as they called them out: knights and castles; St. Francis of Assisi; The Nika Revolt; the dawn of the Middle Ages; Constantinople; the Huns; the fall of Rome; the building of the Hagia Sophia; Eleanor of Aquitaine; and Charlemagne. He asked the students to elaborate a little on the subjects as they came up.

On Tuesday morning the students were asked to enter the classroom quietly, leaving their bags outside, and to sit down behind their desks. The classroom was dark, with the lights off and the curtains drawn. On the floor, in the centre of the classroom, the teacher had arranged a circle of sixteen burning tea candles around a sword, a shield, and a helmet. The candles symbolized the sixteen gates of Patlamunt. As soon as the students were seated the teacher read extracts from Books one and two of the Parsifal story in order to recall that part of the story told the previous day. He then proceeded to recall the splendour of the court of the Baruch, as well as other details of the story dealt with the previous day.

The next morning the teacher started the recall by writing a sentence from *Parzival* on the board from the section dealt with the previous day: "He was baptized in the Christian faith yet his death was a grief to Saracens." He then proceeded to ask the students various questions concerning the quotation written on the board; for instance, where were these words inscribed? He then continued to recall for them various aspects of Medieval History they had discussed the previous week: contact between Christians and Muslims; the Muslims conquering certain parts of Europe, especially Jerusalem; the Crusades; events taking place in Mainz and Worms; and the persecution of the Jews.

On Thursday morning the teacher used an artistic activity with which to do the review. He handed out A3 sheets of blank paper to each student. They also each received a red and green wax crayon. He asked them to notice carefully where on their desks the red crayon and the green crayon were situated. They had to close their eyes and had to feel with their hands all around the edge of the paper. He asked them to imagine that this was the boundary of their world, surrounded by a dark green forest. Using the green crayons, he asked them to draw the forest border around their papers, with their eyes closed. He reminded them that a boundary protected, contained, limited, and held. He wanted them to draw a strong border, filled with green, not just an outline. While they were drawing the forest outline, the teacher told them of an incident in Parsifal's childhood while living in isolation in the Soltane forest, when he was deeply moved by clear birdsong. He now asked the students to draw the bird's song with the red crayon, still with their eyes closed, within the border of green. When the students had completed their drawings they were allowed to open their eyes and look at it.

The following morning the teacher placed a small round table in front of the blackboard. On it he arranged a burning candle and a small rectangular wooden box in which was displayed a ring, a brooch, and a coloured print of Michelangelo's Pieta. This related to parts of the story that were dealt with the previous day, concerning Parsifal's behaviour towards Jeschute, and to Sigune holding the dead knight in her arms.

The recall at School B proceeded quite differently. Hardly any new material was introduced in the first week of the main lesson. The students mainly spent the time reflecting on the journey of the previous week, by rewriting their journal entries into their main lesson books. The teacher asked them to follow a certain process by first thinking about how a day proceeded, for example the Monday, then to read the journal entry for that day. They also had to reflect which part of the Parsifal story was told at which stage of the journey. All of this then had to be reworked in written form into their main lesson books. The students were also given A 3 photocopies of the map of their journey on which they had to plot certain activities, e.g. crossing the wooden bridge, as well as indicating which part of the story they had heard at which stage of the journey. The

teacher asked them to make little illustrations on the map as well to demonstrate the activities and parts of the Parsifal story.

On the first day of the main lesson, the students had to start by recalling and then writing down the sequence of the events of the last day of the journey, the Saturday on which they arrived home after the camp, since they did not write journal entries for that day. They were asked to recall the day backwards, starting with their arrival home. The teacher wrote the main points on the board for them: the arrival home, the journey home, the cable car journey, and the top of the mountain, the closing ceremony, the journey from the hut to the top of the mountain, waking up at 05h00. In the interview with the teacher (Interview B, March 2007), he explained his reasons for asking the students to reflect backwards:

Because they start with a precious thing which is that impression of coming out of the journey where they've been isolated from the cell phones, i-pods, music. All their creature comforts...so the first thing I wanted them to really focus on was this thing of coming back into civilization. I remember when my son came back from the Parsifal journey he said, "My room feels so small"...I think it is also very healthy for them to say, "I did this"...it's a very healthy digestive process...

This is reflected in the journal entry of one of the students who wrote

I got into my mom's car feeling like crap. I was dirty, sweaty, hot and very tired...Driving through the city was quite strange, there were lots of people and activity and it was actually slightly overwhelming...When I got home...I had to wash myself. That was great and I scrubbed until I shone...One thing I noticed was the easy access I have to luxuries which I usually take for granted. I also appreciated some privacy of which I had none for a week.

I usually do a more straightforward recall every day by either asking a student to recall orally the story from the previous day, or to read out to the class the summary or other written work that had to be done for homework. I often give some research exercise for homework which is then discussed in class the next day. For instance, I might ask the students to do some research on sacred geometry in connection with the Grail ceremony in Book/Chapter five of *Parzival*; or some research on the training of a knight; or perhaps to find out more about armor and how it was manufactured. Illustrations are also given to reinforce a part of the story told the previous day.

(iv) Introduction of new material

After the review of Medieval History on Monday morning, the teacher at School A introduced the Parsifal story. He switched off the classroom lights and then began to tell the students the story of Parsifal's father, Gahmuret, and his various adventures. He described the court of the Baruch in detail, and continued the story up to the besieged city of Patelamunt. He carefully described Isenhardt's helmet, sword, and tent. He told them about Belacane and Gahmuret's wedding, and read to the students the letter Gahmuret wrote to Belacane before he left her and their unborn child. He continued the story with the birth of Feirefis, and ended with Gahmuret in Spain ready to fight in a tournament.

The teacher switched on the lights and asked the students to consider two images from the day's story. Firstly, the magnificent court of the Baruch of Baghdad (he sketched the details for them again – the rich clothing; architecture; culture; libraries; and the opulence everywhere). They could choose how they would like to represent this in their main lesson books: they could do some kind of symbolic representation, or a realistic drawing, or they could write a poem of a minimum of sixteen lines. Secondly, he asked them to reflect on Gahmuret and Belcane's African wedding. The teacher described Belacane as beautiful and magnificent. He created an image of them holding up their hands in the air to greet the cheering crowds after their wedding, one hand ebony and female, and the other male and ivory. He asked them to draw the two hands. The students had to use each other as models. (See Figures 4.1 and 4.2 for examples of drawings done by the students).

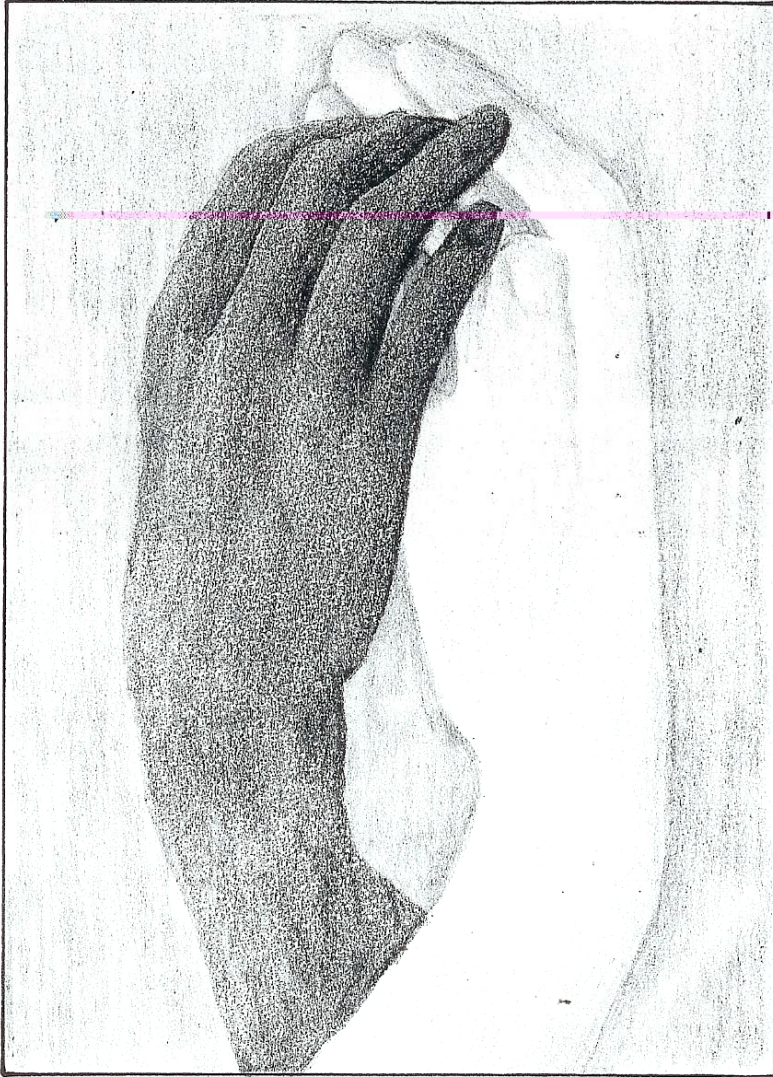


Figure 4.1: Gahmuret and Belacane are married

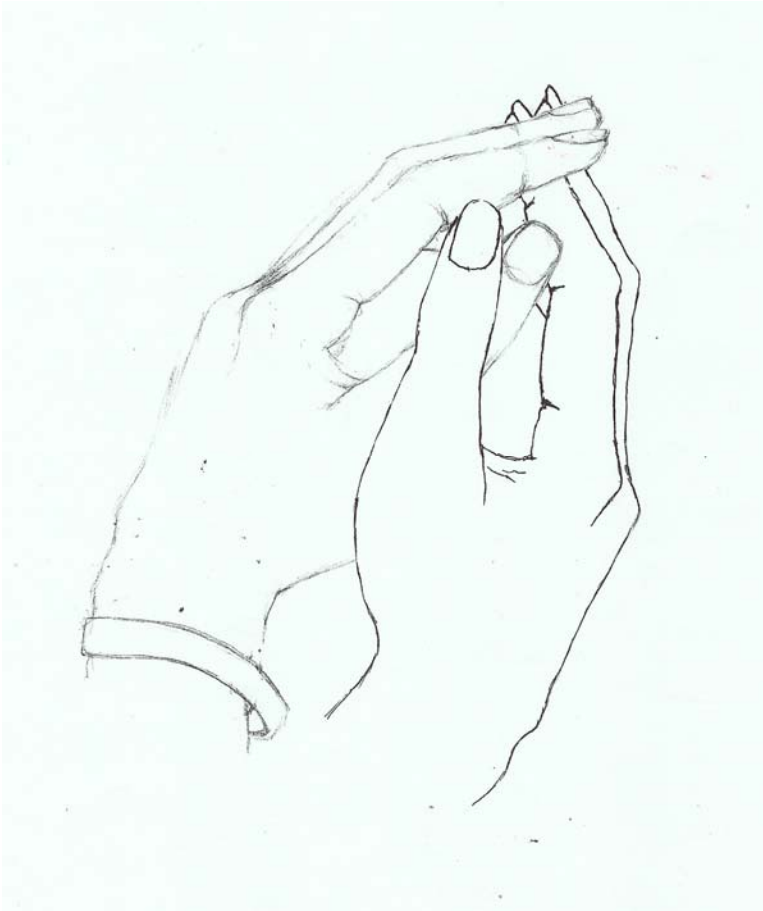


Figure 4.2: Gahmuret and Belacane are married

One of the boys wrote the following poem, describing the court of the Baruch:

*To many, for many,
There is an equal to all
Be it Beauty in word, figure, or
Wonder of the world.
One Court, a Court of Love
Paralleled only by the wall in which
It is kept.
Its beauty too much for word, and
Its perfection far beyond rivalry*

*Beyond lost for a parallel beauty
But yet one could say
We
Each hold our own Court of Love
Within,
Different to any other in the
World.
We
Have chosen one so beautiful, so
Perfect to keep close at heart
To never, never let go.*

The next morning the teacher continued to tell the students the story of the tournament in Spain. He told the story up to the birth of Parsifal and the death of Gahmuret. He also explained to the students that *Parzival* was written in rhyming couplets. No new task was set on this day, and the students were given time to finish the tasks set the previous day.

On Wednesday the teacher talked to them about the world of Baghdad and the Saracens. He explained that Baghdad, now the capital of Iraq, was an ancient city that had existed long before the advent of Islam. He pointed out some of the similarities between Christianity and Islam, and continued to tell them about the revival of Baghdad after the rise of Islam. He read an extract from chapter four of Bernard Lewis' book *The Middle East: 2 000 years from the rise of Christianity to the present day*. He briefly mentioned the different calendars, i.e. the Christian calendar and the Muslim calendar. Some students commented that there were also the Buddhist and Mayan calendars. The teacher reminded them that B. C. and A. D. have changed to B. C. E. and C. E.

The teacher continued to remind them of Charlemagne's court and the uncultured and illiterate courtiers who peopled his court. This was in stark contrast to the court of Harun al Rashid, existing at more or less the same time. Harun's court was similar to that of the Baruch's in *Parzival*, peopled with cultured and learned men.

He read from *The Cross and the Crescent: the history of the Middle Ages* by Malcolm Billings. He read an extract on the first Crusade, and its effects on Mainz and Worms, where the oldest surviving Jewish cemetery in Europe could be found.

The teacher moved on some centuries later to St. Francis of Assisi and his journey to Jerusalem, where he met the Sultan, a very cultured man. He told the students of St. Francis' conversations with the Sultan on almost every aspect of life, and that they found common ground in their humanity as opposed to the continuous strife caused by their religions.

He asked the students to look at their feelings and out of these feelings, to write down what they remembered or what struck them from what he had just told them. He wrote the following on the board: "Considerations/ reflections/ thoughts on the meeting of the Muslim and the Christian worlds in the Middle Ages" to clarify the assignment for the students.

A girl in the class wrote the following:

The two worlds – the Christian and the Muslim – clashed in the Middle Ages mostly during the Crusades. When Christians wanted the only religion to be Christianity, they rode into towns and offered non-Christians the chance to convert, or die. Some Muslims and Jews hid, or were protected by the bishop in the town, but thousands were killed.

It is frightening to think that people will do such atrocious things in the name of religion, even if the teachings of the religion clearly say that they should not.

St Francis of Assisi, during his travels, came to modern day Palestine and met with the Sultan, Malik al Kamil, and his two advisors, and spoke about many things. This was also a meeting of two faiths.

In the last fifteen minutes of the lesson, the teacher continued the Parsifal story. He began with Gahmuret's death, Parsifal's birth, and Herzeloide's sorrow after hearing of her husband's death. He told them of Herzeloide's decision to withdraw with her son into the Soltane forest, and his isolated upbringing there. He concluded the story by mentioning that Herzeloide gave her son three pieces of cunning advice, which he would tell them about the following day.

On Thursday morning the teacher proceeded to tell the students about Herzeloide's advice to her son: greet everyone in a friendly fashion; listen to the advice of grey-haired old men; and when he came across a beautiful woman it would be his right to kiss her and to take her jewellery. The teacher continued to relate the story of Jeshute and Orilus, and Sigune and Schionatalander. Sigune told Parsifal his real name and pointed him in the direction of King Arthur's court. The teacher concluded the story by telling the students that he would tell them about Camelot the following day.

He then asked them to turn over the sheets of A3 paper that they had previously drawn on, and to make another drawing on the other side. He handed out yellow and purple crayons. The students had to draw with their eyes open. He asked them to draw in one corner of the paper the light and splendour of knighthood, and in the other corner the sorrow and grief of a woman holding a dead knight in her arms. They could draw realistic pictures or devise an abstract representation.

While the students were drawing in silence, I asked the teacher about the significance of the different colours of the crayons. He explained that green and red were opposites, and so were yellow and purple. Green represented the green foliage of the forest; yellow emphasized light and brightness; and purple brought out the sorrow.

The teacher then asked the students to transfer these drawings into their main lesson books. They had to work in more detail and had to include other colours in the drawing of the forest and the birdsong. The purple and yellow drawings had to remain in those colours, but they had to try to create a connection between the two. He asked the students to use a double page in their books, so that the drawings were next to each other.

In conversation later in the day, I asked the teacher why the students did not do this exercise straight into their books, and why they had to transfer it into their books with changes as opposed to copying it in exactly like the initial drawings. He explained that he wanted them to have the *experience* of the confined forest and hearing the sound of the birdsong, and then to transform this experience when they copied it into their books. I also asked him why he wanted them to try to create a connection between the two drawings. He pointed out that often in the story and in life there was a fine line between joy and sorrow, and that this exercise gave the students the opportunity to find that meeting place. (See Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 for examples of students work.)



Figure 4.3: Birdsong



Figure 4.4: Birdsong



Figure 4.5: Birdsong

The teacher now continued with the story. He told them the names of the weeping maiden and the dead knight, i.e. Sigune and Schionatalander. He explained the cause of the knight's death, and ended off with Parsifal's journey to King Arthur's court, finding the knight Ither outside the castle waiting for his challenge to be taken up. The teacher mentioned that Camelot was in disarray, and that he would tell them about it the next day.

The following day he also recounted the story of Parsifal and Kondwiramur. He asked the students to write a story about these two characters in the form of a fairy tale

At School B hardly any new material was introduced in the first week. Towards the end of the week the teacher handed the students a very short synopsis of the story and then proceeded to talk them through it. He encouraged them to fill out the story from their own notes taken on the camp. He also asked them to try to identify which scene they would like to depict in their mock stained-glass windows. He sketched the historical background for them as he talked them through the story; he mentioned the difference between the West and the opulence of the court of Harun al Rashid in the East. He also mentioned Wolfram von Eschenbach's cryptic style of writing, and asked them questions here and there to refresh their memories. He told them about Parsifal's family background, and mentioned that it was believed that Parsifal's great grandfather was of fairy stock! The only other new material that was introduced was on the Friday when I taught the section on the Grail ceremony found in the fifth chapter of *Parzival*.

I usually structure my own main lesson in such a way that I introduce a chapter a day, i.e. it takes me sixteen days to tell the story, as there are sixteen books/chapters in *Parzival*. If I only have a three week main lesson, then I combine some of the shorter chapters so that I tell the story over a period of fourteen days, since the fifteenth day is reserved for an open book test.

(v) *Students working on their own*

At School A the students were given plenty of time during which they had to work on their own. This was not always necessarily towards the end of the main lesson, but it nevertheless made sense within the context of what the teacher was trying to achieve. For example, the artistic exercise the students were given as part of the recall, in which they had to imagine and then draw the boundaries of the forest and the birdsong.

The students at School B worked on their own most of the time, as they spent the first week of the main lesson simply recalling and rewriting their journals and the Parsifal story into their main lesson books.

I try to structure my main lesson in such a way that the students are usually given about 30 to 40 minutes towards the end of the two-hour main lesson period to work on their own. In this time they have to do activities such as artistic work, summaries, literary analysis, and creative writing. If there is time, for instance if I have a four-week block, I teach them about the seven soul types (Stibbe, 1992), and then we analyse the characters in *Parzival* accordingly. I might even ask them to analyse their own personalities according to the seven soul types. I usually ask them to write a 600-word short story about a quest. It can have a modern or historical time frame. This work is then done in the last 30 or 40 minutes of the main lesson.

(vi) *Closing verse/finish*

The teacher at School A did not use a closing verse to end off the lesson, but he certainly dismissed the class quite formally. When the bell rang he asked them to stand behind their desks, waiting for silence, before he greeted them and dismissed them.

At School B the students usually packed their bags and left the classroom as soon as the bell rang, with the teacher saying a casual goodbye as they left the classroom. On only one occasion did they end the lesson quite formally by singing a song they sang on the camp the previous week.

I ended off my lessons quite differently by asking the students to stand behind their desks. As soon as they are settled, we said the closing verse which is a verse I use for ending off all my main lessons, irrespective of the content. It is a verse by Steiner that I combine with a verse by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American scholar and philosopher:

**There lives in me an image
Of all that I should be.
Until I have become it
My heart is never free.** (Steiner)

**What lies behind us and
What lies before us
Are tiny matters
Compared to what lies within us.** (Emerson: 2008)

Although the above verse is ascribed to Steiner, it is one of those verses used by Waldorf teachers all over the world (Nielsen, 2003: 13) that can unfortunately not be referenced to any published source.

- **Main lesson rhythm**

I was interested in discovering whether the three-fold rhythm of willing, feeling, and thinking was present in the main lessons at the two schools which I had visited.

I found that these qualities were well-integrated into the teaching rhythm of the teacher at School A. The teacher asked the students several times during the week to live in their feelings regarding some aspects of the lessons. On the Wednesday, while he recounted the tension between Islam and Christianity in the Middle Ages, he asked them to listen to the information with their feelings. When he finished with this section of the work, he asked them to write down, out of their feelings, what they could remember from what he had just told them. He rephrased this for them, and asked them to write about what struck them, or about what they connected with, concerning that which he had told them about that day.

On the Thursday the teacher asked the students to close their eyes and to imagine Sigune holding the recently dead Schionatalander in her arms, her head bent, and weeping. He asked them if they could remember ever having seen a similar image somewhere before. The image he was referring to, which none of them remembered, was of course Michelangelo's Pieta.

The drawing exercise that he gave the students on the Thursday, when they had to draw the boundaries of the forest and the birdsong with their eyes closed, was very much an exercise involving their feelings and their imagination. He asked them afterwards what it was like to draw with their eyes closed, and to think of one word to describe this experience. Some of the students described it as *interesting, irritating, OK, fun, different, disabling, and difficult* (Observation notes A, June 2007).

The various artistic exercises incorporated into the first week of this main lesson also engaged the students' imagination and feelings, as well as their will. They certainly had to put their will into drawing the black and white hands, and drawing with their eyes closed. Similarly, transferring and transforming these drawings into their main lesson books was also a will exercise.

The teacher used various other techniques to engage the feeling and willing faculties of the students. He often switched off the classroom lights before he told a new section of the story. He created suspense by withholding certain details, e.g. the names of characters, which he then revealed to them the following day. He created anticipation in the students by giving them an indication of what he will tell them about the following day, e.g. he told them on the Thursday that Camelot was in disarray, and then said he would tell them about it on Friday.

The teacher prepared the classroom several times in such a way as to engage the students' imagination and feelings. On the Tuesday morning he recreated for them, imaginatively, the sixteen gates of Patlamunt by the sixteen burning tea candles which he had placed in a circle. Inside the circle he had placed the trade marks of a knight, i.e. a helmet, a sword, and a shield. On Friday morning, he placed on a small table in front of the blackboard a rectangular box in which he arranged a ring and a brooch, as well as a print of Michelangelo's Pièta.

The various recall exercises directly engaged the students' thinking faculties. So did the written work, i.e. the writing of a poem about the Baruch's court, and the description of the Crusades.

At School B the willing, feeling, thinking, trichotomy was less obvious. The students were primarily engaged in thinking exercises by having to rewrite the content of their diaries into their main lesson books, as well as recalling the Parsifal story as it was told to them the previous week. The activity whereby they had to recall the last day of their journey backwards, i.e. the Saturday on which they arrived home, engaged the will as

well as the thinking capacities of the students. No artistic activities were expected of the students beyond having to plot the journey on a map accompanied by little sketches of some of the activities. The teacher did mention to the students that in the following week they would be required to make A4 mock stained-glass windows from black and coloured paper. Each student would have to choose a scene from the story and create a mock stained-glass window from it. These windows would then be displayed to the parents at a parents evening (Observation notes B, March 2007). On the Friday the Art teacher joined the last 30 minutes of the main lesson with some Art materials to start them on this project.

I usually ask the students to illustrate a scene from each chapter of the story, so that they would eventually have sixteen drawings or paintings by the end of the main lesson block. I also encourage the students to create decorative borders, often in the form of Celtic weaving patterns. I frequently introduce quite a number of thinking activities in the form of literary analysis, poetry, and creative writing. The teacher at School A confirmed (Interview A, June 2007) that he did a similar exercise with his students in 2002:

I've asked them to create a story of their own...They had to actually write their own story of a quest. And I asked them then to decide what they thought their quest might be in life and use that because it might be easier.

4.3 MAIN LESSON BOOKS

School A gave the students a choice between the standard A4 blank books, and using a display file in which they have filed blank pages on which the work had been done (Observation notes A, June 2007). The teacher demanded a certain order in which the content of the work had to be done in the books. He even wrote it on the board for them on one occasion so that they could check it against their own books (Observation notes A, June 2007). I noticed that some of the students had already started to create borders around some of the pages (Figure 4.6). From some examples from completed main lesson books from the previous year, it was clear that the main lesson books at School A were certainly recognizable as typical Waldorf main lesson books (Figure 4.7 and 4.8). The books at School A also contained many artistic activities and were handwritten.

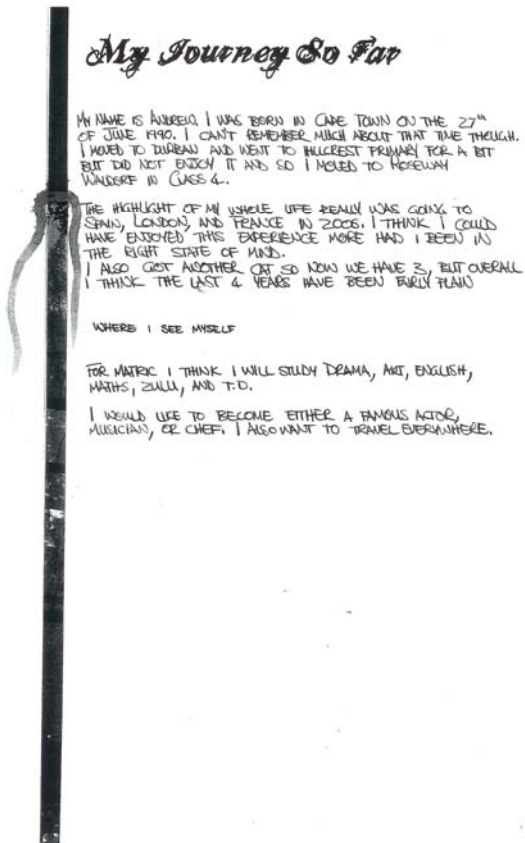


Figure 4.6: Borders

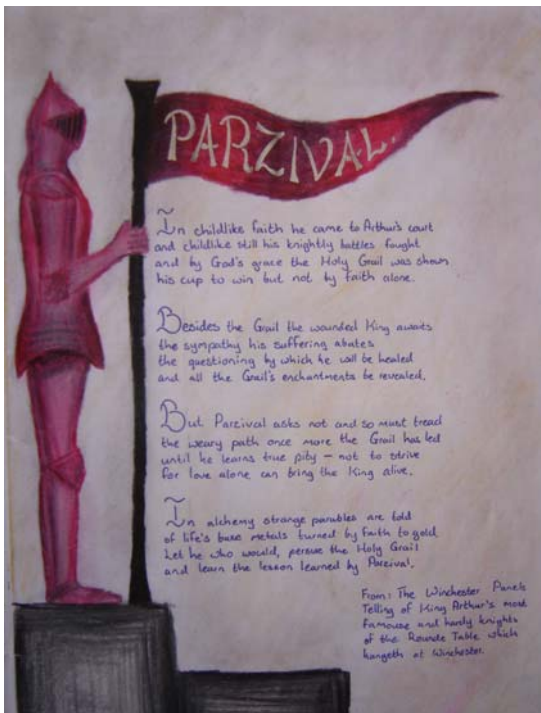


Figure 4.7: Illustration in a typical main lesson book

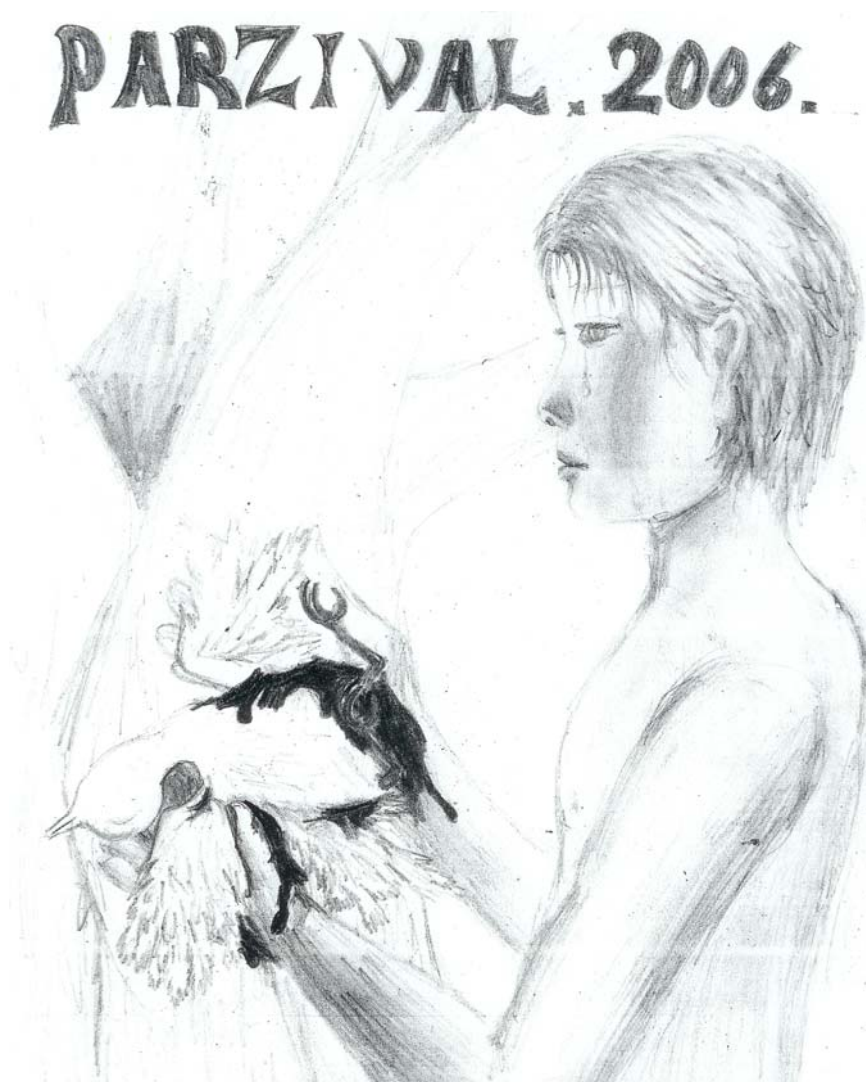


Figure 4.8: Cover illustration for main lesson book

The students at School B did not use the typical main lesson books but worked in what is known as nature study books, with a lined page on the right and a blank page on the left. The teacher indicated (Interview B, March 2007) that he did not want them to window-dress the books, and that he considered these books as work books:

I want to see their work rather than a finished product. The product will come at the end of the main lesson. It will be artistic and reflected from some aspect of the story.

Hence there was no sign of borders or artistic work (except for the map of the journey – see Figure 4.9), and other written work besides the journals and Parsifal story that they were transcribing into their main lesson books. Examples from the previous year’s books also indicated that they did not create main lesson books in the conventional Waldorf sense of the word.

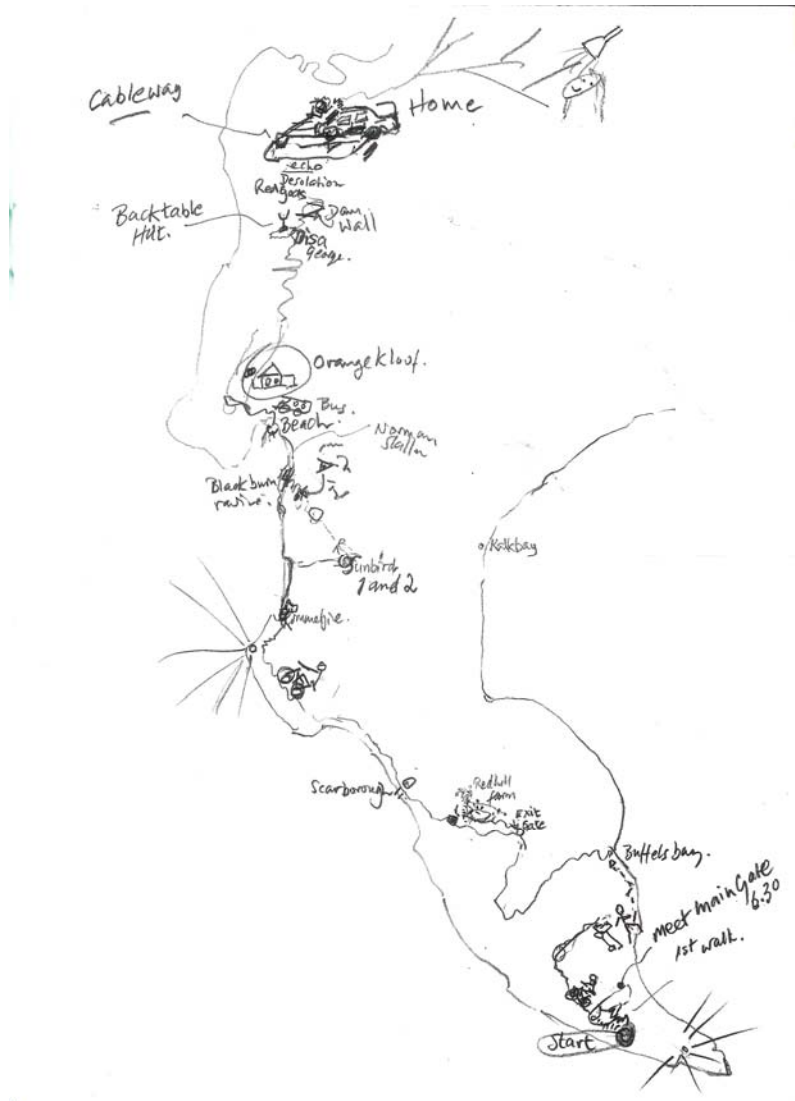
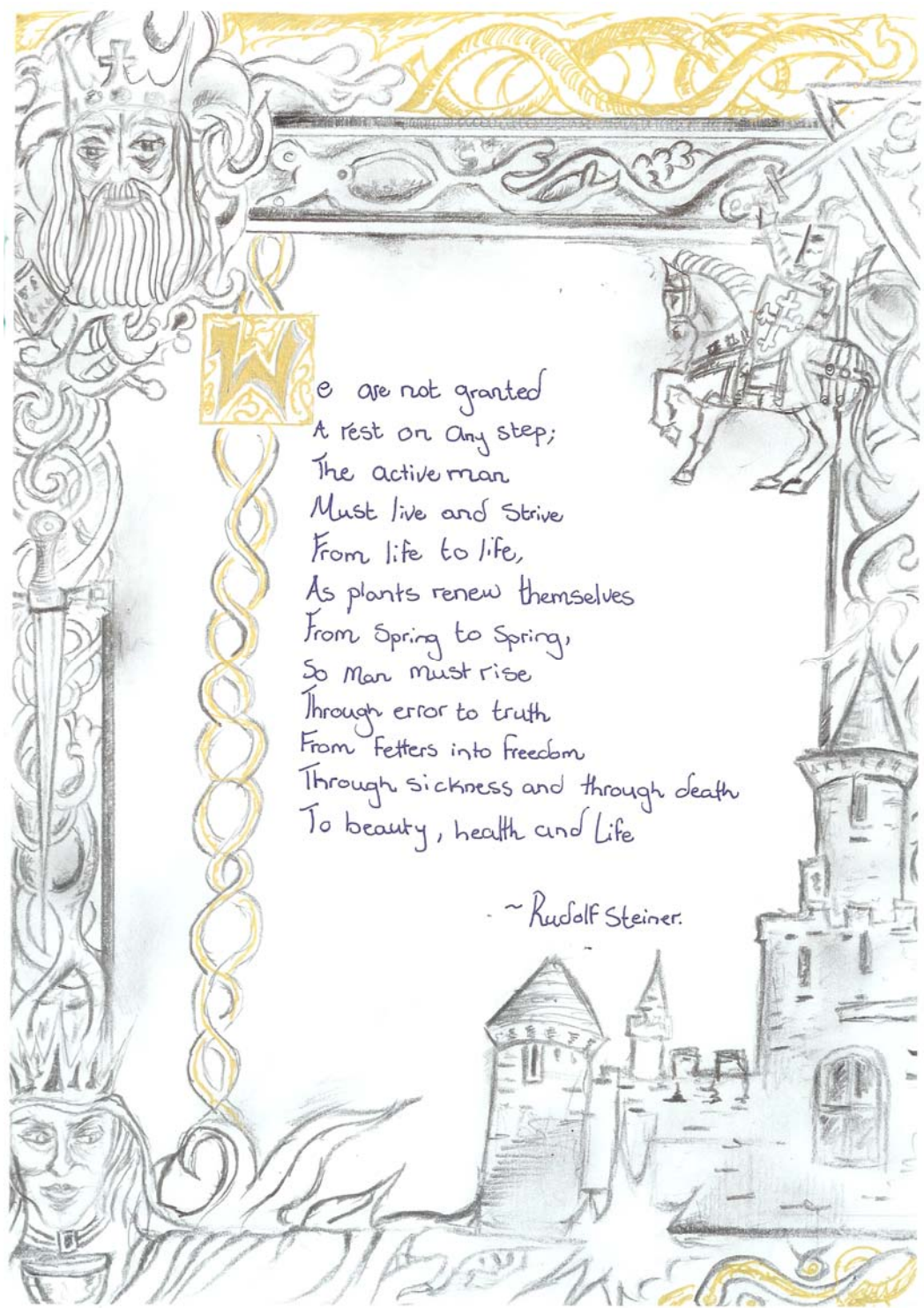


Figure 4.9: Map of the journey

I use the usual blank soft cover A4 main lesson books and require a very specific order to be followed, i.e. a creative, hand-drawn cover (Figure 4.10), poem (used for the speech exercise - see Figure 4.11), contents page, artistic borders (Figure 4.12), and an illustration accompanying each chapter of the story (Figure 4. 13), as well as all the written work in a certain order.



Figure 4.10: Hand-drawn cover



W

e are not granted
A rest on any step;
The active man
Must live and strive
From life to life,
As plants renew themselves
From Spring to Spring,
So man must rise
Through error to truth
From fetters into freedom
Through sickness and through death
To beauty, health and life

~ Rudolf Steiner.

Figure 4.11: Poem

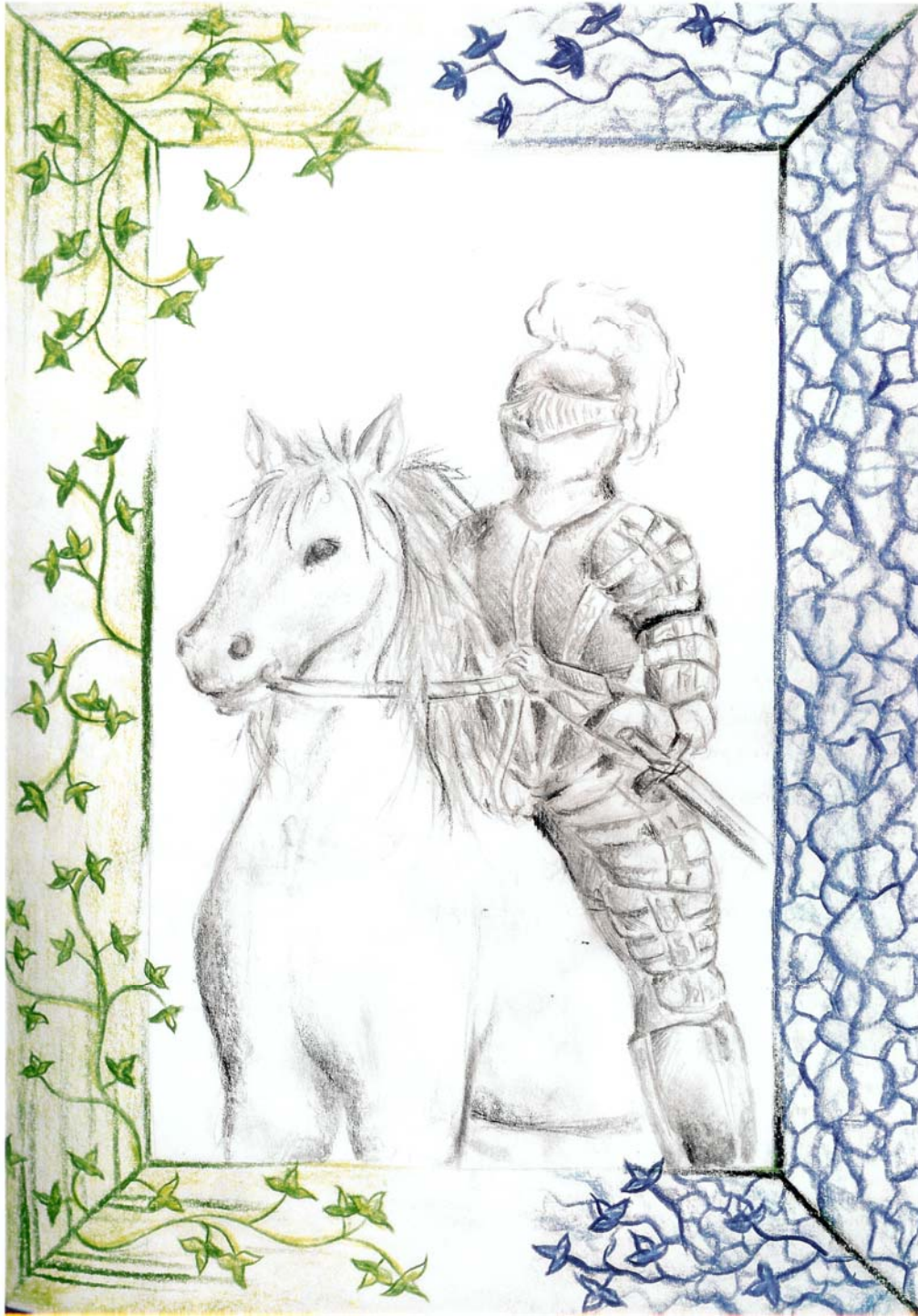


Figure 4.12: Artistic borders



Figure 4.13: Chapter illustration

At School A the classroom work manifested quite clearly into the students' main lesson books. School B followed a different process and in the first week there was very little evidence of classroom work manifesting into the main lesson books. The students mainly spent the time rewriting their journals into their books. The only demand in terms of new work that had to be done into the books was the map that had to be drawn and the notes they took on the section I taught. By the end of the week very few students had started the task of drawing the map (Observation notes, March 2007).

4.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *PARZIVAL* IN THE WALDORF CURRICULUM

I wanted to know from both teachers what they thought the significance of the *Parzival* main lesson was, particularly in the Class 11 year. The teacher at School B felt that -

it's definitely a time where they can fall in love for the first time...but this has got a different quality to it. This falling in love. It's got a kind of mutual respect.

He continued to explain that the boys and girls were equally challenged on the journey and that respect and admiration developed for each other as they faced the physical challenges of the camp. According to the teacher, the Parsifal story also addressed the whole question of masculinity and femininity in a profound way, so that the *Parzival* main lesson was a kind of -

life skills experience without being obvious (Interview B, March 2007).

The teacher confirmed that the main focus for him was enabling the students to live into the imagery of the story, internalizing it through thinking and writing about it.

The teacher at School A felt that -

What makes Parsifal particularly significant for me...is that in this very strange landscape of the medieval mind, we find the birth of a very modern story.

He continued to explain that it reflected the awakening of consciousness and the taking of responsibility for one's own individual actions. He pointed out that it also provided different perspectives on what it was like to live in the world, as Parsifal and Gawain

were really the opposite of each other. He agreed with the teacher at School B that the story mirrored the heightened romanticism of the 16/17-year old. He explained that often the girls identified with some of the extraordinary beautiful female characters in the story, and that the boys enjoyed the way in which some of the male characters took charge of situations and took up challenges and difficulties with courage and determination. The teacher thought that the story's appeal also lay in the fact that the women were real characters and were not just in the background but played significant, active roles. He drew a parallel between the teenager's middle years and the Middle Ages, when teenagers so often feel in transition and the Middle Ages can also be seen as a kind of transitional period in the history of mankind (Interview A, June 2007).

Both teachers felt that an important aspect of this main lesson was actually hearing the story itself. The teacher at School B said that:

I think the main focus is on allowing the children to discover the story, to let the story unfold and let it live for them, such that it can continue to live.

In conversation with another teacher (Interview C, July 2007) who taught this main lesson overseas, I mentioned a student I had observed at School B who seemed to have done nothing in the week that I was there. This student simply never did anything in his main lesson book. This teacher then said, "at least he heard the story", indicating that hearing the story was just as important as the other activities that formed part of the main lesson.

4.5 WHERE TO FROM HERE?

In conversation with both teachers, I was interested to discover how they planned to proceed with the main lesson for the next two weeks, since a main lesson is usually a three-week block.

The teacher at School A indicated that he was going to continue telling the story every day, that more artistic work was planned, and that he was going to refer to other aspects of Medieval History as well. At the end of the main lesson block the students would go on a retreat for a couple of days. Unlike the journey undertaken by School B, he did not plan to take the students on long physical excursions, but wanted to turn the retreat into an inner journey instead. He intended to do a lot of reflective work with the students, such as “Where am I in my life; and what do I want to achieve”.

The teacher at School B planned a process whereby the students would draw parallels between their journey and incidents in the story. They would complete the mock-ups of stained-glass windows, which would be displayed at a parents’ evening. He was planning to give them some more historical background to the story, as well as to touch on some of the other Arthurian legends. The teacher wanted the students to draw a comparison between Parsifal and Gawain, as well as explore the difference between the Grail Castle and the Castle of Wonders. He was also going to look at the themes of noble love/compassionate love, the connection between quest and question, and some artistic activities in terms of one or two drawings illustrating some aspect of the story. He was also hoping to do some written work with the students on the theme of water and how this was connected to the female characters in the book.

I was interested in how these teachers would go about assessing the main lesson books. The teacher at School A gave the students questions for reflection at the end of the main lesson block:

- What has the quest for the Grail meant for you?
- Where do you see yourself in the journey/story of Parsifal? (Is there a character or event that you identify with in your own life?)
- What do you think is the greatest challenge at the moment?
- What image from the story has had a strong impact on you or that you have found fascinating? Explain why this is so.
- Which relationship of love taught you something or which did you find the most interesting and why?

- Is the story valid (true and/or relevant) today? Discuss. (Your answer to this question should be at least 10 lines).

His report would take the form of a letter addressed to each individual student as opposed to a formal school report containing marks. In the letter he would comment on the presentation of the books, the effort put into the artistic work, completeness (i.e. has all the work been completed), how much of themselves they had put into the books, and how much understanding they showed for the various themes of the story. He considered using symbols rather than marks.

The teacher planned a lovely ceremony for the beginning of their matric year at which he would return the books to them after he had had assessed them. The students would come into their candlelit classroom and would find the *Parzival* main lesson books displayed on their desks as a reminder of their high school journey and that they are now taking the final step on that journey by starting their last year of school.

School B's teacher indicated that he would assess the books in terms of a broad symbol because he was more interested in the process whereby the students acquired the story and how they linked it with their experience on the journey. He would of course also assess the written work in terms of the quality of the writing, the structures of the essays, and their abilities to express their feelings. The students would have to cover the books with white paper and would have to design a suitable drawing for the cover.

4.6 CONCLUSION

It was the intention of this study to investigate the presentation and interpretation of the *Parzival* main lesson at two different Waldorf schools in South Africa. I presented the data predominantly in terms of classroom observation, which was then triangulated with interviews and classroom artifacts. I also referred briefly to my own practice as I teach the *Parzival* main lesson at the remaining Waldorf school in South Africa which continues to Class 12.

It was interesting to see how different all three practices were; yet these took place within the parameters of the Waldorf curriculum. All three teachers (including myself) were experienced Waldorf teachers and were trained by the same teacher trainer (Interviews A and B). However, the individuality of the teachers was apparent in their very different approaches to the teaching material. Both teacher A and teacher B agreed that the story itself was fundamental to this main lesson and that it reflected clearly the existential requirements of the 16/17-year old.

The following chapter discusses the findings of this research with specific reference to the Waldorf curriculum.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down** (Robert Frost, cited in Staley, 1996: 167).

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Cohen et al. (2007: 182, 183) state that qualitative data collection is not limited to a few predetermined strategies but that it is characterized by eclecticism and suitability of purpose. This does not imply that “anything goes”, but rather that one should be free to use what is appropriate for answering the research question (Cohen et al. 2007: 183). Cohen et al. (2007: 184) continue to say that data analysis in qualitative research in general, already starts during the data collection process. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 354, 355), moreover, advise researchers in the social sciences to consider the following: data overload; acting on first impressions only; the availability of participants and information; the dangers of only seeking confirmation; and the reliability and consistency of the data.

In order to answer my research question, I determined that classroom observation would furnish me with the most appropriate data. The classroom observation was supported by interviews, which provided me with additional information regarding my observations in the classroom. Artifacts, in the form of main lesson books, served to illustrate the translation of classroom work into a more concrete form. This triangulation was designed specifically in an attempt to answer my fundamental research question which dealt with how the *Parzival* main lesson was presented and interpreted within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum at two South African Waldorf schools. In addition, I referred briefly to my own practice since I teach at the only other Waldorf school in South Africa where the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. I simply did this in order to demonstrate how

different these three practices were, although they took place within the context of the Waldorf curriculum.

My research supplied me with ample data. In fact, I found that there was quite an amount of additional information available, especially from the interviews. I observed the first five days of each three-week main lesson block at each of the two schools hoping to minimise the danger of prejudiced first impressions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 354, 355). Some participants were willing to spend adequate time with me and provided me with very useful and appropriate information. Other participants were less willing to participate in the interview process. The data collected at the two schools were quite diverse as the teachers approached the main lesson very differently, although it still took place within the parameters of the Waldorf curriculum.

Berg (2004: 266) suggests that an interpretative approach makes it possible for researchers to present social action and human activity as *text*. Observational data and interviews can therefore be transcribed into written text for analysis (Berg, 2004: 266). Such a text can be interpreted in various ways. The researcher may choose to organize or reduce the data in order to uncover patterns; the researcher may also attempt to sort the data into various codes; or the researcher may prefer to attempt to capture the essence of the data (Berg, 2004: 266). This might make it possible for the researcher to discover the practical understandings of meanings and actions (Berg, 2004: 266). I therefore attempted to capture the essence of my research by creating a “story” from the data, rather than organizing it into codes and patterns.

I used Anthroposophical lenses in examining the data since my research question focuses on the presentation and interpretation of the *Parzival* main lesson within the context of Waldorf education. Waldorf education is firmly rooted in Anthroposophy. In fact, Steiner (1998:118) states unequivocally that you cannot be a Waldorf teacher if you are not also an Anthroposophist and that Waldorf education cannot separate itself from Anthroposophy. Waldorf education, sometimes also referred to as Steiner education, is a form of education, from pre-school to high school, which is based on the view that the

human being is a being consisting of body, soul, and spirit (Steiner, 1994: 24, 25). The nature of the human being forms the central part of the philosophy that Steiner called Anthroposophy (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). Steiner (1973: 13) defined Anthroposophy as “a path of knowledge that seeks to lead the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.” Anthroposophy forms the epistemological basis for Waldorf education (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). Although Anthroposophy as such is not taught in Waldorf schools, its insights and ethos sustain the curriculum, and provide the teachers with information and ideas from which to work (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14).

In my exploration of the data, I embraced an Anthroposophical position and focused primarily on two important principles in Waldorf pedagogy which inform the Waldorf curriculum and Waldorf methodology, namely the three-fold nature of the human being (i.e. thinking, feeling, and willing), and the essential components of a main lesson. Waldorf education commences from the premise that the human being has a body, soul, and spirit. The physical part of the human being, the body, is that part of man that is directly sense perceptible. It is through his body that man is connected with and embedded in the material world (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). Steiner declared that the body as a whole, not merely the nervous activity impounded in it, is the physical basis of psychic life (Childs, 1991: 35). He described the bodily nature of man as three-fold: consisting namely of the nerve/sense system, located mainly in the head and serving man’s thinking processes; the rhythmic system, comprising heart and lungs and serving man’s feeling processes; and the metabolic/limb system, comprising the digestive organs as well as the arms and legs and serving man’s willing processes (Childs, 1991: 35). Steiner’s concepts of thinking, feeling, and willing bear little resemblance to the cognitive, affective, and conative attributes of the human being as understood in its usual sense (Childs, 1991: 35). The whole bodily-physical nature is a result of man’s soul-spiritual nature. Just as Steiner characterised the bodily nature of man as a trichotomy (Childs, 1991: 36, 37), he described the soul as possessing the attributes of thinking, feeling, and willing, as well as the attributes of sympathy and antipathy. In his soul, man develops an inner world of personal experience which relates him to the outer world and

which expresses itself in the activities of thinking, feeling, and willing (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14). The world reveals its complete nature to man through man's spirit or "I" (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 14), and Steiner conceived of the spirit in terms of consciousness in its attributes of waking, dreaming, and sleeping (Childs, 1991: 38). Steiner (cited in Clouder, 2003: 25) argues that "we can never educate people as whole beings if in education we allow thinking, feeling, and willing to interact chaotically." He continues to say that the teacher must develop all three these elements in the correct way in the child so that eventually the human being will understand how to let intellect, feeling, and will interact correctly in his soul and spirit (cited in Clouder, 2003: 25).

5.2 THE *PARZIVAL* MAIN LESSON

5.2.1 Introduction

Observing two different teachers presenting the *Parzival* main lesson was fascinating, especially since their practices were so different from each other and from my own. Steiner emphasized that teaching is an art (Clouder, 2003: 23) and that "so much depends upon the individual teacher" (Steiner, 1998: 444). He therefore recommended that the individuality of the teacher be emphasized and supported (Steiner, 1998: 444). These two different practices demonstrated the possibility of using content creatively, while still maintaining the principles of Waldorf pedagogy and methodology.

The main lesson is a central feature of the Waldorf curriculum (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19) and each day begins with this two-hour lesson (Steiner, 1982: 88). It is an integrated, cross-curricular unit and includes various activities to awaken and focus the children's attention (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19). These activities include oral and written work, mental arithmetic (in the primary school), artistic activities, presentation of new material, recall and discussion of the previous day's work, individual working, and narrative (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19). Subjects are taught in blocks of several weeks, usually three or four weeks (Carlgren, 1972: 37). Each day's main lesson is an integrated and organic whole. Connections are established across subject areas and between main lesson

themes (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). Main lessons are carefully prepared, and teachers choose material, presentation and activities according to the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of the specific class. Each main lesson should form an artistic whole in which the parts relate to the whole. The whole is permeated with rhythm, structure, and purpose, instead of being simply a chain of events. The main lesson includes activities and content which address the children's intellectual, cognitive, aesthetic, affective, and practical modes of learning (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

Each main lesson is presented in a threefold rhythm irrespective of the specific subject:

First part: morning verse; recitation of poetry (in the primary school, this also includes singing, musical instrumental work, and mental arithmetic); and recall of the previous day's work.

Second part: narrative, presentation of new material, and discussion.

Third part: individual work, practise of basic skills (Rawson & Richter, 2000:20).

School A combined the *Parzival* main lesson with a Medieval History main lesson. Combining the *Parzival* main lesson with a Medieval History main lesson was very useful in that the students gained a thorough understanding of the historical context within which the story is set. One of the aims of the main lesson system is to enable the students and teachers to study a subject in great depth (Maher & Bleach, 1996: 10), and combining these two main lessons made a comprehensive study possible of *Parzival* and the medieval landscape. The previous week the teacher had given the students a brief outline of medieval history, and they had consequently some historical background before he introduced the *Parzival* story (Interview A, June 2007).

School B introduced the *Parzival* main lesson by taking the students on a camp the week before. The story of Parsifal was told to the students little by little every day so that by the end of the week they had heard the complete story. The students travelled a specific route on the camp by walking and cycling some distance every day. This enabled the accompanying teachers to plan the route in such a way that it included experiences

similar to Parsifal's journey. In this way there was for instance a bridge the students had to cross which simulated an incident in Parsifal's biography (Interview B, p. 116).

An experiential approach to *Parzival*, such as the camp undertaken by School B is significant as Steiner (cited in Clouder, 2003: 12) states that "education has lost its direct connection with life." A journey such as the one experienced by School B therefore enables Parsifal's experiences to become more real to the students, and might perhaps engender sympathy in them for the various challenges that Parsifal faced in medieval times.

5.2.2 Classroom observation

Baseline information

- **Setting**

The classroom walls at both participating schools were painted in colours according to Rudolf Steiner's indications (Stockmeyer, 1991: 174, 175). Although the ideal is that the shape of the classrooms should also follow Steiner's indications (Kaller, in Glöckler et al., 2006: 289), this is not always possible. Much depend on the financial position of a school. School B bought an existing school building comprising square classrooms (conversation with teacher, March 2007). Unconventional architectural requests are often more expensive to implement, and one can understand that it is not always possible for all Waldorf schools to comply with the ideal design for a school as indicated by Steiner.

- **Participants**

It was interesting to observe that at all three schools (including my own school) there were more boys in the class than girls. In the past, Waldorf high schools in South Africa usually had more female students than male, but in recent years the pattern seemed to be changing (conversation with William Bester, Executive member of the Federation of

Southern African Waldorf Schools, November, 2008). From personal experience I know that fathers are often concerned about sending/leaving their boys to/in a Waldorf school because of the lack of competitive and contact sport. There also used to be a perception that academically Waldorf schools were not competitive enough either (conversation with William Bester, November, 2008). However, this perception seems to be changing. The student numbers at my own school have grown tremendously in the past eight years. We have a waiting list (conversation with Registrar, March, 2009) for our nursery school which consists of four classes at the moment. There are waiting lists for many of the classes in the primary school, which is double-streamed, and the high school classes are nearly full with up to 32 students in a class. In conversation with the teachers at Schools A and B, they confirmed that their student numbers had also grown in recent years. In fact, School A has as many as 45 high school students in a class from time to time.

Interaction and activities

- **Sequence of activities**

(i) *Greeting and morning verse*

The tradition at Waldorf schools is that students are greeted by hand before the commencement of the main lesson, and that the morning verse is recited with reverence, often accompanied by a lit candle. Greeting students by hand is an important pedagogical gesture (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 23) by the teacher towards the child and is accompanied by making eye contact with the student. Eye contact indicates the greeting of “the other” and calls forth the beginnings of the child’s Ego/I development which will come to fruition at the age of twenty-one (Easton, 1975: 391). Waldorf education distinguishes three basic stages of child development: 0 to 7 years, 7 to 14 years, and 14 to 21 years (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 16). Each of these stages is characterized by significant and specific developments in physical, psychological, and spiritual maturation (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 16), including the maturation of the etheric, astral, and ego-bodies of the human being. The qualities of the body, soul, and spirit trichotomy are also

developing during these three stages of child development, that is, the will is developing in the first seven years, the feeling realm is developing in the second seven-year period, and thinking develops in the third period (Benians, 1970: 70). That is not to say that these qualities are not present at any other stage of child development. They are of course present in the child simultaneously, but are developing and becoming active during these various seven-year stages (Benians, 1970: 70).

Children's handshakes also reveal a number of important aspects about the child such as the emotional and physical well-being of the student enabling the teacher to "read" the child (conversation with Gwynn Dawson, Teacher Trainer, April, 2009). It seems that this custom is followed at primary school level because the class teacher usually starts the day with the main lesson (conversations with various Waldorf primary school teachers, i.e. Yvette Oxlee, Gwynn Dawson, Kim Snapper, 2007, and 2008). However, in the upper school subject specialists are responsible for different main lessons and they do not necessarily always follow this tradition (conversations with Teachers A and B, 2007).

At School A the tradition of greeting students by hand was maintained, as well as the recitation of the morning verse. The teacher greeted each student by hand and by name as they lined up outside the classroom door every morning. Once the teacher and student have shaken hands, the student would enter the classroom and go to his desk. The morning verse was recited once all the students were settled inside. Steiner (1968: 97) states that if the human being is educated in a spirit of reverence "then we shall rightly develop the experience of immortality, of the divine, of the eternally religious element in the growing child." He continues to argue that if man is educated correctly on earth, it prepares the human being for life in the spiritual realms after death, because "the heavenly man lives in the earthly man" (Steiner, 1968: 97). Furthermore, Steiner (1968: 99) summarises this idea in the following verse:

To bind the Self to matter

Means to annihilate souls.

To find the Self in spirit

Means to unite mankind.

To behold the Self in man

Means to build worlds.

School B did not follow this tradition. Although the morning verse was recited, the start of the daily main lesson was casual and informal. The students entered the classroom as soon as the bell had rung and sat down at their desks. The class guardian then entered the classroom, greeting the students casually with a simple “Good morning”, after which she took the register and made some announcements. She next asked the students to stand and say the morning verse. The main lesson teacher then took over, again greeting the seated students with a casual “Good morning Class 11.”

In conversation with various Waldorf high school teachers at different Waldorf schools in South Africa, it was evident that some teachers, usually the majority, follow this tradition of greeting students by hand, and some did not. There did not seem to be any logical reason for not following the tradition beyond the teacher's own individual preference and style of teaching.

Both schools used the morning verse as given by Rudolf Steiner (p. 104).

(ii) *Speech exercises*

Our speech is, with the exception of our gestures, possibly the most intimate and revealing expression of what is human and unique in each of us (Barnes, in Gerwin, 1996: 40). Steiner (1983a: 54) states quite clearly that one should not just “hop” over sounds, but that speech is there to be understood. He therefore recommends that teachers

take special care to find their way into the very forms of the sounds and syllables so that each individual sound comes into consciousness (1983a: 54). He (1983a: 53) continues to state that by cultivating clear articulation through the constant practise of speech exercises, the speech organs become elastic. Barnes (in Gerwin, 1996: 46) furthermore argues that “the more one speaks, the more awake one becomes.” Students become more attentive and learn better after they have recited as their own activity awakens them (Barnes, in Gerwin, 1996: 47).

School A did no speech work in the week that I observed there. The teacher mentioned to me in conversation that he planned to embark upon it the following week. He was considering the following poem for use in the speech exercises:

Percival

*In childlike faith he came to Arthur's court
And childlike still his knightly battles fought,
And by God's grace the Holy Grail was shown
His cup to win but not by faith alone.*

*Beside the Grail the wounded King awaits
The sympathy his suffering abates
The questioning by which he will be healed
And all the Grail's enchantment be revealed.*

*But Perceval asks not and so must tread
The weary path once more the Grail has led
Until he learns true pity – not to strive,
For love alone can bring the king alive.*

*In alchemy strange parables are told
Of life's base metals turned by faith to gold.
Let he who would, pursue the Holy Grail
And learn the lesson learned by Perceval.* (From: The Winchester Panels, Winchester Castle)

School B did speech exercises twice, i.e. two different exercises were given; one was a song which the students sang on the camp, and the other was an extract from Book 10 of *Parzival* which they had to repeat after the teacher sentence by sentence.

They sang the following Welsh song:

The Twa Corbies

*As I was walkin' all alone,
I heard twa corbies makin main;
And 'tain untae the 'tither did say-o
Where shall we gang and dine the day-o.*

*It's in ahint yon auld fell dyke,
I wot there lies a new-slain knight,
And naebiddy kens that he lies there-o
But his hawk and his hound and his lady fair-o*

*His hawk is tae the huntin' gan,
His hound tae fetch the wild fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en anither mate-o,
So we may mak oor dinner sweet-o*

*It's ye'll sit on his white hawse-bane,
And I'll pack oot his bonnie blue eyn;
Wl' ae look o' his gowden hair-o
We'll thiek oor nest whan it grows bare-o*

*It's mony a yin fer him maks main,
But nane shair ken where he is gane:
O'er his white banes whan they are bare-o
The wind shall blow fer ever mair-o!*

One way of focusing on speech would be to engage students in some humorous tongue twisters, such as:

*Three grey geese in a green field grazing
Grey were the geese and green was the grazing.*

And/or

*Higglety, piggelty, pop!
The dog has eaten the mop;
The cat's in a flurry,
The pig's in a hurry,
Higgelty, piggelty, pop!*

And/or

*Moses supposes his toeses are roses,
But Moses supposes erroneously;
For nobody's toeses are posies of roses
As Moses supposes his toeses to be* (Thomas, 1998: 90, 93).

Tongue twisters enable students to take hold of their speech organs in a conscious way before reciting poetry (Jaffke & Maier, 1983: 5). The recitation of poetry moreover engenders in students an appreciation for the beauty of language (Schwartz, 1999: 285), and trains their will, memory, and feelings (Childs, 1991: 107). Barnes (in Gerwin, 1996: 44) states that the precision and agility of speech exercises train the same qualities in the student's thinking. Speech exercises therefore form an integral part of a main lesson.

(iii) *Recall*

Daily recall involves the action of repetition, practice, and habit, which are essentially will-activities which strengthen the powers of memory (Childs, 1991: 106). Steiner (in Childs, 1991: 107) believed that the development of memory is encouraged by concepts which load it, artistic activities which build it up, and exercises of will which strengthen it. Recall of the previous day's material is an exercise of will which can be primarily oral in nature, but it can also involve artistic activities (Schwartz, 1999: 232). It should not simply be a "retelling of yesterday's lesson" (Schwartz, 1999: 232), but should take the form of an active recapitulation involving a meaningful conversation between the teacher and the student (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). The conversation between the teacher and the students is similar to what can be called the "Socratic dialogue" (Schwartz, 1999: 232). Bernard and Brogran (cited in Schwartz, 1999: 232) state that the Socratic dialogue "focuses on neither the teacher nor the student, but rather on a dialogical method of interactive learning." They conclude that the Socratic conversation offers a useful structure for educational transformation and provides valuable insights into the nature of learning (Schwartz, 1999: 232). Waldorf teachers believe that a real conversation between the teacher and the student is an invaluable educational tool. Active

recapitulation is therefore a major skill practised daily in the main lesson, and may even be done in other lessons (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

The recall at School A was done on a daily basis often using creative ways like painting exercises or a visual representation of an incident from the previous day's work. The teacher alternatively involved the students in the recall or did the recall for them verbally. He asked them for instance to remember anything "interesting" or "amazing" from the previous day's lesson or asked specific questions to refresh their memories. From time to time the recall simply involved a retelling or remembering of the previous day's lesson (pp. 121 – 122).

The recall at School B was approached quite differently. The first week of the main lesson was mainly spent reflecting on the journey of the previous week, and rewriting the journal entries into the main lesson books by following a certain process (p. 122).

On the first day of the main lesson at School B, the students had to start by recalling and then writing down the sequence of the events of the last day of the journey. They had to recall the day backwards, starting with their arrival home. The teacher explained his reasons for this by stating that he wanted them to focus intensely on the experience of returning to civilisation after having been isolated from it for a week with no cell phones, i-pods, or music (p. 123). One of the students described this experience of returning to civilisation in her journal in which she wrote that she felt quite overwhelmed by driving in her mother's car and noticing the activities of all the people next to the road. She enjoyed washing herself when she arrived home and appreciated the easy access to running water (p. 123).

The way in which the daily recall is conducted can be varied. One could start off with the simple question of "What can you remember about what was said yesterday?" This can then lead to "What did you connect with?", "What did you find interesting?", or "What did you not connect with?" (Daitz, 1999: lecture notes). The students could be steered towards conversation and discussion about the previous day's work. On a Friday,

students could be asked to recall the entire week's work. One might ask pertinent questions about the work, and might even ask them to write a paragraph or essay about an aspect of the work dealt with earlier (Power, 1999: 23, 24). From time to time students can be requested to illustrate an aspect of the story they have heard the previous day.

The recall is an invaluable educational tool, and provides the students with an opportunity to strengthen the will as well as the memory. Maher and Bleach (1996: 34) state that "it is important to take account of the night's sleep in between one day's teaching and the next." They continue to argue that overnight life forces in the child continue to work on what the teacher had given him during the day. In this way the child metamorphoses the material during sleep, and recalling it the next day strengthens his will and his memory (Maher & Bleach, 1996: 34, 35). There is continued debate among Waldorf teachers worldwide though about the appropriate manner in which the recall should be conducted (National Waldorf Teachers' Conference, 2008, Michael Mount Waldorf School, Teacher Trainers' Workshop).

(iv) *Introduction of new material*

The second phase of the main lesson constitutes the introduction of new material and discussion thereof (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

Very little new material was introduced in the first week of observation at School B. The teacher briefly sketched the historical background to the court of the Baruch and Parsifal's family background, and on the last day of that week I was invited to teach a section on the symbolism surrounding the Grail ceremony.

Towards the end of the week the teacher handed the students a very short synopsis of the story. He asked them to add details to the story from their own notes taken on the camp. He also encouraged them to try to identify which scene they would like to depict in their mock stained-glass windows which they were going to work on the following week. The teacher recounted the historical background for them mentioning the difference between

the West and the magnificence of the court of Harun al Rashid in the East. He also mentioned Wolfram von Eschenbach's cryptic style of writing and told them about Parsifal's family background (p. 132). On the Friday, I taught the section on the Grail ceremony found in the fifth chapter of *Parzival*. This chapter describes the ceremony whereby the Grail is brought in by the Grail Queen, Repanse de Schoie, and twenty-four maidens accompanying her.

School A's teacher introduced new material on a daily basis. This was done in various ways by recounting a new episode in the story and by informing the students of historical detail and other interesting information. The teacher proceeded at a steady pace, systematically working his way through the story, so that by the end of the first week he had reached nearly the end of Book/Chapter Three. He also involved the students in artistic and written exercises pertaining to the new material he introduced them to that day (pp. 124 – 132).

After a review of Medieval History for instance the teacher at School A introduced the Parsifal story by telling them about Gahmuret, Parsifal's father, his service at the court of the Baruch, his marriage to Belacane, and the birth of Feirefis. He asked them to describe the opulence of the court of the Baruch in their main lesson books by either making a drawing or writing a poem on it. He then gave them an artistic exercise whereby they had to draw the entwined hands of Gahmuret and Belacane. The teacher continued in this manner throughout the week by describing historical details to the students and then linking these to various aspects of the tale. This was then reinforced by several artistic and written activities (pp 124 – 132).

(v) *Students working on their own*

At School A the students were given some time each day to work on their own. It did not necessarily occur towards the end of the main lesson, but it certainly made sense within the context of what the teacher was trying to achieve.

The students at School B worked primarily on their own in the first week that I observed. They spent the first week of the main lesson recalling and rewriting their journals and the Parsifal story into their main lesson books.

(vi) *Closing verse/finish*

The students at School A were dismissed formally at the end of the main lesson, standing behind their desks and greeting the teacher. The students at School B packed up and left the classroom as soon as the school bell had rung, not waiting for the teacher to dismiss them.

The main lesson structure and rhythm are the clearest and most systematic way of putting Steiner's educational thought into practice (Blunt, 1995: 168, 169). Steiner recommended that teachers purposely set out to strengthen the will-forces of the students by daily repetition of tasks such as the recitation of the morning verse, speech exercises, and the daily recall (Childs, 1991: 105). It is also important that while exercising the will, consciousness should be drawn into it in the form of feeling and thinking (Blunt, 1995: 94).

- **Main lesson rhythm**

I was interested in discovering how the three-fold rhythm of feeling, willing, and thinking (Maher & Bleach, 1996: 34, 35) was present in the main lesson structure of the two schools which I had visited. According to Steiner, the soul has a three-fold nature of thinking, feeling, and willing, each of which has a close relationship with the physical body (Blunt, 1995: 87). Thinking, feeling, and willing develop through the interfacing of the downward flowing forces of the etheric and the upward flowing of the astral forces (Blunt, 1995: 88). It is this interaction which is of interest to the teacher. The implication for Waldorf education is that everything given to the student through his will, flows into feeling and thinking. This living influence stimulates feeling and thinking (Blunt, 1995: 89). Therefore, if education presents to students rigid, dead concepts, the will and

feelings receive no nourishment and remain unconscious or semi-conscious (Blunt, 1995: 89). According to Anthroposophy, education must therefore work on the limb and rhythmic systems, which will then flow into thinking and awaken the head system with healthy influences. In this way the etheric and astral forces can be brought into harmony with one another (Blunt, 1995: 89).

This three-fold rhythm was well-integrated into the main lessons at School A. The teacher often asked the students to live in their feelings and to react out of their feelings. Several times the students were requested *to imagine* a scene or a situation, which clearly involved their feelings. The students were occupied in various artistic exercises which engaged the three faculties of feeling, willing, and thinking. The written exercises, as well as many of the recall exercises, by their very nature also occupied these faculties.

While he recounted the tension between Islam and Christianity in the Middle Ages, the teacher at School A for instance asked the students to listen to the information with their feelings. When he finished with this section of the work, he asked them to write down, out of their feelings, what they could remember from what he had just told them. He rephrased this for them, and asked them to write about what struck them, or about what they connected with, concerning that which he had told them about that day. Similarly, the exercise whereby the students had to imagine Sigune holding Schionatalander in her arms (p. 135) as well as the drawing the students had to make of the forest and the birdsong (p. 135) were very much processes involving their feelings and their imagination.

The variety of artistic exercises included in the first week of this main lesson, engaged not only the students' imagination and feelings but also their will. They had to put their will into drawing the black and white hands as well as drawing with their eyes closed. Similarly, transferring and transforming these drawings into their main lesson books was also a will exercise.

The teacher used several other techniques to engage the feeling and willing faculties of the students. He often switched off the classroom lights before he told a new section of the story. He created suspense by withholding certain details, e.g. the names of characters, which he then revealed to them the following day. The teacher also created anticipation in the students by giving them an indication of what he will tell them about the following day, e.g. he told them on the Thursday that Camelot was in disarray, and then said he would tell them about it on Friday.

The teacher prepared the classroom several times in such a way as to engage the students' imagination and feelings. He recreated for them, imaginatively, the sixteen gates of Patlamunt by the sixteen burning tea candles which he had placed in a circle. Inside the circle he had placed the trademarks of a knight, i.e. a helmet, a sword, and a shield. At another time the teacher also placed on a small table in front of the blackboard a rectangular box in which he arranged a ring and a brooch, as well as a print of Michelangelo's Pieta.

The various recall exercises directly engaged the students' thinking faculties. So did the written work, i.e. the writing of a poem about the Baruch's court, and the description of the Crusades.

The willing, feeling, thinking trichotomy was less obvious in the main lessons at School B. Here the students were primarily involved in thinking exercises by recalling the previous week's camp and rewriting their journals into their main lesson books as well as recalling the Parsifal story as it was told to them on the camp. Few artistic activities were expected from the students in the first week that I had observed.

The activity whereby they had to recall the last day of their journey backwards engaged the will as well as the thinking capacities of the students. The artistic activity for the week was to plot the journey on a map accompanied by little sketches of some of the activities. This involved the thinking as well as the feeling capacities of the students.

Teachers often find it difficult to integrate the progression from willing, to feeling, to thinking, in a single main lesson (Blunt, 1995: 169). This was evident in the week that I observed at School B where the teacher concentrated primarily on recalling the previous week's camp and in the minimal artistic and speech exercises that were attempted. However, it is something that all Waldorf teachers endeavour to achieve, since the main lesson is the central feature of the Waldorf curriculum (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 19).

5.3 MAIN LESSON BOOKS

The artistic presentation of main lesson books forms an integral part of Waldorf methodology (Trotsky, 1998: 272), since a minimum of textbooks is used in the main lesson, and students therefore create their own “textbooks” so to speak (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 22, 23). (See Appendix B for an example of a “typical” main lesson book.) Every subject in a Waldorf school should be permeated with artistic activity (Schwartz, 1999: 284). The ability to create something artistic is understood to be a perfectly natural endowment, and the assumption is there that every student is capable of drawing, painting, sculpting, carving, knitting, and dancing, in the same sense that students are expected to read, write, and work with numbers (Schwartz, 1999: 284). This makes it possible for a significant synergy to occur when subjects generally regarded as “academic” are approached with an aesthetic sensibility, e.g. when a physics demonstration must be sketched beautifully as well as accurately (Schwartz, 1999: 284).

Although there is not much literature on how students should work in main lesson books, a tradition has developed in Waldorf schools worldwide in terms of what a main lesson book should “look” like (M. Rawson, personal communication, August 14, 2008); (Appendix B.) A main lesson book is usually a softbound book with twenty-four to sixty blank A4-size pages. Some Waldorf high schools allow students to work on loose sheets of blank paper which is then filed in a display file (Schwartz, 1999: 228). Main lesson books are instantly recognizable because they look alike in so many ways, i.e. unlined pages filled with handwritten notes and colourfully illustrated with coloured pencils or even water colour paint and pastel crayons; usually pages have artistically designed

borders and strikingly illustrated front covers (Carlgren, 1981: 174, 183; Roseway Recorder, 2005: 4, 5; Roseway Recorder, 2006: 7, 8, 9). Teachers are therefore free to develop their own preferred way of how they would wish students to work in main lesson books, but still within the parameters of the Waldorf “tradition”.

Main lesson books serve both as a text and as an assessment tool. They form the keystone to the Waldorf evaluative process in that they contain knowledge and skills imparted by the main lesson process (Schwartz, 1999: 228). They serve as an evaluative tool for assessing to what degree the student has mastered that knowledge and skills (Schwartz, 1999: 228). The main lesson book is an instrument through which the student’s will is as involved as his life of thinking and feeling (Schwartz, 1999: 228). I was therefore particularly interested to find evidence of how the teacher’s pedagogy was reflected in the books.

The main lesson books at School A reflected a more traditional way of working in main lesson books. The students could choose between the standard A4 blank books or a display file. At School B the students worked in nature study books, with lined pages alternating with blank pages. The advantage of the traditional blank A4 main lesson book is that the pages lend themselves both to writing and to drawing, and no pages go to waste. A thicker and higher quality of paper is used in the traditional blank main lesson books and potentially these are also aesthetically more pleasing. Developing a sense of aesthetics is an important aspect of Waldorf education (Schwartz, 1999: 289), especially since it strengthens the will (Clouder, 2003: 41), and students could be afforded the opportunity to create works of beauty that they can be proud of, such as the main lesson book (Schwartz, 1999: 291).

The teacher at School A gave very clear indications about how he expected the students to work in their books, i.e. there should be a contents page, the pages should have borders, the written work had to be done in a certain order, and there were quite a number of artistic activities that were completed in the books already in the first week of the main lesson that I observed. As discussed in Chapter three, some of the students had already

started to create borders around their pages. Examples of main lesson books from the previous year indicated that the main lesson books at School A were certainly recognizable as “typical” Waldorf main lesson books, i.e. neatly handwritten texts, illustrated covers, creative borders, and colourful illustrations. One student even presented the classroom work on separate sheets of paper stained with tea to create an “antique” look, rolled up to look like scrolls. The classroom work therefore manifested clearly in the main lesson books.

School B did not work in the traditional way in main lesson books. The teacher stated that he did not want the students to “window dress” the books. He said that he was not so much interested in a finished product as in their actual work (p. 139).

Steiner (cited in Clouder, 2003: 28) argues that teachers must be capable of forming the instruction so that the student does not simply receive something intellectual in the education, but enjoys the teaching in an aesthetic way. He continues to say that the teacher can meet the child’s aesthetic needs if he brings himself into a correct relationship to the student’s feelings (cited in Clouder, 2003: 28). Steiner furthermore concludes that the intellect is the highest mental aspect in the human being; but we should endeavour not to develop it one-sidedly, without a concurrent development of feeling and will, since a one-sided development of the intellect may lead to a tendency towards materialistic thinking. He suggests that by first tastefully, in an aesthetic way, developing sensitivity, the feelings, we can direct the human intellect towards the spirit (cited in Clouder, 2003: 29).

5.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *PARZIVAL* IN THE WALDORF CURRICULUM

Sloan (2007: 11) states that over the years as an English and Drama teacher he has witnessed the ability of literature to “quicken the minds and fortify the hearts” of the youth eager for soul nourishment. He continues to say that literature can present adolescents with more than just material for the typical academic exercises of character analysis and thematic discussion (2007: 11). The classics of literature and poetry (Sloan, 2007: 16) can address teenagers’ deepest needs to learn about themselves, about their relationships, and about the human condition (Sloan, 2007: 11). In other words, literature studies can provide young people with “life lessons” (Sloan, 2007: 11). Barnes (in Gerwin, 1996: 71) writes that “the soul of the adolescent is in a state of glorious imbalance.” The teenager’s soul is “a-flow and a-wash” (Barnes, in Gerwin, 1996: 71) with new, fresh ideals, dangers, dramas, and mysteries. According to Barnes (in Gerwin, 1996: 71) one of the tasks of a high school teacher is to help the students, through the medium of imagination rather than raw experience, to explore these longings, extremes, ideals, dreams, and life riddles even further.

The upper school curriculum for Waldorf schools in the United Kingdom (Rawson, Burnett, Mephram, 1999: 16) states that the Class 11 literature curriculum culminates in a *comprehensive examination* (my italics) of Von Eschenbach’s *Parzival*. Rawson et al. (1999: 16) continue to say that the story investigates many issues of significance to late adolescence, such as the nature of love and marriage; the chivalric ideals of knighthood; illusion and temptation; the abuse of power; alienation and doubt; reconciliation and atonement; the meeting of destiny; and the quest for the Grail and its symbolic and spiritual significance. *Parzival* is a unique story of a quest for selfhood which reflects the adolescent’s inner journey (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 58) and lends itself to a large number of possible activities and themes on which the teacher can focus.

In conversation with both teachers, five ideas were highlighted regarding the importance of the *Parzival* main lesson:

- The story itself, and its accompanying imagery, is of great importance.
- The differences between masculinity and femininity are addressed in a significant way.
- *Parzival* reflects the awakening consciousness of the 16/17-year old adolescent.
- The story mirrors the heightened romanticism of the adolescent at this stage.
- It reflects the feeling of transition experienced by some teenagers.

There is some correlation between the teachers' opinions and that of the two curricula mentioned above. There is agreement that the story of Parsifal reflects the inner journey of the adolescent, the transition experienced by teenagers, and its accompanying awakening consciousness. The nature of love and marriage, and the differences between masculine and feminine, also go hand-in-hand.

The teacher at School B explained that teenagers at sixteen-seventeen often fall in love for the first time and that there is an experience of mutual respect between them (p. 145). He stated that boys and girls were equally challenged on the journey and that respect and admiration developed for each other as they faced the physical challenges of the camp. The teacher pointed out that the Parsifal story also addressed the whole question of masculinity and femininity in a profound way, so that the *Parzival* main lesson became a life skills experience (p. 145). The teacher confirmed that the main focus for him was enabling the students to live into the imagery of the story and internalizing it through thinking and writing about it.

The teacher at School A stated that the significance of the Parsifal story was in the way the medieval landscape gave birth to a very modern story (p. 146). He believed that it reflected the awakening consciousness of the adolescent in terms of taking responsibility for one's own individual actions. According to this teacher *Parzival* also provided different perspectives on what it was like to live in the world, as Parsifal and Gawain were really the opposite of each other. He agreed with the teacher at School B that the

story mirrored the heightened romanticism of the 16/17-year old and explained that often the girls identified with some of the astonishingly beautiful female characters in the story. The boys in turn enjoyed the way in which some of the male characters took charge of situations and faced challenges and difficulties with courage and determination. The teacher thought that the story's appeal also lay in the fact that the women were real characters and played significant, active roles. He drew a parallel between the teenager's middle years and the Middle Ages. Teenagers so often feel in transition and the Middle Ages can similarly be seen as a kind of transitional period in the history of mankind (pp. 145, 146).

Both teachers felt that an important aspect of this main lesson was actually hearing the story itself. The teacher at School B said that the main focus was on allowing the story to unfold and in this way the students discovered many aspects of the tale for themselves (p. 146).

In view of the adolescent's awakening intellect and capacity for abstract thinking (Staley, 1996: 25), teenagers of 16/17 are capable of literary analysis and identifying motifs and symbols, and such work is important for the intellectual development of these students, as indicated by both curricula. Adolescents need to be challenged intellectually in order for the intellect and their thinking capacities to fully develop and mature (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18, 19). Hill (1986: 17) suggests that there are various skills that should be included in the study and enjoyment of literature. Students could be encouraged to visualize mentally what is described in words; they should be able to respond emotionally to the text and to identify with, or feel sympathy for, the hero or heroine; students should be led to understand the characters' motives; they should be able to make critical and moral judgments of varying degrees of sophistication on what they read; and they should be able to detect the relationship which exists between the author and the text (Hill, 1986: 17).

On the other hand, Sloan (2007: 13) feels that "the journey is as important as the destination", that progress can make room for process, and that quantity may defer to

quality. In conversation (Interview C) with another teacher who sometimes team-teaches with the teacher at School B, I mentioned a student who in my view did hardly any work in the week that I observed, but who simply sat idly at his desk in the front of the class. The teacher's response was that "at least he heard the story". Perhaps this student had "gone inside" as one of Sloan's Class 11 students told him some years ago (Sloan, 2007: 80). This student continued to say that he did not know if it was good or bad, but that he had found himself "wandering inwardly" and that he had more "inner chambers" than he had realized (Sloan, 2007: 80). Possibly just hearing the story of Parsifal may lead to some students embarking on this inward journey and discovering their "inner chambers", which is also of immense psychological value for the developing adolescent.

Rudolf Steiner (cited in Gerwin, 1996: 87) wished students to leave high school with a sense for humanity as a whole and for human nature in particular. There is an excellent opportunity to develop some consciousness of this by the manner in which one shapes the study of literature in the upper school.

5.5 WHERE TO FROM HERE?

I observed only the first week of a three-week main lesson block and was therefore interested in how the teachers planned to continue with the main lesson in the following two weeks.

The teacher at School B planned to work on quite a number of prevalent themes in the story, i.e. a comparison between Parsifal and Gawain, the differences between the Grail Castle and the Castle of Wonders, noble love/compassionate love, the connection between quest and question, and the theme of water and its connection to the female characters. He intended that the students to do some more artistic work in terms of two major illustrations, and to complete the mock stained-glass windows. Both teachers considered giving the students more historical background to the story. At School A the teacher would continue with the story, and some more artistic work.

In assessing the main lesson books, both teachers considered using symbols rather than marks. Neither teacher set a test at the end of the main lesson block. The teacher at School A gave the students questions of a more reflective nature, and assessed the books in terms of presentation, artistic work, effort, completeness, and understanding of the themes. At School B the students' work would be assessed in terms of how the students managed to link the journey with the story of *Parzival*, the quality of the written work, the ability of the students to express themselves clearly, and the quality of the artistic work. Neither of the teachers planned to write a conventional report. School A's teacher would write a letter to each student, and at School B the students usually received a decorative report on the main lesson with general remarks addressed to all the students (Interview C, July 2007).

5.6 CONCLUSION

It was immensely enriching for me to have observed two different teachers at two separate schools teaching the same main lesson, and my own practice has benefited from this experience. These different practices in my view demonstrated the possibility of freedom and creativity regarding the presentation and implementation of content, and in this case of the *Parzival* main lesson, within the parameters of the Waldorf curriculum.

In the history of Western vernacular literature, from the troubadours and the minnesingers, Dante, Chaucer, and the authors of the heroic Grail cycles, to the great authors of the Renaissance, we see imagination incarnate deeper and deeper into human experience (Bamford, in Gerwin, 1996: xii, xiii). When we study this tradition, we learn to understand that the vision of the ancients enables the experience of opening the heart (Bamford, in Gerwin, 1996: xiii). We do not usually think of the heart when we think of the study of literature. However, without the painful openness to experience that these authors demand, art cannot be created or understood (Bamford, in Gerwin, 1996: xiii). The German romantic poet, Novalis, expressed it as "to love is to hold the wound always open" (Bamford, in Gerwin, 1996: xiii). Christy Barnes expresses this even more profoundly when she writes:

*A wound awoke me,
Opened the lids that lie closed
Over the eyes of the longing
That lives in the sleeping soul
To be whole;*

*And a word woke me
To reach
Into the wounds of the world –*

*And the wounds
Became speech. (in Gerwin, 1996: xiii).*

The study of literature and the development of a love for the word, provide young adults with more than a simple sense of history, more even than membership of a culture or a sense of human solidarity (Bamford, in Gerwin, 1996: xiii). The study of literature involves what Bamford (in Gerwin, 1996: xiii) calls “soul-making.” He continues to state that information without knowledge and wisdom is without value as far as the primary human task of individuation and human freedom is concerned (in Gerwin, 1996: xiv).

Barnes (in Gerwin, 1996: 3) states that the relationship of education to intellect and imagination should be one of the most fundamental concerns today. She claims that the development of intellectual powers and the ability to absorb information are not enough and that without training the imagination we will not be able to foresee, organize, or originate what is needed for the future (in Gerwin, 1996: 3). Imagination leads to inspiration (Barnes, in Gerwin, 1996: 14). Imagination creates “Cosmos out of Chaos”, and in educating it, we work not with telescope or microscope but upon the exercising and polishing of our own lens of insight (Barnes, in Gerwin, 1996: 16). Barnes (in

Gerwin, 1996: 16) continues to state that the healthy awakening and training of imagination may well be one of the most vital challenges that face educators today.

Respect for the word is the first commandment in the discipline by which a man can be educated to maturity – intellectual, emotional, and moral. Respect for the word – to employ it with scrupulous care and an incorruptible heartfelt love of truth – is essential if there is to be any growth in a society or in the human race (Dag Hammeskjold, in Gerwin, 1996: 25).

Barnes (in Gerwin, 1996: 59) writes that the word contains all human attributes: thought, feeling, will. She continues to say that “It forms and transforms. It is medicine and mediator” (in Gerwin, 1996: 59). The world of *Parzival* is a world of developing individuality. The necessity to question is the essence of the plot, the dynamic movement carrying the individual towards self-development (Leonard, 1997: 9). Beneath the rich clothing and rusty armour of the Medieval landscape is a very modern human being who experiences scepticism and hopelessness. Parsifal must assess the forces in his own nature which carried him to the highest ideal – the Holy Grail – but which also led to his failure to ask the question which would have led to his attaining that ideal (Leonard, 1997: 9). Merry (cited in Leonard, 1997: 10) writes that there is no scene in *Parzival* which does not strike deep into the conscience of the humanity of our time. She asks the question: “Who among us can cry aloud, out of the uttermost depths of Love and Pity – What ails thee?” (cited in Leonard, 1997: 10). What ails thee? – this is the question which would have healed the Grail King of his wound and made Parsifal King of the Grail Castle.

Both schools addressed the relationship between the intellect and the imagination. The journey undertaken by School B prior to the start of the main lesson, led the students not only on a physical journey similar to Parsifal’s but imaginatively it allowed them to identify with certain aspects of the story. The mock stained-glass windows which they were going to make, would also have called upon the imaginative abilities of the students. School A called upon the imagination of the students by the many artistic activities that

were demanded of them in the first week. Both teachers viewed the story as such of paramount importance and in this way allowed the students to experience the fundamental existential questions with which Parsifal is faced.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Joy and woe are woven fine

A clothing for the Soul divine:

Under every grief and pine

Runs a joy with silken twine. (William Blake, cited in Staley, 2006: 2)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the study on how the *Parzival* main lesson was interpreted and presented at two South African Waldorf high schools within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum. In addition to these two schools, I also referred briefly to my own practice at the only other South African Waldorf high school at which the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. The concluding chapter summarises the findings of this study and highlights the limitations of the research as well as its significance. Finally, I submit recommendations pertaining to the teaching of the *Parzival* main lesson.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research was conducted as a multiple case study involving two South African Waldorf high schools at which the *Parzival* main lesson was taught. My research question was concerned with the interpretation and implementation of the *Parzival* main lesson within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum. The main source of data collection was classroom observation, which was enhanced by interviews and classroom artifacts. The findings of this study are summarised under three sections: the relationship between *Parzival* and adolescence; classroom practice; and main lesson books.

6.2.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *PARZIVAL* AND ADOLESCENCE

Fairy tales, myths, and legends have survived for centuries. They express universal truths and can be understood on many levels (Staley, 2006: 5). Campbell (1973: dust jacket) writes that “the latest incarnation of Oedipus, the continued romance of Beauty and the Beast, stands this afternoon on the corner of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the traffic light to change.” This is simply a poetic way of saying that we are all creatures of myth, that the ancient legends and tales are still the master keys to the human psyche (Publishers Weekly in Campbell, 1973: dust jacket). This is also true of *Parzival*. It is a tale recounting the development of a boy from his sheltered childhood to the highest position as King of the Grail. Many of the important themes in *Parzival* are reflected in our own lives and in the lives of teenagers (Carlgren, 1981: 185), such as family relationships, love, reconciliation, betrayal, and loyalty (Rawson, Burnett, Mephram, 1999: 16). Staley (2006: 4) argues that *Parzival* is particularly helpful in understanding the journey from childhood to adulthood, with specific emphasis on the adolescent years. It is for this reason that *Parzival* forms the heart of the Class 11 Waldorf curriculum (Wulsin, 2006). Between ages sixteen and twenty-one the adolescent may occasionally glimpse something bigger, something beyond an everyday awareness of himself (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). Staley (2006: 5) states that this experience may lead the teenager to questions such as “Who am I really?”, and “What am I here for?”

Lievegoed (2005: 100) states that “puberty is a wonderfully dramatic event in the life of a child”. He refers to Wagner’s opera of *Parsifal* as a drama reminiscent of the drama of puberty (2005: 100). Parsifal is banned from the Grail Castle because he entered it in the innocence of his childhood, and as a “pure fool” failed to ask the right question. In the opera, Parsifal now finds himself in the magic garden of the magician, Klingsor. Parsifal breaks the enchantment and Klingsor throws a spear at him which he catches in his hand. At that moment thunder is heard and darkness descends upon the garden. The entire magic world collapses, and Parsifal finds himself standing alone in grey light, surrounded by a rocky wasteland. His task is now to find himself within this loneliness and to re-discover the way to the Grail Castle (Lievegoed, 2005: 100).

These events reflect the experiences of the beginning of puberty. The light, colourful, innocent world of early childhood is exchanged for a bare, grey world of naked facts (Lievegoed, 2005: 100). According to Lievegoed (2005: 100), loneliness is the leitmotif of puberty. He sights the example of typical comments that are often found in the diaries of teenagers: “No one understands me. Has anyone ever been as lonely as me?” The characteristics of adolescent imbalance are related to the experience of loneliness (Lievegoed, 2005: 101). Out of this loneliness a path is sought towards others, towards the world, towards the community of the Grail, to use the imagery of *Parzival*. After separation, and after what one could term a period of analysis, there follows a period of synthesis (Lievegoed, 2005: 101). Lievegoed (2005: 101) states that striving towards this synthesis is what dominates the last seven-year period before full adulthood. Querido (1991: iv) describes how in teaching *Parzival* to various Class 11 students in Europe and the United States, he realised how important the universal relevance of this tale is to seventeen-year olds, when they start grappling with the questions of life and death.

Staley (2006: 2) refers to the journey of adolescence as “the journey through the Sacred Passage”. Parsifal’s journey echoes the path of the adolescent in many ways. In the journey through adolescence the teenager advances from an old place to a new place and to a new position in the community (Staley, 2006: 212), just as Parsifal does. Adolescents often experience trials and tribulations, and rites of passage can facilitate a new status and a new awareness (Staley, 2006: 212). These are echoed in *Parzival* itself and in the Class 11 journey at School B and the class camp after the completion of the main lesson at School A.

Just as Parsifal’s journey was a dangerous one, so is the path of the adolescent. The transitions from early to middle to later adolescence are the stepping stones of adolescent development (Staley, 2006: 104). Like Parsifal, the teenager has to learn to be flexible in response, has to learn to see the bigger picture, discovers that there are greater and lesser values (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12), and hopefully encounters adult role models who guide them through the “Sacred Passage” (Staley, 2006: 104).

The teachers at both schools agreed that *Parzival* reflects the awakening consciousness of the 16/17 year-old, that the story mirrors the heightened romanticism of the adolescent at this stage, and that it highlights the feeling of transition experienced by so many teenagers. They also believed that the story itself and its accompanying imagery were of great importance.

The teacher at School B explained that the boys and girls were equally challenged on the journey and that respect and admiration developed for each other as they faced the physical challenges of the camp. According to the teacher, the Parsifal story also addressed the whole question of masculinity and femininity in a profound way, so that the *Parzival* main lesson became an exercise in life skills. The teacher confirmed that the main focus for him was enabling the students to live into the imagery of the story, internalizing it through thinking and writing about it.

The teacher at School A believed that *Parzival* reflected an awakening to responsibility for one's own actions in adolescents. He stated that it also provided several perspectives on what it was like to live in the world, as Parsifal and Gawain were really the opposite of each other. He agreed with the teacher at School B that the story mirrored the heightened romanticism of the 16/17-year old as the girls often identified with many of the strong, attractive, and independent female characters in the story, and the boys enjoyed the courage and determination of the male characters. The teacher compared the transition so often experienced by teenagers in their middle years to the Middle Ages which can be seen as a kind of transitional period in the history of mankind (p.146).

Both teachers agreed that an important part of this main lesson was actually hearing the story itself and allowing it simply to unfold so that the students could discover certain aspects of the story for themselves. In conversation with another teacher (p. 146) who has taught this main lesson overseas, I mentioned a student I had noticed at School B who seemed to have done very little in the week that I was there. This student for instance did not do any work in his main lesson book. This teacher commented that "at least he heard

the story”, indicating that hearing the story was just as important as the other aspects that formed part of the main lesson.

Barbara Francis (1995: 99) writes that two themes in particular stand out as of profound value in the *Parzival* main lesson block for Class 11 students in New York City. The first theme is that of the single mother raising a child in an over-protected manner, and the pain that follows when the child needs to spread his wings and assert his own independence (Francis, 1995: 100, 101), as reflected in the relationship of Herzeloide and Parsifal. Francis (1995: 101) writes that many students in her classes are familiar with families consisting of a single mother and an only child. They sympathize with Parzival because they are aware of the overprotective gestures of the mother, and the difficulty in finding their own independence without causing their mothers pain. The second theme is that of Parsifal proceeding with his life in such a way that he unwittingly causes distress and destruction in the lives of those around him (Francis, 1995: 102). The students point out this phenomenon in their own smaller social circles as well as in the context of New York City (Francis, 1995: 102). They cite the deaths of unintended victims during gang and drug wars, when innocent women and children are caught in the crossfire; as well as the simpler ways in which we hurt those around us unintentionally in what we do or say (Francis, 1995: 103). Francis (1995: 104) continues to say that students are often shocked when they realize that harm to another human being is just as devastating when it is unintentional as when it is intentional.

A survey conducted at twenty Waldorf High Schools in America in 2003 and 2004, reveals that the top five choices for the most positive academic experience include the *Parzival* main lesson (Gerwin, 2005: 61). Students singled out the *Parzival* main lesson in nearly every school that offered it (Gerwin, 2005: 61). It ranks as number five on the list, preceded by the humanities, especially history and English; Science, especially biology and chemistry; Mathematics, especially geometry; and the senior research project (Gerwin, 2005: 61). Students were asked to list those subjects that had most influenced their thinking. The responses focused overwhelmingly on the main lessons taught in

Classes 10, 11, and 12, especially the literature main lessons. Here again the *Parzival* main lesson in particular was mentioned (Gerwin, 2005: 62).

Rawson and Richter (2000: 12) continue to describe the suitability of *Parzival* for Class 11. They state that the story of *Parzival* itself concentrates on inwardness and the individual's path via the stages of failure, guilt, atonement, and grace through several aspects of the story, including the encounter with the medieval courtly world, the limitations and possibilities of a society that is guided by external principles, and the Gawain sub-plot which reveals a whole universe of human abysses and tasks in connection with the relationship between "you and me" (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). *Parzival* is suitable in an educational context because it combines history with the general and the individual. The developmental progression is more easily seen than in a modern novel in that the medieval world picture is strictly formed and inward-looking (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12). The story ends in an idealized conclusion with Parsifal's integration into the world. Furthermore, this work offers many opportunities, from a language-teaching perspective, for essays, exercises on language and structure, historical studies, and questions on literary form (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 12).

6.2.2 CLASSROOM PRACTICE

The three-part structure of a main lesson is quite clear, as discussed by Rawson and Richter (2000: 19, 20) in their fundamental Waldorf curriculum. Every trained Waldorf teacher will be aware of the essential structure of the main lesson (conversation with Gwynn Dawson, April, 2009). The rhythm of the main lesson is usually divided into three phases (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). In the high school the first part consists of the morning verse, movement, speech exercises, and recall of previous material. The morning verse is a verse given by Rudolf Steiner specifically with which to start the day, and this same verse is used throughout the world in various translations.

Traditionally, teachers greet each student by hand and by name as they enter the classroom. The teacher often lights a candle in reverence for the morning verse which is recited together by the teacher and students.

A main lesson should engage the student's willing, feeling, and thinking (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20). Maher and Bleach (1996: 36) state that unless all three parts of the student's inner being, i.e. the thinking, the feeling, and the willing, are fully engaged, we are not educating the whole child.

Each main lesson therefore also consists of a rhythmic part, engaging the student's will. This serves to "warm up" the students, creates inner movement, and arouses interest in the activities of the classroom (Maher & Bleach, 1996: 36). In the high school, teachers often start with a couple of stretching exercises and even ball games from the Bothmer Gymnastics, or Spatial Dynamics, syllabus. Count Fritz von Bothmer was the gymnastics teacher at the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart (Childs, 1991: 196). He was asked by Rudolf Steiner to develop a system of gymnastics with the aim of imparting an enhanced experience of space, and of cultivating greater strength of will (Childs, 1991: 196). Steiner claimed that purposeful movements have a stimulating effect on the student's will (Childs, 1991: 107), and require a fair degree of alertness and concentration (Childs, 1991: 107).

This first phase of the main lesson includes speech exercises like tongue twisters and the memorization of a poem pertaining to the content of the main lesson. Practising individual sounds through tongue twisters at the beginning of the lesson, enables the students to take hold of their speech organs in a more conscious way before continuing to recite poetry or prose (Jaffke & Maier, 1983: 5). The recitation of poetry also engenders in students an appreciation for the beauty of language (Schwartz, 1999: 285). The recitation of the morning verse, as well as the memorization of a poem or prose extract, trains the student's will, memory, and feelings (Childs, 1991: 107).

The speech exercises are usually followed by the recall of previous material. The activities involving repetition, practise, and habit are essentially will-activities, and these build up the powers of memory (Childs, 1991: 106). Steiner established three important rules to strengthen memory: concepts which load the memory; artistic activities which build it up; and exercises of will to strengthen it (Childs, 1991: 107). Recall does not involve simply retelling the previous day's lesson. Recapitulation is mainly oral in nature, and is comparable to what Schwartz (1999: 232) calls the "Socratic dialogue". Bernard and Brogran (cited in Schwartz, 1999: 232) explain that the Socratic dialogue involves an active conversation between the teacher and the student which is pedagogical in nature. They determine that the Socratic conversation offers a useful structure for educational transformation and provides valuable insights into the nature of learning (Schwartz, 1999: 232). Waldorf teachers believe that a real conversation between the teacher and the student is a very useful educational tool. Dynamic recapitulation is therefore a major skill practised daily in the main lesson, and may even be used in other lessons (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

The second phase of the main lesson constitutes the introduction of new material and discussion thereof (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20).

The third phase usually occurs towards the end of the main lesson, and constitutes individual working (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 20), either on a task set specifically for the classroom or on homework. These may include tasks such as clay modelling, drawing, painting, or written work. Students can work in groups or individually on their own.

A main lesson should try to show a progression from willing, to feeling, to thinking (Blunt, 1995: 167). The main lesson structure and rhythm are the clearest and most systematic way of putting Steiner's educational thought into practice (Blunt, 1995: 168, 169). Teachers are not always successful in integrating this progression from willing, to feeling, to thinking, in a single main lesson (Blunt, 1995: 169), but it remains an ideal to be striven towards.

Even so, there is ample creative freedom available to the teacher within these parameters (Steiner, 1983 (a): 165). The teacher makes a choice concerning the content and process of the speech exercises, the way the recall is done, artistic exercises, written work, and how and in which order students work in the main lesson books.

This freedom within the parameters of the Waldorf curriculum was clearly demonstrated by the individual ways in which the *Parzival* main lesson was taught by the two teachers whose lessons I observed. Their practice in turn differed from my own. The greeting of the students and the recitation of the morning verse were approached quite differently at both schools where I observed. School B had a more informal start to the morning whereas School A's approach was more traditional. School B did speech exercises twice in the first week, and School A was planning on starting the speech work in the following week. The recapitulation at School A was done daily and the teacher alternated the ways in which it was managed, i.e. some mornings the recall was attempted through the medium of an artistic exercise, and on other days the teacher chose to do it orally. School B spent a greater part of the main lesson recalling the previous week's camp and rewriting their diaries into the main lesson books. The presentation of new material was also unique to each teacher. The teacher at School A presented the students with new material every day. He usually related a certain part of the story after which he highlighted important details. The students were then given either an artistic exercise or a written one concerned with the new material he had just introduced. The teacher at School B introduced new material twice in the week that I observed and set the students the task of drawing a map of their journey as well as starting the preliminary work on the mock stained-glass windows which they were going to work on the following week. The willing, feeling, thinking trichotomy also differed at the two schools. School A's rhythm was a more daily rhythm, whereas the rhythm at School B seemed to be a more weekly rhythm.

6.2.3 MAIN LESSON BOOKS

Main lesson books are an extremely important component not only of the main lesson but of Waldorf education as such. A typical main lesson book (Appendix B) will instantly be recognized by any teacher or parent who has ever been involved in Waldorf education (Schwartz, 1999: 228, 229). Most students take great pride in their main lesson books, and these are the books parents pack away carefully for future generations to enjoy!

The artistic presentation of main lesson books forms an integral part of Waldorf methodology (Trostly, 1998: 272), since a minimum of textbooks is used in the main lesson, and students therefore create their own “textbooks” so to speak (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 22, 23). Every subject in a Waldorf school should be permeated with artistic activity (Schwartz, 1999: 284). The ability to create something artistic is understood to be a perfectly natural endowment, and the assumption is that every student is capable of drawing, painting, sculpting, carving, knitting, and dancing, in the same sense that students are expected to read, write, and work with numbers (Schwartz, 1999: 284). This makes it possible for a significant synergy to occur when subjects generally regarded as “academic” are approached with an aesthetic sensibility, e.g. when a physics demonstration must be sketched attractively as well as accurately (Schwartz, 1999: 284).

Main lesson books are instantly recognized by Waldorf teachers worldwide as a tradition has developed in Waldorf schools in terms of what a main lesson book should “look” like (M. Rawson, personal communication, August 14, 2008; Appendix B). A main lesson book is usually a softbound book with twenty-four to sixty blank A4-size pages. Some Waldorf high schools allow students to work on loose sheets of blank paper which is then filed in a display file (Schwartz, 1999: 228). Main lesson books look alike in so many ways, i.e. unlined pages filled with handwritten notes, and illustrated with coloured pencils or even water colour paint and pastel crayons; usually pages have artistically designed borders and illustrated front covers (Carlgren, 1981: 174, 183; Roseway Recorder, 2005: 4, 5; Roseway Recorder, 2006: 7, 8, 9). Teachers therefore have the

freedom to determine how they would like students to work in main lesson books, albeit within the parameters of the Waldorf “tradition”.

The student fills the blank main lesson book with content, e.g. compositions and illustrations drawn from the content of the main lesson (Schwartz, 1999: 228). The main lesson book serves as a text and a test. It forms the keystone to the Waldorf evaluative process (Schwartz, 1999: 228) in that it contains knowledge and skills imparted by the main lesson process, as well as serving as an evaluative tool for assessing to what degree the student has mastered that knowledge and skills (Schwartz, 1999: 228). The main lesson book is a text that is created together by the teacher and the student. It represents the essence of all that the student has learned in a main lesson block (Schwartz, 1999: 228). These books are collected by the teacher at the end of the main lesson block for assessment. It is not uncommon for students who had kept their main lesson books to show them to their grandchildren years later (Schwartz: 1999: 229)!

School A created “typical” main lesson books containing written exercises as well as artistic work. The classroom work was clearly reflected in these books. School A allowed the students a choice between the standard A4 blank books, and using a display file in which they filed blank pages on which the work had been done (Observation notes A, June 2007). The teacher demanded a certain order in which the content of the work had to be done in the books. He even wrote it on the board for them on one occasion so that they could check it against their own books (Observation notes A, June 2007). I noticed that some of the students had already started to create borders around some of the pages (Figure 4.6). Some examples from completed main lesson books from the previous year illustrated that the main lesson books at School A were recognizable as traditional Waldorf main lesson books (Figure 4.7 and 4.8). The books at School A also contained many artistic activities and were handwritten.

School B’s main lesson books were not the characteristic Waldorf main lesson books. The students worked in what is known as nature study books, with a lined page on the right and a blank page on the left. The teacher indicated (Interview B, March 2007) that

he did not want them to window-dress the books, and that he considered these books as work books -

I want to see their work rather than a finished product. The product will come at the end of the main lesson. It will be artistic and reflected from some aspect of the story.

Hence there was no sign of borders or artistic work (except for the map of the journey – see Figure 4.9), and other written work besides the journals and Parsifal story that they were transcribing into their main lesson books. Examples from the previous year's books also indicated that they did not create main lesson books in the conventional Waldorf sense of the word.

6.3 LIMITATIONS

An interpretive stance leads one to focus on individual meaning making, subjective meanings, and multiple realities, and it is therefore often difficult to determine where the “truth” lies. Le Compte and Preissle (cited in Cohen et al., 2007: 168) propose that the intent of research of this nature is to create a vivid reconstruction of the group that is under investigation. Consequently the interpretive orientation was the ideal paradigm from which to conduct this study, which involved the only three South African Waldorf schools at which the *Parzival* main lesson is taught. In a study such as this, one could not determine any one “truth” but rather had to observe different classroom practices of the presentation and interpretation of the *Parzival* main lesson within the wider context of the Waldorf curriculum.

I referred fleetingly to my own practice in Chapter four simply to demonstrate the individual approaches to the *Parzival* main lesson by three different teachers within the constraints of the Waldorf paradigm. Although one has no pretence of objectivity, it was nevertheless sometimes difficult to maintain an objective outlook on my own practice. The danger is that one may use one's own practice as a form of self-validation and that it would then become a standard or norm against which to measure other practices. Although I had one of my main lessons videotaped by someone else in an effort to gain

some distance from my own practice, I am not sure that watching it contributed towards objectivity on my part. Since I am also a teacher trainer, I found it at times difficult to remain objective and non-judgmental in my observations of the practices involved in this study. Chapters five and six were particularly difficult to write because I kept on donning my teacher training hat and I am not sure that I managed to remain objective at all times.

The sample that was available for me to work with was quite small. There are only three Waldorf schools in South Africa that continue to Class 12 and at which the Class 11 *Parzival* main lesson is taught. I necessarily therefore could only base my research on these three schools, one of which is the one at which I teach. This also makes anonymity problematic, as it would be quite easy to determine which schools I refer to. A more comprehensive and perhaps objective study would have been made possible by a larger sample, possibly including other English-speaking Waldorf schools such as the ones in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and America.

This study relied strongly on the cooperation of the participants, i.e. the two teachers and the Class 11 students at these schools. My own students posed no problem, and neither did the students at the other two schools. I found that students were generally quite eager to volunteer their main lesson books. However, teachers are usually very busy and not always comfortable with having someone else observing their teaching, let alone videotape it. The data from School B was also not as rich as I would have wished for. Although member checking was encouraged, I did not always encounter the cooperation I would have preferred.

I observed only the first week of a three-week main lesson at each school. This limited my impressions. Observing all three weeks of a main lesson would have provided me with richer data and would have enabled me to see completed main lesson books as well.

Research on Waldorf education in South Africa is a fairly new field and the limited research that is being conducted within the circles of the Waldorf community tends to be of a defensive character rather than a more objective one. In view of the recent

introduction of the GET and NSC, much time is spent by the Federation of Southern African Waldorf Schools in drawing up documentation for the Department of Education that will enable Waldorf schools in South Africa to retain their independence and to guarantee minimal interference in the Waldorf curriculum, the content of which is based on the Anthroposophical view of child development and what is age appropriate, which is not always in agreement with other educational organizations. Committed Waldorf teachers spend much time in studying a vast body of Steiner literature. This can lead, as in my own case, to a dedication to Steiner education and philosophy that makes it difficult to develop objectivity or even an interest in other educational movements and theories. The Waldorf community in South Africa forms quite a separate community due to its defensive character as well as the dedicated parental involvement in most schools. This makes it difficult for objective research by its own members, and yet this would be most useful since a comprehensive knowledge of the theory and practice of Waldorf education is needed in order to conduct research in this field.

Lastly, I felt limited in my access to more recent literature on Steiner published in German. I am not proficient in German, and I therefore could not engage with literature available in German, not yet translated into English, which adopts a more critical look at Steiner and Waldorf education (Martin Rawson, personal communication, December, 3, 2008).

6.4 POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE STUDY

Lincoln and Guba (in Cohen et al., 2007: 168) suggest that qualitative research involve investigations in their natural settings since context is of great concern in meaning. I thus found the process of this research personally very valuable. As a Waldorf teacher I have not always had the opportunity of observing lessons in other Waldorf schools. Although I have extensive knowledge of the Waldorf curriculum, and have been a teacher-trainer for a number of years, it was extremely interesting to see how different teachers interpret and present the same material. I observed two very diverse *Parzival* main lessons, which were

in turn unlike my own practice. This study enabled me to view my own practice more critically and to consider various changes and improvements.

I think that a physical challenge of some sort is very valuable linked to the *Parzival* main lesson such as the journey undertaken by the students in School B prior to starting the main lesson. A more contemplative experience such as the one planned by School A is equally appropriate considering Parsifal's time spent with Trevrezent and Gurnemanz. In terms of my own practice, it would be good to attempt either of these two experiences, as I have not done so in the past. This would add a more experiential dynamic to the main lesson.

I consider the artistic activities set by the teacher at School A exceptionally useful. They engaged the students not only artistically but also occupied their imagination and their feeling life. Artistic activities by its very nature of course always involve the will (Blunt, 1995: 95; Steiner, 1976: 45). I particularly appreciated the exercise in which the students drew the entwined hands of Gahmuret and Belacane. The process of drawing with the eyes closed and then transforming this into their books also appealed to me, and I would like to incorporate this into my own practice.

It is my wish that this study should be valuable not only to Waldorf teachers but also to teachers outside of Waldorf schools. Hopefully it would open up interest for research in other aspects of Waldorf education such as Eurythmy (a form of movement taught in Waldorf schools), Bothmer Gymnastics, school governance (which is quite different in Waldorf schools since they have a predominantly flat structure), and the way in which writing and reading are taught in Waldorf schools.

Although the *Parzival* main lesson in this instance takes place within the context of the Waldorf curriculum, I believe that it can be attempted outside the main lesson realm as well. The artistic activities and the journaling exercise are techniques that could be valuable in any teaching situation. In fact, I believe that many elements in a main lesson

can be used in any classroom situation, e.g. greeting students by hand, reciting a morning verse, choral work, and recall exercises, as well as the creation of a “main lesson” book.

It is my hope therefore that non-Waldorf teachers would find this study useful as well and that it would generate an interest in Waldorf education as such. The closed nature of Waldorf communities, and the alternative and often misunderstood Anthroposophical approach of its pedagogy, can benefit greatly from academic research, both within Waldorf education as well as “putting it on the map” so to speak. There are 17 Waldorf schools in South Africa at present and two new schools will be opening their doors in 2010. It is a system of education that appeals to many parents and it would be good if the myths and misunderstandings surrounding Waldorf schools could be dissolved by more academic research.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

There are two important principles that a teacher in a Waldorf school needs to take cognizance of: the nature of the human being according to Anthroposophy, and the essential components of a main lesson.

Rawson and Richter (2000: 19, 20) in their seminal Waldorf curriculum, as well as Maher and Bleach (1996: 36), state unequivocally that a two-hour main lesson consists very clearly of three parts; it should engage the student’s willing, feeling, and thinking; and unless all three these aspects of the student’s inner being are fully engaged, we are not *educating the whole child*, which is one of the dictums of Waldorf education. It is therefore essential that teachers aim at following the rhythm of the main lesson and that the main lesson addresses the willing, feeling, and thinking faculties of the child; otherwise it simply becomes a two-hour chain of events.

According to Anthroposophy, with the awakening of the astral body at the onset of adolescence (Steiner, 1996: 15), the child becomes increasingly capable of forming abstract concepts (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18). The thinking forces of the child now

start to mature and one notices the development of a critical attitude (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 18). Steiner (1996: 14) states that the educator works directly with the physical, etheric, astral, and I-bodies of the child. The Waldorf curriculum has been designed to work specifically with these emerging faculties of the child (Rawson & Richter, 2000: 5, 7, 14), i.e. the faculties of willing, feeling, and thinking, which are related to the awakening of the physical, etheric, and astral bodies of man.

The main lesson book moreover forms the keystone to the Waldorf evaluative process (Schwartz, 1999: 228). It serves both as a text and as an assessment tool, and reflects the knowledge and skills imparted to the student during the main lesson block (Schwartz, 1999: 228).

I therefore wish to present the following recommendations based on the observation of the first week of a three-week *Parzival* main lesson block in two South African Waldorf high schools:

- It is essential that teachers aim to follow the three-phase rhythm of a main lesson.
- Addressing the willing, feeling, and thinking faculties of the student is of vital importance.
- Teachers should aspire to attempt the daily practise of speech exercises.
- The awakening thinking faculties of the adolescent needs to be addressed, i.e. students require to be adequately challenged academically, and the teacher should guard against allowing artistic and/or experiential exercises to detract from an in-depth study of the *Parzival* text.
- The importance of the process of creating the main lesson book should not be overlooked.

Furthermore, I wish to recommend that a more active exchange takes place between Waldorf teachers at various schools in order to enable them to observe the practices of other Waldorf teachers, which will in turn enrich their own practices.

Lastly, I would like to encourage Waldorf teachers to engage in research on various aspects of Waldorf education which could enhance not only their own practices but Waldorf education as such.

6.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion therefore, the high school teacher at a Waldorf school, and in this instance, particularly the teacher responsible for the *Parzival* main lesson, should be aware of the context within which the main lesson takes place, i.e. within the context of the *Waldorf* curriculum. Central to this curriculum is the nature of the human being and the phases of child development according to Anthroposophy. The main lesson structure and rhythm, and the main lesson book, are the clearest and most systematic way of putting Steiner's educational thought into practice (Blunt, 1995: 168, 169). These aspects of Waldorf education consequently need to be considered. Even so, as is demonstrated by this study, it is still possible for the teacher to maintain creative freedom within the parameters of the Waldorf curriculum and Waldorf pedagogy (Steiner, 1983 (a): 165).

Surveys conducted in America (Francis, 1995; Gerwin, 2005) indicate that upper school students experienced the *Parzival* main lesson as one of the most significant main lessons in their high school careers. The importance of the story as well as its accompanying symbolism and themes must hence not be underestimated.

The universal theme of the "Search for the Holy Grail" has lost none of its attraction, even for today's youth. This is borne out by the popularity of the *Parzival* main lesson (Francis, 1995; Gerwin, 2005), as well as the success of the *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* books and films, and the ongoing publication of books dealing with the theme of the Holy Grail.

Finally, Steiner (1983 (a): 165) states that he does not aim at transforming teachers into "teaching machines", but into free independent teachers. He provides four principles for teachers to which he would like them to adhere steadfastly: the teacher must be a man of

initiative in everything that he does, great and small; the teacher should be one who is interested in the being of the whole world and of humanity; the teacher must be one who never makes a compromise in his heart and mind with what is untrue; and most importantly, the teacher must never get stale or grow sour (1983 (a): 164 165).

Turn your thoughts again and yet again to all that has been said which can lead you to an understanding of the human being and especially of the child. It will be of service to you in all the many questions of method which may arise (Steiner, 1983 (a): 166).

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APPENDIX A

A SYNOPSIS OF *PARZIVAL*

(Based on Hutchins: 1992)

BOOK 1

GAMURET

The poet begins his theme with a strange comparison. We are told that a dauntless man's spirit is both black and white like the magpie's plumage. Both colours have a share in him, the colour of heaven and the colour of hell. Inconstancy is black like hell, while steadfast thoughts draw near to the brightness of heaven; and yet the one who strives may win his way to blessedness after all. It is here made clear that the leading theme of the poem is the struggle of the human being to transform his lower nature. The hero of the story is a brave man yet 'slowly wise,' for the overcoming of darkness and the emergence into light is a long process, and can be achieved only through steadfast endeavour.

The story is first of all concerned with Parzival's father, Gamuret of Anjou. As the younger son of a knight, he inherited nothing under Roman law from his father. His older brother offered to share his inheritance with Gamuret, but he wanted to pursue knightly adventures elsewhere. He accepted from

his brother sixteen squires, four pages, five horses, and four traveling chests filled with gold and jewels. His mother gave him a chest full of precious silks. He then set out for the East to win renown under the Baruch of Baghdad, who was said to have power over two thirds of the earth. In the Baruch's service Gamuret changed his coat of arms from his family escutcheon of a panther to the sign of an ermine white anchor against a background of emerald green, with golden ropes looped through it, for he felt the need of establishing himself in life. It is said that he won fame throughout heathendom and was admired by both Muslims and Christians.

Years later, in the course of his adventures, he came to Zazamanc, a country of the Moors on the coast of Africa, where he was drawn into a remarkable conflict. The Queen of the realm had been wooed by a Moorish Prince, Isenhart, but she had refused to accept his love until he had proved his devotion in deeds of daring. In fighting to win her regard he lost his life. To avenge their lord his followers attacked Queen Belakane in her capital city of Patelamunt. At the same time a Christian army led by a Scottish noble, a vassal of Isenhart, joined the combat against the Queen.

We are told that there were sixteen gates to Patelamunt, which during the war were never closed. Attacking the eight gates on the West was the dark-skinned Muslim army; against the eight gates on the East the Christians were assembled. Gamuret conquered both armies and was accepted as the Queen's husband, and so was able to restore peace. His victory enabled him to take over the splendid equipment of Isenhart; a magnificent tent, a helmet of diamond, a suit of armour, and a sword.

He brought both armies before the Queen to give her the kiss of peace. He was able to unite West and East but he had not acquired steadfastness. After a short while he became restless and, just before the birth of their son, he steals away in the middle of the night in quest of further adventure. He leaves her a letter explaining his ancestry. As the father was white and the mother black, the child was born streaked black and white. 'Like the magpie was the colour of his hair and skin.'

BOOK 2

HERZELEIDE

On his return to France, Gamuret learned of a grand tournament. Herzeleide, Queen of the realms of Norgals and Waleis, had arranged a contest in which the winner would be accepted as her husband and would share her rule. Without considering the obligations involved, Gamuret determined to try his strength against the many famous champions entering the lists. The poet gives an eloquent description of the splendour of Gamuret's approach, preceded by trumpeters, fiddlers and drummers, and of the setting up of the royal tent of Isenhart.

In the contest Gamuret overcame all opponents but his triumph brought him into difficulties. The King of France had just died and the widowed Queen Anflise now sent messengers to claim Gamuret as her rightful husband, because in the course of his knightly training, he had chosen her as his ideal. On the other hand the rules of the tournament required that he should accept Queen Herzeleide. Gamuret stoutly refused both on the ground that he had a beloved wife in the East; but he found himself overborne. No one in a Christian country would acknowledge the validity of a pagan marriage. Finally Gamuret had to accept the ruling of the judges of the tournament. He sent a message to the Queen of France that he was still loyal to her as his ideal, but that this did not involve marriage, and he took Herzeleide as his wife. She won his love but again he could not settle. When he had first

set out on his adventures he had prayed: "May God show me the ways of blessedness." He still felt that his quest was not yet fulfilled.

At the very moment of his victory in the tournament, Gamuret had received the sad news of his elder brother's death on account of which he now became the ruler of Anjou. He reverted to the family crest of the panther. He became restless for adventure and left for the East. Once again, he left behind a pregnant wife.

Some months after Gamuret's departure, Herzeleide laid one noontide in a restless slumber. Suddenly it seemed that lightning was flashing round her and she was caught up into the clouds. Thunder rolled, sparks of fire seemed to spring from her windblown hair and there came a violent rush of rain like burning tears. Then the dream changed. She had given birth to a dragon and was suckling it; but it sprang away from her and disappeared, never to return. She awoke in anguish to find that a messenger had arrived with tragic news. Her husband had lost his life fighting in the East.

His death had been brought about by treachery. Resting from combat in the noonday heat, Gamuret had removed his armour and the diamond helmet he had won from Isenhart. An envious knight, through the spells of black magic, filled a vessel with the blood of a he-goat and poured it into the helmet thereby softening the diamond that had hitherto withstood the hardest steel. When Gamuret awoke to the cry of battle and rushed into the conflict, his enemy's sword pierced through the helmet and Gamuret met his death.

The Baruch ordered a costly funeral. An epitaph, engraved on the diamond helmet and secured on a cross made from a single emerald above his grave, proclaimed his many triumphs and included the words: 'He was baptized in the Christian faith, yet his death was a grief to Saracens. Wish him bliss that lies here.' His gold coffin was decorated with precious stones, and a single slab cut from a ruby was laid over his grave.

Gamuret had the courage and qualities of heart to unite West and East, but he lacked constancy and so the forces of evil were able to overcome him. The task in which he had failed would pass to his son Parzival to fulfill.

Herzeleide for a while gave way to violent grief, but she was already bearing Gamuret's child and she summoned up her strength for the sake of their son. A fortnight later she gave birth to a sturdy boy and comforted herself fondling him and calling him by the endearing terms of 'Bon fils, cher fils, beau fils.' However, she was determined that on no account should he follow in the steps of his father, so leaving their three kingdoms in the charge of a regent, she took him away into the woods of Soltane and brought him up as a child of nature, entirely removed from all contact with the culture of his time. She ordered her servants never to mention knighthood or speak to him of the life he was being denied.

BOOK 3

GURNEMANZ

We find in many legends that the hero who is to bring a new impulse to mankind needs in early life to be protected from the customs and traditions of his time. It was well for Parzival that he was saved from the elaborate and artificial codes of mediaeval chivalry. He grew up with all the wonder and unrepressed delight of childhood. In his woodland home there were no luxuries; he washed in the stream, he made his own bow and arrows and helped the servants hunt for food. He knew nothing of death, and when he shot down the birds and silenced their singing, he wept.

There was one lesson his mother taught him which brings to mind the leading theme of the poem. When he asked her 'What is God?' she replied, 'He is brighter than the daylight, yet He took upon Himself the features of man. Pray to Him when in trouble for His fidelity has ever offered help to the world. But there is one called the Master of Hell, and he is black and faithlessness is his mark. From him turn your thought away, and also from inconstant wavering.'

One day when Parzival was roaming through the woods, four members of King Arthur's Court came riding past to rescue a maiden whom two knights were carrying away by force. The leader, who was in shining armour, asked Parzival if the fugitives had passed that way. The boy knelt in reverence for he

imagined that this shining figure must be God. When the leader told him about Arthur's Court and the noble order of Knighthood, Parzival questioned them in wonder about the armour and their weapons. They were astonished that this beautiful lad could be so ignorant and, finding that he could give them no help, they rode on their way.

The boy went at once to his mother and told her about the riders who were "more shining than God." He demanded a horse so that he could ride away at once to become a knight at Arthur's Court. Herzeleide was grieved to the heart; she dressed him in the garb of a fool and mounted him on a poor knock-kneed pony that stumbled at every step, for she thought that when folk mocked him he would be glad to come back to her. But so great was her sorrow that as he rode away she fell lifeless to the ground.

All unconscious that he had caused his mother's death, Parzival went on his way until he came to a lordly pavilion. Its owner, Prince Orilus, had ridden out, leaving his wife Jeschute resting. Parzival made his way into the tent. Herzeleide had given him misleading advice about how to treat ladies; she said that he should kiss them and ask for a token, perhaps a ring. He saw Jeschute sleeping so he went to kiss her and snatched her ring and broach; then he helped himself to the food and drink laid out on a table. Jeschute was alarmed but felt she could do nothing against someone so strong. She could only beg him to leave her. Soon after he had gone, Orilus returned. When Jeschute told her tale he was convinced that she had encouraged the lad, and, in a jealous rage, he tore off her clothing, leaving her only a linen smock.

Parzival was riding on his way, blissfully ignorant of the wrong he had done, when he came upon a maiden, holding a dead knight in her arms. She was weeping and tearing her long brown braids for grief. The simple boy addressed her with mingled pity and curiosity. He was anxious to know whether the knight was dead and who had done this deed. In spite of her grief the maiden perceived the boy's true nature. She greeted him with the words. 'You have virtue in you. Honour be to your sweet youth and to your lovely face. In truth you will be rich in blessings.'

When she asked his name, all he knew was that his mother had called him, 'Bon fils, cher fils.' She at once recognized him, for she was his cousin Siguné, who long ago had been cared for by his mother. From her, for the first time, Parzival learned his name. She also told him that Schionatulander, the dead knight for whom she mourned, had lost his life at the hand of Orilus while defending Parzival's domains. He had died for Parzival's sake. The lad was at once eager to avenge her lover's death, but she misdirected him, fearing that he could be no match for a seasoned warrior. Parzival was to meet Siguné twice again in the course of his wanderings and each time he was to gain self-knowledge.

At last he reached Arthur's Court which had just been shaken by an act of revolt. Ither of Gaheviess, known as the Red Knight, was indignant that Arthur had given a judgement against him. To express his contempt, he had ridden into the hall, snatched a golden goblet from the table, spilling the wine over the Queen's lap, and had defied any knight who dared to come and

claim it from him in combat. As the leading knights were absent on adventures, no one responded. Parzival's arrival in quest of knighthood aroused merriment among the squires and pages; but when he heard that no one was willing to challenge the Red Knight, he demanded the task. Against his judgement, Arthur was persuaded to agree.

Among the courtiers was a maiden, Kunnewaaré, who was doomed never to laugh until she beheld the one who was to win supreme honour. As in his fool's dress, Parzival rode out, she laughed, not in mockery but in joy. Sir Kay, indignant that she was laughing at such an unworthy object, struck her severely. This made a deep impression on Parzival; again someone had innocently suffered on his behalf.

On the jousting meadow outside the town the Red Knight was waiting for combat. When a lad in fool's garments, riding on a shabby horse, challenged him, he could not take it seriously, and with the butt end of his spear pushed Parzival off his mount. Leaping to his feet in anger, Parzival flung a javelin, aiming at the eye slot in the Red Knight's armour. The aim was true; the weapon, entering the eye, pierced the brain and the Red Knight fell dead.

It was an age of bloodshed when many knights lost their lives in such encounters; and Parzival felt no compunction for his deed. The Red Knight's horse and armour was his by right of conquest, but he had no idea how to unarm the dead man. Fortunately for him, a young squire, Iwanet, had followed at a distance to see the outcome. He now came forward and helped arm Parzival and mount him on the Red Knight's horse. Aware of the mockery

he had met at Arthur's Court, Parzival realized he must earn his place in knightly society before returning, but he asked Iwanet to report his victory and express his sorrow to the Lady Kunnewaaré.

Parzival set off and galloping in one day a distance that any unarmed sensible man would do in two, he arrived at the castle of the old knight Gurnemanz. There was astonishment when his armour was removed and a lad in fool's raiment was disclosed. But Gurnemanz realized his quality and took him in hand to teach him knightly conduct and courtly manners. There was one item of Gurnemanz's teaching which was to play an important part in Parzival's later progress. He was taught not to ask questions, for what he was ripe to receive would be revealed in due course. This was the customary method of education of the time.

When his guest had acquired what was necessary, Gurnemanz suggested that, as his own sons had been killed in combat; Parzival should marry his daughter Liasse and become his heir. This would have given Parzival an established position and he was already romantically attracted by the lovely girl; but he felt that he had not yet found his rightful place in life. He was not at this stage fit for such a position, so, saying farewell, he set out once more.

BOOK 4

KONDWIRAMUR

Parzival came to a swinging bridge of wickerwork spanning a wild torrent. It had no rope or handrail and his horse refused to cross. One incautious step either to the left or right would have landed him in the tumultuous waters below. Parzival dismounted and led his horse across the abyss without mishap.

By nightfall he came to the beleaguered city of Pelrapeire, but, as fighting for that day was over, he succeeded in winning an entry. He was greeted by the inhabitants with courtesy, his armour was removed, and water was brought from the well for him to wash away the iron rust. In return he offered them his service if they were to need it. A message was sent to Queen Kondwiramur who, accompanied by her two uncles, the Dukes of Kiot and Manfilot, came to welcome him.

Owing to the siege all were weak from lack of food, but Kiot and Manfilot owned a hunting lodge in a wild mountain glen and were able to bring a supply of provisions. At Parzival's suggestion they shared these out among the starving townsfolk so that there was little left for Kondwiramur and her guest but they shared it in harmony. Remembering Gurnemanz's teaching, Parzival was silent in her company. Realizing that it was the duty of the hostess to make the first move, she thanked him for his offer of service. He

learned that she was the niece of Gurnemanz, whose son Schenteflur had died fighting on her behalf. After their meager supper Parzival was conducted to his bed. Around Parzival's bed the candlelight was as bright as day, when the Queen in her nightgown of white silk slipped softly without a sound into his chamber and knelt weeping before him. He took her into his bed. There was no passionate love, but he became aware of her deep distress. King Klamide, by besieging her city, was trying to force her to marry him. She had decided to throw herself into the moat rather than yield. Moved by her beauty and her sorrow, Parzival resolved to defend her. Then she glided away unseen.

According to the custom of the times, if a knight championed a lady attacked by an unwelcome wooer, he himself was committed to marrying her. Parzival felt sorrowful at the thought of renouncing Liasse but he realized that his rightful task was to support the Queen and he resolved to confront Klamide. When he had successfully overthrown the enemy, he sent him to report at Arthur's court and surrender to the maiden Kunewaré in recompense for the insult she had suffered on Parzival's account when he had first appeared there in fool's garb.

Parzival had now won a kingdom and a bride. He felt such reverence for his wife that it seemed to him unfitting to approach her passionately and the marriage was not consummated until the third night. They loved each other with true and lasting affection. The kingdom was soon restored to order, ships arrived with provisions and Parzival saw to the fair distribution of supplies.

For a while all was joy, but soon Parzival asked his wife if he might leave her for a short time to find how his mother was faring, for he had received no news of her since he had left the woods of Soltane. Little did he know that the time of his absence from Kondwiramur would be long and sad.

BOOK 5

ANFORTAS

Parzival set out in quest of his mother, who had already passed through the portal of death. His subsequent adventure was also closely connected with another figure that had died on his account, the young Schionatulander. As he rode he was so troubled by thoughts of his beautiful young wife that he allowed his horse to take what path it pleased, and so, without a conscious aim, he rode further in that one day than a bird with ease could have flown. He met no human being and passed no sign of a dwelling.

In the evening he came to a mountain lake where from a barge, anchored near the shore, a number of men were fishing. Among them was a kingly-looking figure who wore a hat adorned with peacock feathers. Parzival asked him if there were any place near at hand where he could spend the night. The fisherman replied that there was nowhere within thirty miles unless he rode straight on. He would then reach a castle in which the fisherman himself would later be his host. But he warned Parzival to be careful for there were many roads that led no one knew where and it was easy to miss the way.

At the top of the hill Parzival saw the castle with its many turrets and marvelous fortifications. He thought that no besieging army could ever seize such a fortress for an abyss lay between him and the protecting walls. In

reply to his call that the fisherman had sent him, the drawbridge was lowered. Parzival was kindly received and the squires who tended him did not let him observe how sorrowful the mood of all within was. They removed his armour and brought him a beautiful cloak of Arabian silk loaned him by the Queen. When he had washed the rust from his hands and face, it seemed to them all as though a new day had dawned.

Parzival was led to the great hall for the evening meal. A hundred chandeliers gave light, a hundred couches, each seating four knights, were arranged through the hall, and on three great fireplaces logs of sweet smelling wood were burning. Parzival saw his host on a couch near the central fire. He was obviously suffering, and in spite of the heat of the fire, was wrapped in splendid furs of black and grey sable. But he welcomed his guest warmly and asked him to sit beside him.

Suddenly the door opened and a squire dashed in, carrying a lance dripping with blood. At his entry all present sank to their knees, weeping and groaning, until he had circled the hall and departed. Then the mourning ceased. After this there came a strange ritual procession. Twenty four maidens, their hair decked with flowers, entered the hall in groups. The first four were dressed in brown, two bore candles and two carried ivory trestles. They were followed by eight in robes greener than grass, four bearing lights and four a table top carved from a single jewel. Four more that carried lights were accompanied by two with sharp silver knives. The last group, wearing coloured silks interwoven with gold, had vessels of clear glass in which sweet smelling balsam was burning. After them came the

Queen, Repanse de Schoie, at whose entry it seemed that the sun was rising. She bore that which was called "The Grail." This was placed before the host and from it each knight procured whatsoever nourishment he most desired, both of food and drink.

Parzival gazed in wonder and longed to question the meaning of what he saw, but he remembered the teaching of Gurnemanz and remained silent. Presently his host summoned a squire to bring a sword, encased in a jeweled sheath and with a hilt fashioned from a single ruby. He presented it to Parzival with the words, 'since God wounded me, you are the one fitted to wear this sword. You will find it a sure defense.' Once more Parzival longed to question his host but was again restrained by the counsel of Gurnemanz.

The feast came to an end and the Grail procession withdrew. As the Grail bearer passed out of the door, Parzival caught a glimpse into an antechamber. There lay the most beautiful old man that he had ever beheld; he was greyer than the morning mist. It was Titurel to whom the angels had entrusted the guardianship of the Grail.

The host now sadly suggested that Parzival should retire as he must be weary from his long journey. The visitor was conducted with ceremony to his rest and soon fell asleep. That night he was tormented with dreams which caused him as much anguish as that suffered by Herzeleide when she felt she had given birth to a dragon and woke to hear of her husband's death. All night long Parzival imagined that he was in the rush of battle, thrust at with

countless spears and overthrown by a charge of horses. He felt that his pain was a presage of sorrow.

When at last he awoke to full consciousness the morning was well advanced. No squires came to call him but he saw his clothes and armour laid out ready for him. He dressed hurriedly and went through the corridors, calling and searching for his companions of the evening before; but no one was to be found. In the courtyard his steed stood saddled and waiting. The ground was trampled and the drawbridge down as though the whole company had ridden out. Parzival mounted and rode hastily after them. He was sure now that he must find out the meaning of what he had experienced. As he was crossing the drawbridge, before he had reached the other side, it was drawn up so suddenly that his horse was flung onto the opposite bank and Parzival nearly lost his seat. He heard the words shouted after him; "Ride on and bear the hatred of the sun. You are a goose."

Parzival did not understand the meaning of these words, but he felt that in some way he had failed. He imagined that his host and followers were engaged in combat and needed his help, so it was important for him to find them as soon as possible. For a while he could follow their tracks, but soon all traces were lost and he no longer knew the way.

At this moment he heard the sound of weeping and he came upon a woman sitting in a linden tree, holding in her arms the dead and embalmed body of a knight. She had become so wasted and pale that Parzival did not at first recognize her as his cousin Siguné; but he expressed his grief at her

distress. She was surprised that anyone could venture unharmed into this wild region where many had lost their lives, and she warned him to turn back. When Parzival told her that he had spent the night at the Castle, she thought that he was deceiving her, for no one could enter there unless it revealed itself to the seeker. When he affirmed that he had seen many wonders, she recognized him and saw that he was wearing the sword given him by Anfortas. She told him of its strange powers. It bore upon its blade mystic signs. It would serve him well at the first stroke, but at the second it would break, and the owner would have to reweld it by dipping it before dawn in a magic spring.

As the sword revealed to her that Parzival must truly have been at the castle, she assumed that he had asked the question which would bring release to the suffering King. It had been foretold to the servers of the Grail that, when a young and innocent knight found his way to them and asked the suffering King what ailed him, Anfortas would be freed from his pain and the newcomer would take his place.

When she found that Parzival had failed, she accused him of being accursed and of having the fangs of a venomous wolf. Parzival begged for a kindlier word before they parted, but she remained adamant, declaring that he had lost his honour and Parzival parted from her with a sense of deep remorse.

BOOK 6

ARTHUR

Parzival continued in his quest for the *Grail*. Although it was late spring, the time of Pentecost, there was a fall of snow, and as he passed through a dark forest he came to a spot where a wild goose, wounded by a falcon, had shed three drops of blood. Parzival was transfixed at the sight. The white snow, the red blood and the dark trees, called to mind the white skin, the red lips and the dark hair of his wife Kondwiramur, and he was overcome with longing.

The words 'Bear the hatred of the sun. You are a goose,' had sounded after him as he left the *Grail Castle*. Lost on his way, oppressed by his failure, he was himself like the wounded goose. Gazing at the blood drops, he fell into a trance.

All unaware, Parzival was now in the neighbourhood of Arthur's Court and the news was brought by Kunewaaré's squire that a strange knight was near at hand as though in preparation for battle. An ambitious young knight, Segramor, won permission to go and challenge the intruder. Lost in his trance Parzival made no response; but, when attacked he suddenly became conscious and struck Segramor from his horse. Then he was once more caught in the spell of his love and longing. Segramor returned to Arthur's Court discomfited and Sir Kay rode out, only to suffer a harsher fate. In

the attack, his horse was killed and he himself fell, breaking his right arm and his left leg. In this way Kay received punishment for his treatment of Kunnewaaré. Only when Gawain appeared was Parzival freed from his spell.

He immediately realized Parzival's condition, and taking a silk scarf, he laid it over the blood drops and wakened Parzival from his trance. By now all at Arthur's Court knew of the exploits of Ither of *Gahievess'* slayer, whom they called the Red Knight as they were ignorant of his true name. Gawain offered to serve Parzival and to conduct him to the King.

Parzival was welcomed into Arthur's order with joy, especially by Kunnewaaré to whom he had shown such homage. Just as Parzival had given his pledge to the knightly fellowship, there rode into the circle a strange intruder. She was hideous to look upon for she had black hair as coarse as that of a pig, and black eyebrows so long they had to be gathered into plaits. Her nose was like a dog's and her skin rough and hairy; she had two horrible tusks and claws like a lion. Yet this alarmingly ugly woman wore rich apparel and peacock feathers in her hat, for she was Kundrie, the messenger of the Grail.

She denounced Arthur for harbouring one who would bring him into disrepute. She then turned to Parzival and cursed him. He had failed in honour, he had received a sword of which he was unworthy and he had been false to the Grail King. His treachery was like the adder's fang. Not only did she make Parzival aware that he had lacked compassion for Anfortas; she

also implied that his half-brother Feirefis stood in greater honour than he. A visiting queen from the East was able to tell Parzival more about his brother. He was a rich and generous ruler, worshipped like a god, and his skin had the sheen of a magpie's feathers, streaked black and white.

Before she left, Kundrie made mention of another Castle strangely related to that of the Grail. She asked if there were no noble knight prepared to win fame by seeking the four queens and the four hundred maidens to be found in the Castle of Wonders. This was the adventure that Gawain was to undertake, although for the time being he had to set out on an entirely different enterprise.

At this point Gawain had come to Parzival's aid and from now on for a while he is the leading character in the story; yet Parzival continues to play a part behind the scenes. After Kundrie's departure, another visitor, a famous warrior Kingrimursel, entered the hall and proceeded to accuse Gawain of having slain his overlord. In spite of both Arthur's and Gawain's denial of this accusation, the newcomer declared that the only way for Gawain to clear himself would be to accept a challenge within forty days in the Dukedom of Schamfanzun, where the crime had occurred. Thus the two most famous knights were driven at the same time to leave Arthur's Court.

Through Kundrie, Arthur for the first time was made aware of Parzival's true name and lineage. There was general sorrow at his departure and the maiden Kunnewaaré whom he had served so faithfully, herself armed him. It was Parzival that Kunnewaaré loved, but she knew she was not destined to

win him as her husband. The defeated Klamidé sought her hand in marriage and asked for Parzival's aid. In response to the latter's intercession, Kunnewaaré accepted the King who had been sent to do homage to her. Then there was a sad parting between the two who had such affection for each other.

Gawain in his farewell asked that God might help him some day to serve Parzival as he would wish; but Parzival replied. 'Alas, what is God? If He were mighty He would never have imposed such disgrace on us both. Now I shall renounce His service.' He even told Gawain that women were more to be trusted than God.

BOOK 7

OBILOT

Gawain set out for the kingdom of Schamfanon but on the way became involved in a quite different adventure.

King Meljanz of Liz, while still a child, was entrusted after the death of his father to a loyal vassal named Lippaut until he became of age. He fell in love with Lippaut's daughter Obie, but she mocked him, saying that she would not be satisfied with anyone less than an emperor. As soon as he was independent, the indignant Meljanz made war against Lippaut, intending to seize Obie by force.

When on his journey Gawain sought hospitality with Lippaut in the city of Beausrosch, he found the gates closed and the hostile army taking up its position outside the city; so his squires set up his tent just under the walls. Lippaut's wife and two daughters came out on the battlements to watch him. The spiteful Obie, who now felt herself in a false position, began to mock at him, telling her family that he was a merchant come to make profit out of the war. But the younger daughter Obilot, who was still a child, declared that she was sure he was a knight, as she had never before seen anyone so noble. Gawain overheard all her conversation. Obie, bent on mischief, now sent a message to the burgomaster to say that a swindler had established himself outside the walls and she thought his goods ought to be confiscated

to pay their mercenaries. The burgomaster, hastening to investigate, came upon Gawain. He immediately recognized that this handsome stranger was no swindler but a noble knight, and so he sent word to Lippaut who at once besought Gawain's help. Gawain replied that he was involved in an affair of honour which did not allow him to delay. However, he promised to consider the matter and give his answer by nightfall.

Meanwhile, little Obilot had taken matters into her own hands and all alone made her way to Gawain. Imitating the courtly language of the grown-up world, she asked him to become her knight. She offered him her love and said she was sure he would not fail to serve her. Gawain could not resist the child's innocent confidence in him. He remembered Parzival's saying that it was better to trust women than God, so he gave his promise that he would bear arms in her honour, and he clasped her little hands in his own.

Obilot knew that it was the fashion for ladies to give tokens to those who fought on their behalf and she wondered what gift to give him. She consulted her little friend Clauditte who offered her best doll. But when her father heard that Obilot had won Gawain's support he was so delighted that he asked her mother to make a beautiful silk dress so that Gawain could wear the right sleeve on his shield.

The next day a violent conflict took place. Knights were flung from their horses and many were slain or captured. Among the combatants, there were two who were outstanding. In support of Lippaut, Gawain mounted *Gringolet*, a Grail horse given to him by Orilus who seemed invincible. Wherever the

contest was fiercest, he was in the midst, and he finally took King Meljanz prisoner.

On the other side, a strange knight in red armour was equally remarkable, and succeeded in capturing three of Lippaut's allies. Hearing that Meljanz was taken, the Red Knight knew that it was useless to continue to fight, so he sent his prisoners into Beausosch to offer themselves in exchange for Meljanz. He added that if they were unsuccessful they should seek for the Grail on his behalf. If they failed in this, they were to go to his wife in Pelrapare and tell her that he still yearned for her love. From now on, he no longer sent defeated knights to Kunnewaaré but to Kondwiramur.

When Gawain heard this he knew that the Red Knight was none other than Parzival and he was grateful that fate had saved them from coming into conflict. Meljanz now deeply regretted that he had ever turned against Lippaut who had been as a second father to him. Gawain said to him, 'Here bonds must be joined anew which nothing but death can sever.' According to the custom of the time he presented his prisoner to Obilot and gave her the right to decide his fate. Obilot, realizing that Obie's treatment of Meljanz sprang from pride and a desire to test him, commanded them to come together, and the episode ended in a general reconciliation. The only sorrows were those of Obilot and Gawain. The little girl wept bitterly and begged to go with him, and as he left, Gawain's heart was heavy with grief.

BOOK 8

ANTIKONIE

In the following adventures Gawain again found himself involved in a quarrel which was not of his seeking. At last he reached the Kingdom of Schamfanzon and came to the Castle of Askalon. King Vergulacht greeted him warmly but, as he himself was involved in some pressing affair, he asked his sister Antikonie to entertain Gawain until his return.

Antikonie was young and charming so that she and Gawain, happy in each other's company, began to exchange certain intimacies. An old knight became suspicious that the guest was about to seduce his master's sister, and he set up an indignant shouting. Servants came running and the cry was raised that the slayer of the former King of Schamfanzon was betraying Vergulacht.

Antikonie and Gawain now found themselves in the greatest of danger for Gawain was completely unarmed and his squires had all gone off in chase of a sparrow hawk. She led the way to a tower where Gawain tore a bolt from the door and, with this as a weapon, threatened their assailants. In the meantime, Antikonie had found a set of chessmen and began to hurl the heavy figures of kings, queens and knights so that many of their attackers were stunned. At this moment Kingrimursel arrived on the scene. He immediately realized what was happening and was horrified. He had promised Gawain safe conduct and he alone was entitled to meet out vengeance. This

unlawful attack would only bring him into disgrace, so he went to the support of *Gawain*.

When *Vergulacht* turned up he was tempted to continue the conflict which now also involved an attack on *Kingrimursel*, but the latter at last managed to make him see reason. *Vergulacht* was severely reproached by his sister for offending the laws of hospitality, so at last reconciliation was brought about. One of the terms of the agreement was that *Gawain* should take over a task from *Vergulacht*. In the wood the latter had met a knight in red armour who had defeated him but had granted him his life on the condition he sought for the *Grail*; so *Gawain* now agreed to take over the task given by *Parzival* to *Vergulacht*. He then rode away to fulfill his duty but he was sad at heart at leaving the fair *Antikonie*.

BOOK 9

TREVREZENT

Since leaving Arthur's Court, Parzival traveled over land and sea and took part in many battles in which he was always victorious. The sword, given him by Anfortas, had once snapped but had been rewelded at the magic spring.

While journeying one day through wild country, he came to a hermit's cell. He rode up to the window to ask the way, and to his surprise a woman came at his call. She wore a grey gown and a widow's band around her hair, while on her finger shone a little ring with a red garnet that flashed like fire. In reply to Parzival's comment that he did not know that a hermitess was allowed to wear a ring, she told him that she wore it in memory of her true love, who had been slain and was now buried in this shrine where she mourned over his grave. Parzival recognized his cousin Siguné and removed his helmet. 'Is it you Parzival?' she said. She no longer reproached him but asked how his quest had prospered. When Parzival told her of his sorrow at losing the Grail, she offered helpful advice. She told him he was now near Monsalvasch and that as Kundrie, who every Saturday brought her food for the week, had just ridden away, he might be able to follow her tracks through the wood.

Parzival set out, but, just as the tracks disappeared he was challenged by a Grail knight who forbade him to penetrate further. A fierce fight ensued.

They were just on the edge of a ravine which was concealed by the trees and ferns. In the onslaught the Templar lost his seat and rolled over the cliff. Parzival's horse, charging after him, also fell and, although Parzival saved himself by clinging to the branches overhead, he saw that his horse was killed. The Templar got up unhurt and made his escape but his mount was left free for Parzival to use.

It was early in the year and a light snow had fallen. Parzival had not ridden far when he came upon an aged knight with his wife and daughters who were walking as pilgrims barefoot through the snow. The old knight reproached Parzival for riding fully armed on a holy day, for it was Good Friday. Parzival replied that he had lost count of time and as for it being a holy day, God had refused to help him so now he was doing without God. The pilgrims asked Parzival to join them but he declined and said farewell.

However, the knight's words and the daughter's sympathy had softened his stern mood and he cried aloud, "If God can help, then may he show this horse the way." He let the reins fall loosely and the Grail horse guided him to the cell of Trevrezent, where long ago he had sworn Jeschuté's innocence. In humbled mood he approached through the snow and addressed the hermit with the words, "Sir, give me counsel, I am one who has sinned." He was led into a cave where a fire was glowing and where he could remove his cold armour and warm his limbs, while his horse was taken to shelter under the protection of the cliff. In reply to his complaint that God had deserted him, Trevrezent warned him of the sin of Lucifer who had set himself up against God. He then told him of the loss of paradise and described how, when Cain

slew his brother, the blood of Abel defiled the ground so that the earth lost her innocence. Through Cain's sin, hatred was stirred up among men, the animals were taught to destroy one another and the plant world was tainted with poison. The love of Christ, who gave His life for man, was the only power which could bring redemption, and so man must seek to serve the Christ and make atonement to the One who had entered the dark earth as a brightly shining light.

Trevrezent proceeded to teach Parzival about the Grail. Titurel had built a castle as a Temple to guard the Grail Mysteries and had gathered round him a group of Templar Knights. Only those whose names were proclaimed in the stars were called to its service. Within the Castle only the Grail King was allowed to marry; but, when any neighbouring country was left without an heir, a Grail Knight would be sent to give guidance and was then free to take a wife. The daughters of the King married into ruling families so that the influence of the Grail wisdom was spread abroad.

Titurel was now too old to serve as King though he was still able to give wise counsel. His life was sustained by the Grail which had the power to consume the phoenix to ashes but immediately to restore it anew. On Good Friday a dove comes down from heaven to lay a white wafer on the stone, thus renewing its life-giving strength.

Anfortas, Titurel's grandson, had become King, but he had not been faithful to his calling. After he had received his dreadful wound, Trevrezent, who had also indulged in love quests, retired to a hermit's cell to do penance for

his brother's sin. The Grail Knights had long lived in hope, remembering the promise that a young knight would come to their relief; but a foolish lad had found his way to the Castle and failed to ask what ailed the King. Now they had all lost heart.

Trevrezent then enquired into Parzival's parentage and it emerged that he also belonged to the Grail family. Herzeleide, as well as Siguné's mother Schoysiane, were the sisters of Anfortas and Trevrezent, so Siguné's relationship with the Grail community is made clear. Parzival now learned of his two great errors. Through leaving his mother, he had brought about her death. Ither of Gaheviess, whom he had so light-heartedly slain, was his cousin. He had committed the twofold sin of Cain. Since leaving Arthur's Court Parzival had followed his life of adventure with defiant pride; now he had to bear the heavy burden of guilt.

For a while he did not mention that he himself had been the fool who had found his way to the Grail Castle. Sad at heart the two men paused in their talk and went out to seek their meal of roots and herbs in the snow-clad woods. On their return Parzival begged his uncle to have mercy on him and tell him what to do, for he was the knight who had failed to heal the King.

Trevrezent was deeply grieved but he realized Parzival's need of help. He warned him that it was useless to seek for the Grail for it appeared only to those who were divinely chosen; but he should fulfill his knightly duties in the knowledge that God accepted all earnest service.

Parzival stayed fifteen days in the hermit's cell and Trevrezent's teaching of the Redeemer sank into his heart. When they parted Trevrezent absolved him with the words, 'Give your sins to me. In the sight of God I am the guarantee for your atonement.' He was able to do for Parzival what he had not achieved for Anfortas. He himself in his youth had deserted the Grail in quest of love adventures and so was powerless to help his bother; but Parzival's steadfast striving had awakened in Trevrezent a new gift of blessing.

BOOK 10

ORGELUSÉ

At the end of Book 8 we discovered how on Parzival's behalf Gawain had taken over from Vergulacht the quest of the Grail. As he rode on his way, he came upon a woman weeping over a wounded knight. Gawain was skilled in the art of healing and immediately offered his help. He saw that the knight's wound was not mortal but he was bleeding internally so that the blood was pressing on the heart. He stripped the bark from a linden twig and, making a little tube, gave it to the woman to suck so that the blood would flow outward. He then bound the wound with her scarf. Recovering consciousness, the knight said that he had been attacked and wounded near the city of Logrois by an enemy set out to overtake and punish the offender.

When Gawain drew near the city of Logrois he was struck by its appearance. High above the town rose the citadel, but to the observer it seemed to be endlessly spinning like a top so that no enemy could easily take it.

Before he crossed the bridge into the town, Gawain became aware that sitting beside a spring was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. This was Orgelusé, the Duchess of Logrois. Gawain approached her with reverence and asked if he might be accepted as her knight. She replied with great scorn that she saw no reason why he could expect such an honour and, if he served her, he would certainly get no reward. Gawain was not to be

discouraged; he was willing to endure any treatment she bestowed on him for, he said, he did not wish to receive love unearned. She then ordered him to go and fetch her horse, which he would find in the orchard beyond the bridge.

When Gawain entered the town and passed among the singers and dancers, they stopped to warn him that he should have nothing to do with Orgelusé as she had brought many men to their doom. In spite of their well-meant advice Gawain secured the horse and brought it to its mistress. She thanked him with the words, "Welcome, you goose." Then she mounted and set off across the heath with Gawain following.

Presently Gawain dismounted to gather an herb. He explained to her that this had power to heal a wounded knight for whom he had been caring. Orgelusé replied scornfully that if he were a doctor as well as a knight he would certainly do well for a living.

At that moment Orgelusé's squire, Malcreature, came to her with a message. He was hideously ugly, with a face like a dog and two great boar's tusks, for he was none other than Kundrie's brother. He was so rude that Gawain struck him, thereby cutting his hand on the sharp bristles, at which Orgelusé laughed maliciously, saying "I love to see both of you so furious."

They soon came upon the wounded knight and his lady. The knight declared that he was now much better and asked Gawain to help them both onto the lady's horse so that he could be taken to a neighbouring hospital to recover.

But while Gawain was helping the lady to mount, the knight saw his chance. He leapt onto Gawain's horse and galloped away.

Now, to Orgelusé's great amusement, Gawain was without a mount and so had to make do with Malcreature's horse which was lame and stumbled at every step. Gawain bore her insults and told her that the more she mocked him now the more she would wish to compensate later.

At last they came to a river and beyond it they saw a lordly castle with battlements and towers. At the windows Gawain saw so many ladies that he thought there must be at least four hundred. A ferryman was waiting at the waterside to take them across. But before they reached the boat, a knight came charging down upon them. It was none other than Lischois Giwellius whom Gawain had been seeking. The two knights were at once engaged in fierce combat. At the first charge Gawain's wretched nag collapsed, but Lischois Giwellius also lost his seat, and the fight ended in a wrestling match in which Gawain was finally the victor. To his surprise, he found that his opponent's horse which he had now won was his own steed Gringolet which had been stolen earlier. Gawain was hoping for Orgelusé's approval of his prowess, but while the two heroes were fighting, she had stepped into the ferryman's boat and had been taken across the river.

The ferryman, realizing that Gawain was cast down by Orgelusé's desertion, invited him to be his guest for the night.

BOOK 11

ARNIVÉ

Gawain woke early to the sound of birdsong. When the ferryman's daughter Bene came to attend to him, he asked who the ladies were. "Sir, she said, "do not ask, I cannot tell you anything." When he pressed her for some answer, she began to cry. Presently her father came in and, when he heard the cause of her tears, he said, "For God's sake do not ask! Over there is misery beyond all misery", but Gawain persisted. "You must tell me. I shall find out anyway what is going on up there."

His host then explained to him that if he entered the Chateau Merveil he would have to experience the Wonder Bed and face death. There would be little chance of his coming out alive. Gawain expressed his determination to face whatever perils were in store if he could bring some consolation to those who were held by enchantment. The ferryman then offered his help. He said that if Gawain survived he would become ruler of the kingdom, but, if he died, it would be the greatest grief that could befall them. He mentioned that the previous day he had ferried the slayer of Ither of Gaheviess across the river. Gawain realized that Parzival was once more near him, but he learned that the Red Knight had heard nothing of the story of the Castle of Wonders so had not attempted this adventure.

Gawain's armour was brought to him and his host lent him an especially stout shield, warning him that he must on no account part either with it or his sword. Passing through the gate, Gawain saw a door standing open, leading into a chamber with a pavement that shone like glass. In the centre stood the Wonder Bed on its swift wheels of four red rubies. Gawain knew that he had to mount it, but from whatever angle he approached, it shot off in the opposite direction. He gave a mighty leap and landed in the middle. The bed at once began to rush round wildly, slamming into each wall with a crash like thunder. Gawain lay still and committed himself to God's care. Presently from a gallery above there came a volley of great rocks, followed by a flight of powerful arrows. Gawain had the greatest difficulty in protecting himself with the ferryman's shield, and although it withstood the bombardment well, he was bruised with the blows and the arrows did not entirely miss him. He became dizzy with the movement and the noise. Suddenly the bed came to rest. A door opened and a rough-looking fellow clothed completely in fish-skin and carrying a great club entered the room. He said angrily, "It's only by the devil's power that you are still alive. I will see that you now forfeit your life." As he retreated a sound like the roll of twenty drums could be heard and a husky lion as great as a horse rushed into the room. Gawain leapt to the floor and stood on his guard, but at the first lunge the lion ripped through his shield with its claws. Gawain, with a sweep of his sword, cut off one of the lion's legs. There was a rush of blood. As the fight continued the combatants were slipping about in the flood. The lion leapt again and again and tried to drag Gawain to the ground, but at last with a bold stroke the hero pierced it to the heart. By now Gawain was seriously wounded and dizzy from loss of blood. He sank unconscious onto the lion's body. However, from

above the aged Queen Annivé, mother of King Arthur, had watched the contest. She saw with joy the death of the lion but feared that Gawain had lost his life.

BOOK 12

EIDEGAST

Gawain spent the night after his adventures tossing in anguish because of his unrequited love for Orgelusé. His restless movements loosened the bandages so that his wounds bled afresh. However, at dawn he found clean garments laid out for him so that he was able to appear in fitting attire.

He now began to explore the Castle and found that at one end of the hall winding stairs led up to a narrow tower high above the castle roof. In the centre stood a circular pillar that reflected all the lands around. Gawain began to watch the images appearing in the mirror. There were people, riding, running and walking, and the great mountains in the background seemed to collide with reverberating sounds. Gawain received an impression of the same restless movements that he had experienced on the preceding day.

While he was observing the changing pictures, Queen Arnivé, accompanied by her daughter Sangivé, who was Gawain's mother, and by his two sisters, Itonjé and Kundrie, came to greet him. They did not recognize him for he had left his family at a very young age to be reared at Arthur's Court.

Arnivé described to Gawain the properties of the pillar which had been stolen by Klingsor from the Eastern Queen Sekundille whom we later learn to

be the lover of Feirefis. No hammer or smith could harm it and it reflected everything in a radius of six miles around. It seems to have had the quality of reflecting whatever the beholder wished to see for Gawain now beheld across the river Orgelusé riding in the company of an attentive knight. Gawain, fearing that he was being deceived, turned to Arnivé for confirmation. When he heard that the lady mirrored in the pillar was indeed the beautiful Duchess of Logrois, he at once decided to go and attack her companion in order to win honour in her service. Arnivé begged him to desist as he was in no condition to undertake such a conflict; but it was impossible to restrain him.

The ladies wept, for it seemed certain that Gawain would be defeated. He was so sorely wounded that he could scarcely carry his shield. However, mounting Gringolet, he made his way to the ferryman who furnished him with a strong spear and took him across the river.

In spite of the strength and courage of his opponent known as the Turkoite, Gawain, with a masterly stroke, unseated him and became the victor. Orgelusé again greeted him with scornful words. She implied that he was no doubt pleased that the ladies in the Castle had been able to watch his success; however she was sure that, as he had been so badly wounded that his shield was like a sieve, he would be only too ready to avoid the combat she would ask of him if he really wished to serve her. Gawain replied that her favour would bring healing to his wounds and there was no adventure so dangerous that he would not undertake it on her behalf.

Orgelusé now ordered him to leap the ford perilous and win for her a wreath from the tree guarded by King Gramoflanz who had caused her the deepest grief. She allowed him the favour of riding by her side through Klingsor's forest until they heard the roar of a waterfall and came to a ravine across which they could see the tree from which the wreath was to be gathered. Here Orgelusé waited to watch the result.

Gawain at once spurred on his horse to take the leap. Gringolet reached the other side with only his two front feet and fell back into the stream where he was swept down by the swift current. Orgelusé, seeing their danger, burst into tears. Gawain managed to cling to an overhanging branch and clutch his spear which was floating near him. He climbed out onto the bank and turned to rescue his horse. Gringolet was struggling, sometimes with his head above water, sometimes submerged; but at last the current carried him into a whirlpool near the bank. Gawain managed to reach the reins with his spear and guided the horse into the shallows.

He was now able to climb the bank and pluck a branch from the tree. As he placed the wreath in his helmet, a handsome knight, wearing a hat decked with peacock feathers and a green silk cloak trimmed with ermine, rode up and challenged him. This was none other than King Gramoflanz, the owner of the tree.

The King informed Gawain that he knew Orgelusé had driven him to this deed in revenge because he had slain her husband Eidegast. Gramoflanz had in

recompense offered to make her his queen, but she had scorned him and sought his death.

Although Gramoflanz demanded recompense for the theft of his wreath, he declined to fight with Gawain. It was his custom never to fight with less than two adversaries at once, so he suggested that Gawain could make amends by doing him a favour. Though he had never seen her, he had fallen in love with Gawain's sister, Itonjé, so Gawain could be a go-between and take a little ring to her as a token of affection. Gawain agreed; but in the course of their conversation it emerged that there was one knight with whom Gramoflanz was prepared to fight in single combat. This was none other than Gawain himself whose fame made him a worthy opponent. Moreover, Gawain's father Lot had slain Gramoflanz's father, so there was a blood-feud to be settled between them. When Gawain revealed his identity, the two agreed to meet and fight it out on the Plain of Ioflanz in eight days time.

Gawain made the return leap with complete success. Orgelusé now fell at his feet and with tears offered him her love. 'Lady, he said, 'accept this wreath, but never again use your beauty to bring dishonour on any knight. If I must endure your mockery, I would rather renounce your love.'

Orgelusé, weeping bitterly, told him her story. She had once been happily married to Eidegast, a knight whom no man surpassed in honour; but he was slain by King Gramoflanz. Seeking an avenger to bring about the King's death, she had accepted the services of Anfortas, King of the Grail. To win her favour, Anfortas had presented her with the rich booth which stood outside

the gate of the Castle of Wonders. However, this whole realm had fallen under the power of Klingsor and, when Anfortas received his terrible wound while fighting for her, Orgelusé gave the booth to Klingsor as a bribe so that he should not harm them further.

Klingsor had thrown his spell over Orgelusé so that she bewitched all men who came into contact with her and drove them to injury or death. One knight alone had been able to withstand her. Orgelusé told Gawain that a Red Knight had come riding through her kingdom of Logrois. She had offered him her love but he had rejected her, saying that he had a more beautiful wife of his own. It is clear from this that Parzival had passed through Klingsor's kingdom but that the evil spell had no power over him.

Parzival's rejection now enabled Gawain to win Orgelusé. Through his courtesy in accepting her as his wife, Gawain had removed the spell.

Gawain sent a letter to King Arthur to report the forthcoming encounter with Gramoflanz and to invite all the Court of the Round Table to the Plain of Ioflanz, to support him in his final trial. He still kept the inhabitants of the Castle of Wonders ignorant of his name and title. Queen Arnivé tried to find out from the messenger the contents of the letter, but he was faithful to Gawain's instructions and her curiosity remained unsatisfied.

BOOK 13

KLINGSOR

There was a grand festival of feasting and dancing. The knights whom Gawain had conquered, Liscois Giwellius and the Turkoite, were greeted as friends and, as a compliment to Orgelusé, freed without conditions.

Gawain now set about fulfilling his promise to Gramoflanz. In the meantime Gawain's messenger was on his way to Arthur's Court. When he presented the letter, there was a general rejoicing. While everyone was waiting for Gawain's contest with Gramoflanz, Queen Arnivé taught him about the power and character of Klingsor, the lord of Terra Labur who came from a family of famous magicians and had attained universal renown. He succeeded in winning the love of Iblis, wife of Iblert, King of Sicily. When Iblert discovered their guilt he took his revenge. He castrated Klingsor, who then became embittered, giving up his life to the study of black magic so that he might acquire unrivalled power.

At last Arthur and his mighty host arrived on the Plain of Ioflanz and countless handsome tents were set up. A great fleet of ships crossed the river. The magnificent booth from the Castle of Wonders was set up on the plain.

Gawain made sure that everyone was provided with all the comforts required for the night, as on the following morning the combat was to take place. He himself rose very early to practice his skill in arms and to make certain that his wounds were sufficiently healed for him to fight freely. As he was riding alone across the plain he saw an armed knight approaching.

BOOK 14

GRAMOFLANZ

Gawain took note that the knight riding towards him was wearing a wreath from the tree from where he himself had plucked a branch for Orgelusé. He assumed that the stranger was Gramoflanz, who must also have come early to the jousting place; so without delay he prepared for combat. Soon both were fighting with powerful strokes and the ground was strewn with splinters.

In the meantime, King Arthur had sent a deputation to Gramoflanz asking him, in consideration for the esteem in which the Arthurian Court was held, to forgo the fight with Gawain. However, the messengers found the King in an arrogant mood, determined on the combat. He had just received a love token from Itonjé and was above all anxious to distinguish himself to win her favour. In great splendour he set out for the place of meeting. On their return journey Arthur's messengers came upon Gawain and his opponent in their deadly conflict. In alarm they cried out Gawain's name; they saw that he was near the end of his strength. When the strange knight heard their cry, he suddenly threw his sword away and exclaimed, "I am honoured to have taken part in this contest. Alas that I should have fought with the noble Gawain! It is I myself I have vanquished."

Then Gawain felt a roaring in his head and sank to the ground. Running to him, Arthur's squires began to fan him to restore consciousness. At this moment there came towards them the three armies of Arthur, of Orgelusé and of Klingsor's host now under the leadership of Gawain, all in preparation for the coming combat. When Gramoflanz also arrived on the scene, he was greatly disturbed to find everything had gone contrary to his plans. Gawain was obviously in no condition now to fulfill the undertaking, so he offered to postpone their contest to the next day.

Parzival greeted Gramoflanz courteously and offered to take Gawain's place. But the king replied that this battle was essentially between himself and Gawain, who owed tribute for the wreath he had plucked for Orgelusé. As King Arthur's army rode back to their encampment, Parzival was at first defensive about appearing before the court where he had previously suffered the disgrace of Kundrie's curse. But Arthur welcomed him with the assurance that the fame of his deeds had reached them to wipe out any doubts they might have had about his nobility.

The following morning Gramoflanz was determined that this time there should be no mistake, so he arrived early on the field. He was vexed that Gawain was not already there but presently a knight in full armour rode forward and began the attack.

Meanwhile Gawain was attending mass in the company of Arthur and his court. When the service was over they rode towards the appointed place and on the way were astonished to hear the clash of arms. They arrived on the

scene to find Gramoflanz in sore distress. He had hitherto scorned to fight with only one adversary but now his opponent seemed to have the strength of six. The arrogant King was humbled in his self-esteem. When Arthur's army appeared he realized that again a mistake had been made. Now it was Gawain's turn to offer a postponement till the following day.

During the afternoon, events were taking place behind the scenes: Itonjé was overcome with grief to realize it was her lover and brother who were to meet in battle. Arnivé took her to Arthur and she pleaded to him to prevent the fight. Arthur sought counsel with the uncle of Gramoflanz and between them they persuaded Itonjé to use their influence. Orgelusé, for the love of Gawain, should renounce her hatred of Gramoflanz; Itonjé should convince Gramoflanz that his love for her could not be rewarded if he slew her brother. Through this intersection the warriors were reconciled. Arthur then gave Itonjé in marriage to the one she loved.

At the marriage festival of Gramoflanz and Itonjé there was general rejoicing. All dangers and difficulties now seemed overcome. Klingsor's power was at an end, ladies were freed from his spell, Gawain was lord of the Castle of Wonders and all conflict was brought to rest. Parzival alone felt an outsider. He was still separated from his dearly loved wife and it was impossible to think of paying court to another. He realized that there were still some tasks in stall for him, so in the early dawn he armed himself and stole away with the thought, "May fortune show me what be best for me to do."

BOOK 15

FEIREFIS

As Parzival was traveling through a great forest he came to a bright glade. Here he met a powerful knight clad in the richest armour and trappings that he had ever seen. His surcoat was flashing with jewels and above his helmet there rose a talisman in the form of a strange beast known as an ecidemon. The two warriors at once rushed into combat. Shields were pierced with spears, and splinters flew but neither lost his seat, so at length they leapt to the ground to fight it out with swords.

The mighty stranger kept shouting his war-cry of "Trabonet," the name of the pagan land from whence he came, and Parzival found himself being driven back. He mustered all his strength and, concentrating all his thoughts on his wife and on the Grail, he cried "Pelrapare." The ecidemon was shattered with blows and the heathen sank to his knees. At that moment Parzival's sword, which he had won from the Red Knight, broke in his hand and he was left unarmed. The last of his early debts was now paid and he had to prepare for death.

The heathen leapt to his feet, but he courteously withdrew from the fight, saying, "Brave man, I should win no renown by attacking you when you have no sword. Let there be a truce between us." The stranger suggested that they should reveal their names and titles and declared himself a member of the

royal house of Angevin. This astonished Parzival who was by right of birth the ruler of Anjou. Remembering the description of the heathen Queen at Arthur's Court he asked his companion whether he had a complexion like parchment with writing on it, black on a white background. The stranger removed his helmet and showed his skin which was like a magpie's plumage. He was none other than Parzival's half-brother Feirefis.

The two brothers took great joy in each other and Feirefis said, "You have fought here against yourself; against yourself I rode into combat. Your strength helped us so that I prevented our deaths."

Parzival learned that his brother had a mighty army waiting for him at a neighbouring harbor. They were so well disciplined that they would wait for months without deserting their posts. Feirefis wanted Parzival to go with him and he offered him a kingdom in the East, but Parzival suggested that they should visit Arthur's Court first so that his brother could learn something of the chivalry of the West.

Feirefis was received with great courtesy by all who had assembled for Gramoflanz's wedding. Everyone was astonished at the splendour of his army and the richness of his garments, which were thickly inlaid with jewels.

The following morning, after Mass had been celebrated, a visitor was seen approaching. It was none other than Kundrie, the Messenger of the Grail. But this time she had not come to drive Parzival away. She prostrated herself before him and begged his forgiveness for her earlier harshness.

She had now come to announce that his name was proclaimed in the stars as lord of the *Grail*. Sorrow was to be transformed into joy for the misery of Anfortas would be brought to an end and the *Grail* henceforth be truly served. Kondwiramur, with the two sons Kardeiss and Lohengrin who had been born after Parzival's departure, had been summoned to meet her husband. Parzival was told that one companion could accompany him to the *Grail Castle* and Feirefis was his choice.

As the brothers set out on their journey the word went round that no man, by fighting, could win the *Grail*. Only those to whom it revealed itself could behold it and thus many who had set out on a vain search renounced their quest.

BOOK 16

LOHENGRIN

While Parzival was assured that at last his long quest had come to an end, Anfortas no longer knew how to bear his intolerable anguish. He cried out to his followers to spare him the sight of the Grail and allow him to die in peace. He even threatened that after death he would summon them before God's throne and denounce them for infidelity, but, aware of what the stars foretold, they would not obey him.

In the meantime, Kundrie was leading Parzival and Feirefis through the forest of Monsalvasch where a host of Grail knights was keeping guard. Feirefis was eager to attack and had to be restrained. When they recognized the turtle doves embroidered on Kundrie's garments, the Templars dismounted upon the grass to do homage to their deliverer. They felt that his greeting in return was a benediction.

The newcomers were led to the great hall where all were waiting in expectation. Anfortas greeted Feirefis courteously, then begged Parzival to come to his aid, and if nothing else availed, to allow him to die.

Parzival asked where the Grail was kept. After genuflecting before it, and praying that he might receive strength for his task, he asked, "Uncle, what is it that did this to you?" In a moment, a change passed over the face of

the Fisher King. The renewal of life and joy shone forth with beauty surpassing that of all others present.

With the healing of Anfortas, Parzival was acknowledged as King of the Grail. He now set out to meet his wife. After visiting Trevrezent to tell him of the redemption of Anfortas, Parzival came early in the morning to the place where Kondwiramur, accompanied by her Uncle Kiot and her faithful retainers had encamped for the night. Kiot led Parzival to the tent where the Queen was asleep with her two young sons at her side. When she was roused to welcome her husband, the sorrow of their long parting was at an end. Parzival was reunited with his wife in the very place where nearly five years earlier he had been caught in a trance of longing when the red blood, the white snow, and the dark trees had called up a vision of the one he so dearly loved.

Before Parzival could set out with his wife for the Grail Castle, Kardeiss, the elder of the twins, was crowned King of his parent's domain. Kiot took charge of his upbringing and he and the Queen's party returned to Pelrapare. When he grew to manhood, Kardeiss re-won those of his father's lands which had been wrongly seized.

On their way to Monsalvasch Parzival wished to pay a last visit to Siguné. They came to the little hermitage and found her in an attitude of prayer above her lover's grave. When they called to her they realized that she was dead. They broke into the cell and raised the stone under which her lover lay embalmed, as beautiful as he had been in life. The impression is given that it

was the presence of Parzival, the Grail King that bestowed this beauty upon Anfortas whom he had healed and upon Schionatulander who had died for his sake.

In the evening after their arrival at the Grail Castle, the ritual procession took place and all were nourished by the Grail. Feirefis gazed in astonishment. He saw maidens and the Grail-bearer and he received the choice food, but he could not see the Grail itself. Titurel was consulted and informed Parzival and Anfortas that only those who were baptized could behold the Grail. Feirefis fell passionately in love with Repanse de Schoie. He asked how he could win her, for he was prepared to undertake any dangerous battles on her behalf. When he was told that only if he became baptized as a Christian could he win her hand, he was completely prepared to take the step. After baptism, he was able to see the Grail and all consented to his wedding with the bearer.

After twelve days of celebrating, Anfortas accompanied the young couple until Feirefis was reunited with his army. Here they received the news that the Queen Sekundille had died, so there was now no rival wife to create a problem for Repanse de Schoie. The son of Feirefis and his wife was Prester John through whom, according to legend, Christianity was firmly established in the East and Africa.

The story ends with a brief account of Parzival's son, Lohengrin. Knights of the Grail were sometimes sent out into the world when a kingdom was left without leadership. Else, the young heiress of Brabant, was in danger. Her

guardian was plotting to deprive her of her lands, so Lohengrin, who had by this time attained knighthood, was sent to her aid. Legend narrates that a swan brought him from the Grail Castle and he was accepted by the people of Brabant as their lord and Else's husband. However, he warned her that he could stay with her only if she never enquired into his true name and lineage. Her enemies began to spread false rumours until, through fear and uncertainty, she demanded to know his secret. Then the swan appeared and bore him back to the Kingdom of the Grail. However, he had restored Brabant to its position of leadership and he left behind a sword, a horn and a ring, symbols of the kingly virtues of strength, wisdom and love.

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL MAIN LESSON BOOK

The Arthurian Legend of Parsifal



Sarah Carne

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We are not granted
 A rest on any step
 The active man
 Must live and strive
 From life to life,
 As plants renew themselves
 From spring to spring.
 So man must rise
 Through error to truth,
 From fetters into freedom,
 Through sickness and through death
 To beauty, health and life

Rudolf Steiner



The Quest for the Holy Grail

The quest for the Holy Grail can be looked at from two main points of view; the physical aspect and then the deeper, more spiritual, view point. When physically searching for the grail one should ask oneself certain questions, such as, what is it that I am looking for, why am I looking for it and so on. When these questions are asked from the spiritual perspective we see that they become profound existential questions.

The word 'grail' means truth or relic. The grail is a Christian artefact but some say it has Pagan origins. The actual physical manifestation of the grail seems to be ambiguous. It is most commonly said to be the from which Christ drank at the last supper, and in which his blood was caught by Joseph while he was crucified, however, it is also renowned to be a bowl, sword, magic stone, or spear. Some say that it shifts shape between all of these. The Pagan origin is said to be in the link between the cauldron and the bowl or cup.

There is another highly controversial belief that Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene had a child, and

the Holy Grail is Jesus' bloodline through his child.

In the story of ^aPersifal the Holy Grail is in the form of an emerald-like stone which fell from Lucifer's crown as he was exiled from heaven. ✓

Grail Community

Uther Pendragon was a great king and warrior. He was an ally of the Duke of Cornwall, Gorlois. Uther was a very choleric man who always got what he wanted. Unfortunately, what he wanted was Gorlois' wife, Igraine.

In his longing for Igraine, Uther sought his nephew's counsel. His nephew was Merlin, the son of Uther's much older brother, Ambrosius Aurelianus, and the Lady of the Lake, leader of the priestesses of Avalon, of the time.

Merlin, having clairvoyant powers and having been raised in Avalon by the priestesses, was a wizard. Merlin said he would grant ~~Uther~~ Uther one night with Igraine. However, Merlin saw that a child would be borne of this union.



and that he would be the heir to the kingdom of England. So, Merlin made Uther promise that any child of his ^(Uther's) that Igraine bore would be entrusted to the care of Merlin.

Merlin disguised Uther as Gorlois, and, one night while Gorlois was away in battle, Uther went into the castle Tintagril and slept with Igraine. At the same time Gorlois was killed in battle.

Igraine and Uther were then married but not before she knew she was pregnant. Arthur was born and, when he was seven years old, was taken away by Merlin to live with his foster father, Sir Ector and his son Kaye. Uther knew he could not acknowledge Arthur as heir to his throne so he was conceived out of wedlock.

Uther died and chaos ensued until one day Arthur innocently pulled a sword out of a stone and was crowned King of England at 15 years old.

When he was 16, the time came for Arthur to be initiated. He had to slay a stag with white horns and wear the horns, which he did. He also had to have ritual sex with one of the priestesses of Avalon appointed by the Lady of the Lake.

The Lady of the Lake chose Morgan Le Fay, who she knew was Arthur's sister, however, neither Morgan nor Arthur knew this.

Only once Morgan discovered she was pregnant was the truth revealed to her. Morgan was very angry and left Avalon to live with her (and Arthur's) half sister, Morgause, and her husband, King Lot.

Morgause, however, was twisted by her jealousy of both her half siblings, and dabbled in the dark Craft.

In the meanwhile Arthur's first wife, a beautiful, blonde, christian girl called Guinevere had already died and he was married again to another Guinevere.

Morgause took Morgan's child, Mordrid, at birth and raised as her own, but she raised him to hate his father. She only told him his true parentage at puberty, when she sent him to challenge his father. Morgause knew that if Mordrid became King, she would be very



powerful

Arthur's kingdom was already weakened by the betrayal of his friend, Lancelot, seducing his wife, when Mordred came to challenge him. Mordred and Arthur were both wounded by each other. Mordred was mortally wounded. Arthur, however, was taken by the priestesses of Avalon never to be seen again. ✓

Introductory Notes

The tale of Parsifal represents the striving of the human being to bring spiritual values into life on earth. Von Eschenbach gives us a good picture of the turmoil middle Ages, both in its idealism and its barbarity. ~~The~~ ^{He} is as medieval writer, in that he allows women to play an important part in the story. He also gives love an important part in the marriage relationship: Marriage now becomes an act of love, and is no longer a political arrangement, in order to secure a bloodline.

Little is known about Von Eschenbach. He was born about 1170 AD and the poem was completed early in the 13th.

Story tellers were the bringers of news in the Middle Ages. The troubadours and minstrels brought the message of love. Where as before true love was often unrequited and the lady was loved and admired at a distance, in the Parsifal story love and marriage now become synonymous. Because of the power of the Roman Catholic church story tellers often revealed secrets through their stories, in which they used certain codes

and symbols. So too in Parsifal.

Through this story knighthood also becomes transformed - the rough, unsophisticated, fighting knight, through the examples of Parsifal and Gawain, becomes a sophisticated gentleman.

Each one of us can take the initial step towards our own transformation. Each one of us is a Grail Knight, looking for a level of mystical experience above that of every-day experience. Our inner, spiritual state is reflected in this story. There must be, in the individual, a deep desire for the grail, our true transformer.

The Poem of Parsifal

Book 1 Gamuret

The poem begins by telling us of a man who ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~sporti~~ was both black and white. This is a metaphor for the good and bad in all of us which we must strive to overcome.

Parsifal's father, Gamuret of Anjou, features first in this story. Gamuret travels East in order to seek fame and fortune under the Banuch of Baghdad. This is a representation of the allure of the East to western men. While in the ~~an~~ service of the Banuch Gamuret changed his coat of arms from a pouter to an anchor. Apparently Gamuret found the renown he sought, among both Muslims and Christians.

While he was in the East Gamuret was drawn into a strange conflict in a place called Zaganore. A prince, called Isenhot, had fallen in love with the Queen of the land, Belakone. However, he had been slain while trying to prove himself to her and his vengeful followers ~~to~~ ^{to} were now attacking the capital, Patelanut, aided by their Scottish vassals.

Significantly, the city had sixteen gates, eight being attacked by the Scottish and the other eight being attacked by the Muslim army. This siege is said to parallel an inner spiritual battle towards enlightenment and corresponds with the Buddhist eightfold path of right understanding, thought, speech, behavior, occupation, effort, contemplation, and concentration.

This battle also represents a shift from the pre-Christian thinking of Isehart to the Christian thinking of Camuret, who later won the war and became the Queen Belakune's husband.

The battle where the soldiers trusting on atavistic knowledge are black and those striving towards the light are white is a continuation of the beggling theme of the poem. Camuret is able to bring both armies to the Queen and give her the kiss of peace. Queen Belakune and Camuret have a child who is streaked both black and white.

This opening to the book sets a theme of overcoming darkness ~~to~~ to move towards light and the progression of old, atavistic, knowledge being replaced by clear consciousness.

Camuret's cowardice becomes apparent when he abandons Belakune and his son in the middle of the night.

Book 2 Herzeliade

Camuret returned from the East to France where he competed and won a tournament. The rules of the tournament stipulated that the winner would marry the lady Herzeliade. At the same time Camuret's ideal, Anflise, Queen of France, requested that he marry her as her husband had died.

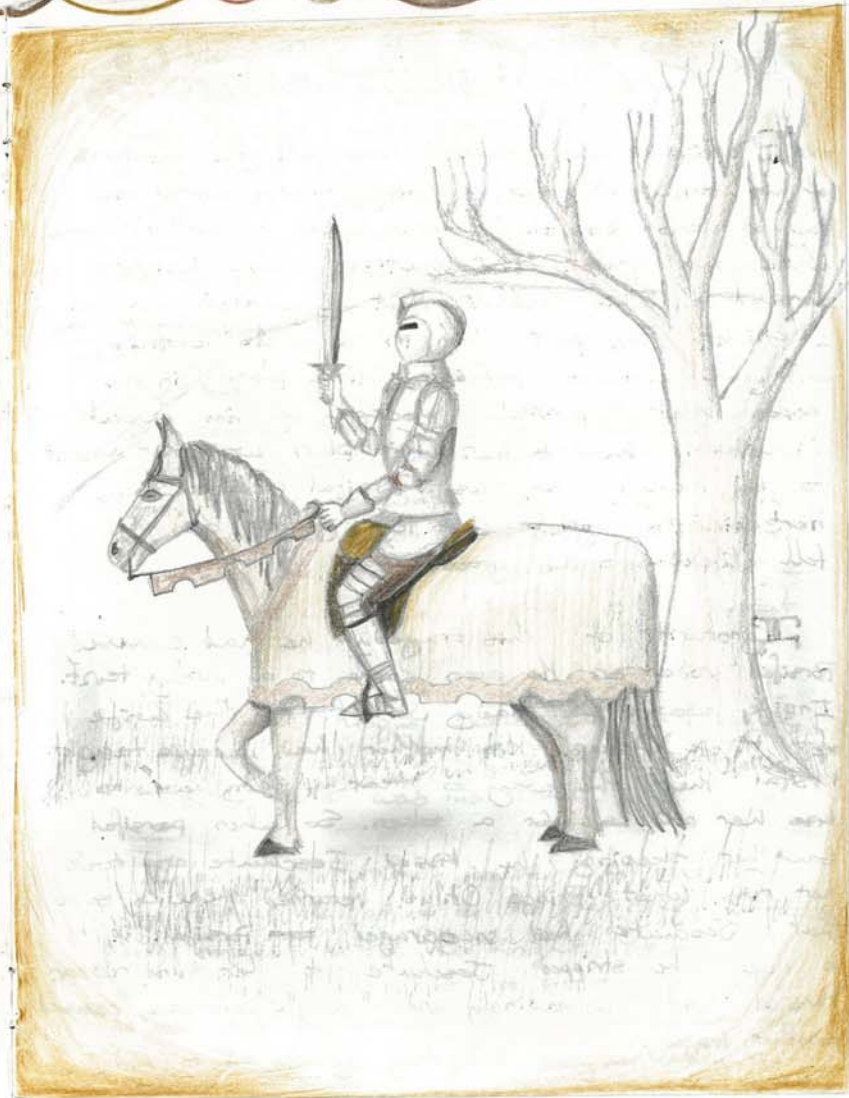
Camuret refused both these proposals, saying he was loyal to a wife in the East but the westerners would not acknowledge this and Camuret ended up marrying Herzeliade.

At the same time as he won, the news came that his brother had died. Camuret was now ruler of all Isehart's lands, his father's and brother's lands of Anjou, and the lands of the men he conquered in the East. In light of his new inheritance, Camuret changed his coat of arms back to a panther.

One night, during her pregnancy, Herzeliade dreamt that she gave birth to a dragon. When she awoke she was given the news that Camuret's helmet had been softened by the black magic of a jealous knight and he had been killed.

Herzeleide reacted out of fear and took her son, Parsifal, to be raised in the Edtane woods. He was not to know anything about his birthrights or knighthood, he was not even called by his name, Herzeleide called him bon fils, cher fils, beau fils.

Although Herzeleide meant to keep her son from harm, she also failed to equip him with the tools required for life in the world. He would need these as his father's quests were all passed on to him.



Book 3 Gurnemanz

Parsifal was shielded from all the customs of his time and grew up very simply until one day a few knights passed his woodland home while on a quest. After meeting these knights Parsifal told his mother that he wanted to be a knight. She put him in a fool's clothing and gave him a pathetic little pony, in the hopes that people's mockery of him would drive him back to her. This plan was not meant to be though, as, as Parsifal rode away, Herzeliede's grief was too great and she fell lifeless to the ground.

Ignorant of this tragedy he had caused Parsifal rode on. He soon came to a lordly tent. Inside was the lady Jeschute, the wife of Prince Orilus. His mother had always taught Parsifal that the way to treat a lady was to kiss her and ask for a token. So when Parsifal saw her sleeping he kissed Jeschute and took her ring. When Prince Orilus returned he was sure that Jeschute had encouraged ~~him~~ Parsifal. So, in a rage, he stripped Jeschute to her underwear. Parsifal had, unknowingly and through ignorance, caused another tragedy.

While riding along, Parsifal came across a woman weeping over a dead knight's body. Parsifal was anxious to know who it was who had killed this knight. The maiden greeted him with the words "You have virtue in you. Honour be to your sweet youth and to your lovely face. In truth you will be rich in blessings."

When she asked his name and Parsifal responded with the only ~~one~~ ^{one} he knew which was boin fils, cher fils, baen fils. The maiden was Sigurê, his cousin, and she now recognised him. She told Parsifal his real name. Parsifal would meet ~~her~~ ^{her} twice more and she would reveal truths to him about himself.

The dead knight was Echionatulander. He had died while defending Parsifal's lands from Orilus. Sigurê was his ideal.

Eventually Parsifal reached the court of King Arthur. He arrived to find that the court was being menaced by the Red Knight. Parsifal decided to challenge this knight to prove himself. As he rode out a woman named Kunnewarê saw him in his strange garb and laughed. Lady

Kunnewaric was destined never to laugh until she beheld the one who was to win supreme honour. Sir Kaye was outraged that Parsifal was this man and struck her.

Parsifal slew the Red Knight with a javelin through his visor. A young squire, Iwanet, helped Parsifal don the Red Knight's armour. Parsifal sent Iwanet to tell all that had come to pass, and to tell Kunnewaric of his sorrow, she was another whose hurt he had unintentionally caused. Parsifal was not yet ready to become a knight, so, he went on his way.

Soon Parsifal came to the castle of an old knight called Gurnemanz. Gurnemanz taught Parsifal three lessons; Never kill a man if he could have a use, Love and marriage should be one and don't ask unnecessary questions.

Gurnemanz also suggested that Parsifal marry his daughter, Lisse, and become his heir. But Parsifal thought he still had more to learn and bade them farewell.

In this chapter we see Parsifal begging and totally ignorant, even of his own name, and having to navigate a wasteland of disappointment and despair. This mirrors our own journey through life.



Book 4 Kondwiramur

This book begins with Parsifal leading his horse across ~~the~~ a treacherous bridge without mishap. By night fall he came to the besieged city of Telrapeire. Eventually he gained entry to the city and came to the castle of Queen Kondwiramur.

In the castle the queen's wifes, the Dukes of Kiot and Marfilot, had managed to procure food. Parsifal suggested that they share these supplies with the starving populous.

As Curremarz had taught, Parsifal was quiet in the Queen's company. He listened thoughly and learnt that she was the niece of Curremarz and that his son, Schanteflur, had died fighting on her behalf.

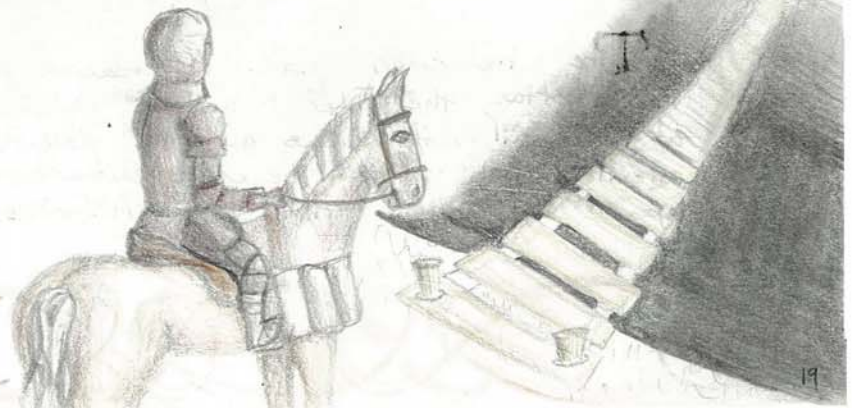
When ~~at~~ Parsifal was in his bed that night, the Queen came into his room and wept to him. She told him that the man besieging the city was King Klamide. The reason for his hostility was that he was trying to force Queen Kondwiramur to marry him.

Parsifal knew that, according to customs,

if he saved Kondwiramur and her city he would have to marry her. He was remorseful that he would not be able to marry Liasee, but he felt it was right to save Kondwiramur.

Parsifal conquered King Klamide and sent him back to Kunnewaare's service in return for the hurt he had caused her. Parsifal married Queen Kondwiramur and they had sons. Two boys called Lohengrin, who was the eldest and carried the symbol of a swan, and Kardez, who continued the symbol of the panther.

After three years Parsifal left Kondwiramur to search for his mother. Their relationship was one of love, they were united in the spiritual world as well as the physical, and Stroner says love needs to be renewed after three years. ✓



Book 5 Anfortas

Parsifal comes to a lake he meets a fisherman wearing peacock feathers. The peacock feather is a symbol closely linked with the grail. In Hindu mythology the peacock feather symbolises royalty, immortality, solar glory, eternal cosmic cycle, rebirth, unity of the cosmos, wisdom and poetry. The peacock feather is linked closely with the grail castle, wisdom and rebirth.

The journey to the castle where the fisher^{man} sent him is a spiral. The spiral, when inverted, forms the shape of a grail or cup which symbolises our spirits which need to be filled.

The grail castle is invisible, it only reveals itself to those who are pure of heart and intention. It revealed itself to Parsifal for these reasons and because it was his destiny to go there.

The fisherman with the peacock feather is Anfortas, the Fisher King. The gatekeeper at the grail castle knows our true thoughts and intentions, thus he knows whether to let you in or not. The Fisher King, Anfortas, has

a wound which does not heal. This wound is on his testicles. It symbolises sterility. This wound can only be healed by the true grail King coming and asking the right question. Parsifal, unbeknownst to him, is the true grail King. The right question is "What ails thee?" but Parsifal is not yet free of Gurnemanz's teachings which dictate not to ask questions.

So, while Parsifal was being led into the hall he wondered but did not ask the question. The sterility represented by this wound mirrors the sterility in our own lives. Our lives are sterile because we have lost touch with true love and imagination. Even in today's world is purely a physical thing. The world is very material, there is no imagination, we have lost connection with the spiritual world. Our task is to find out what happens behind the material world.

The question Parsifal was destined to ask, "What ails thee" is symbolically important because in dealings with others we must always think about what ails the other.

person, this will help you understand why they are the way they are.

In the hall 24 girls come in. There are 144 of a certain type of being, 24 of whom are ascended masters and there are 12 disciples of the Christ. These maidens use patterns made with their bodies to open portals. Twelve ~~girls~~ maidens enter, carrying a table with the top made of a single ruby. These maidens make the pattern of an eight pointed star, the octagon symbolises the infinite power of the universe.

Twelve more maidens escort in the grail queen holding the grail. They form a seven pointed star, a heptagon, this symbolises a vibrational frequency that protects mystical knowledge.

Now the grail queen stands between the two circles of 12 maidens each. These circles represent the trees of knowledge and life. These two circles move to form a circle around the grail queen of 24 maidens, they represent the 24 elders around God.

Repanse de Schoie, the grail queen, is pure so she can touch the grail which, in this story,

is an emerald-like stone and can grant your heart's desire. Each of the knights in the room touched it and it gave them wonderful food and drink.

During the evening Parsifal is presented with a sword, the hilt is made of a single ruby. The sword represents the intellectual world of decision. This sword can only be used once, ~~or~~ then it must be remade.

Another interesting thing that happened that evening was, first, before the grail and maidens came in, a man came in running, holding a spear covered in blood. This was the spear that had pierced the side of Christ and the blood was a stigmata.

That night when Parsifal went to bed he was tormented by bad dreams of crossed swords. This was because he had not asked the Question. These crossed swords represented trouble making decisions.

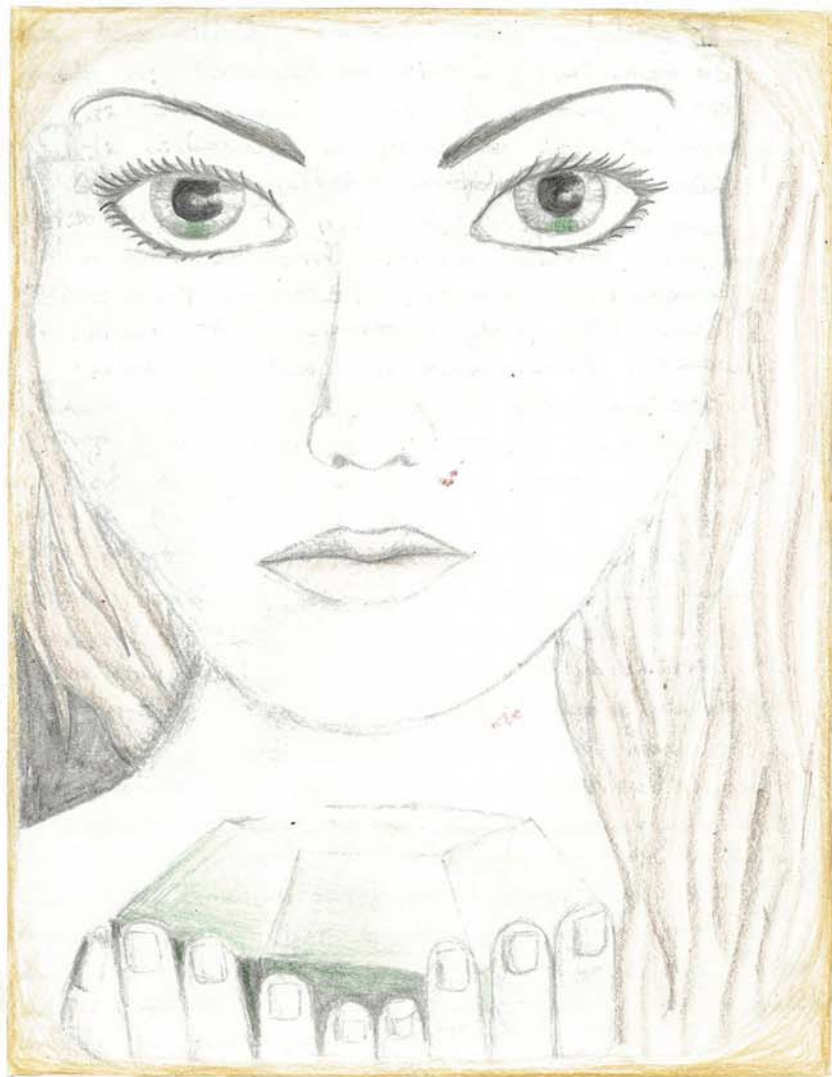
Then Parsifal leaves the castle the next morning the drawbridge is drawn up very suddenly and some one calls after him "Ride on and bear the wrath of the sun, you are a goose!"

This represents that Parsifal needs to grow from a goose to a swan.

In his travels later that night he comes to his cousin Sigurð. She is still in the same place, mourning over the body of Shionatalunder. She took the ideal of idealized love to the extreme, she guarded the body of the man whose ideal she was until her death.

When you sleep, whatever you have been through in the day comes to a different form of consciousness. When you lose your feet the etheric body becomes active. This is the right time to introduce intellectual education. When one enters puberty the astral body awakens. Education is now even more intellectual and ~~not~~ analytical. At 21 your ego awakens. When you sleep your ego and your astral body separates from your etheric and physical bodies. These two sets work upon each other and spiritualize and interpret whatever ~~to~~ you have absorbed during the day. A person's guardian angels lead them through the sleep-time journey of astral travelling while they are young but by the time you are 21 they will leave unless you invite them to stay. These angels and the sleep-time spirit world need beautiful things to work with.

Parsifal comes across Orilus and Jeschute. Orilus is covered in ~~the~~ his symbol of the dragon, all his armour and surcoat are covered in it. This usually deters his opponents and puts them off but when Parsifal fights him Parsifal wins. This restores Jeschute's honour. Parsifal then sends Orilus to pay homage to Kunneware. Kunneware is actually Orilus' sister. ✓



Book 6 Arthur

Journeing from the grail castle Parsifal comes across a goose who has been wounded by a falcon. The goose has shed three drops of blood on the grass. This goose represents Parsifal's condition and he is transfixed on it.

He is currently in Arthurs domain and news of his presence soon reaches the court. A knight, Degramour, comes to challenge him, but Parsifal knocks him off his horse without even breaking out of his trance. Sir Kay then comes to challenge Parsifal but Kay is beaten soundly by Parsifal. Kay receives punishment now for having struck Kunnnewar.

Finally Sir Gawain comes and he understands Parsifal's condition. Gawain frees Parsifal from his trance. Gawain offers to serve Parsifal and take him to Arthurs court.

Just as Parsifal makes his pledge to the knights, a fearsome messenger appears. She is Kondrie, the messenger of the grail.

Kondrie says Arthur is wrong in harbouring

Parsifal. Kondrie cursed Parsifal, saying he has failed in honour and is not worthy of the sword he ~~was~~ is carrying.

Kondrie says he lacks compassion for Amfortas and implies that his brother from the East is more worthy of honour than him. Parsifal finds out from a visiting Eastern Queen that Feirefis, his half-brother, is a ruler who is worshiped like a god and is loved by all.

Kondrie says that Parsifal is like a viper. This ~~is~~ symbolises the hurt he has caused to many people, knowingly or unknowingly.

This is interesting because it is the third Animal Parsifal has been compared to. These animals all represent parts of his personality Parsifal must overcome. He was called a wolf by Sigune, this represents his scavenger-like nature, he ~~is~~ not making his own life, he is just living by whatever comes along. He was also called a goose as he left the grail castle, this is symbolic of his inferiority to the swan and his illegitimacy.

Before she leaves, Kondrie tells the court about the Castle of Wonders. At this point in the story

Sir Gawain takes the lead as he goes to seek the Castle of Wonders, which houses four Queens and four hundred Maidens. Gawain now becomes Parsifal's Alter-ego.

Even though Kunnewaare has now fallen in love with Parsifal it is idealised love as they could never be together. Kunnewaare ends up being married to Klumide, but it is said that as Parsifal left the court there was a sad parting between Parsifal and Kunnewaare.

Parsifal's quest now is to find a relationship with the spirit world. He suffered loss of happiness when he left Kondwiramur and he has now felt the grief of unfulfilled love and longing for Kunnewaare. These were typical experiences for the Celts of the time.



Book 7 Obilot

On his way to the Kingdom of Echamfanzon, where it was that he was falsely accused of murder, Gawain came across a city that was besieged by King Meljanz of Liz. King Meljanz was attempting to seize Obie, the daughter of King Lippaut of Beaurosch, by force. She was a spiteful girl and when she saw Gawain setting up camp she told her family that he was a merchant come to make money out of the war.

But, the younger princess, Obilot, saw that he was a knight and she decided to take matters into her own hands. She went to Gawain and asked him to become her knight.

Sir Gawain fought for Lippaut and a mysterious Red Knight fought for Meljanz. In the end Beaurosch was victorious and Persifal sent his prisoners to Lippaut, in search of the grail or to Kondwiramur.

Little Obilot realised this conflict was purely between Obie and Meljanz and persuaded

them to meet and reconcile.

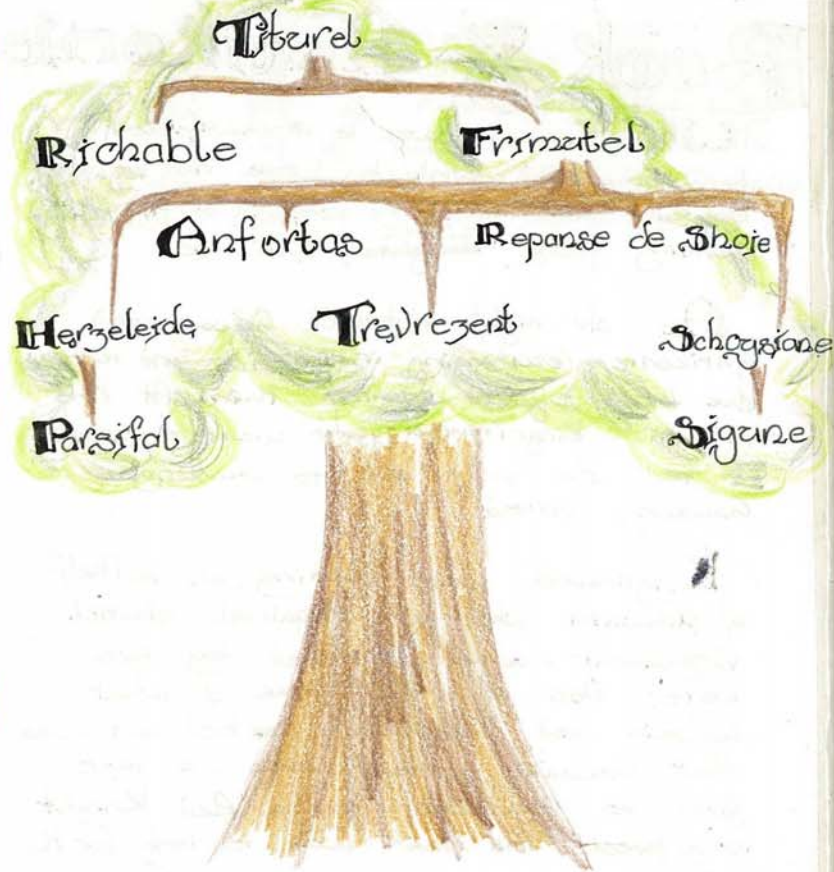
In the end of this story the only grief was that of Gawain and Obilot. The child wept bitterly when he left and Gawain's heart was heavy as he rode away. ✓

Book 8 Antikonie

When Gawain came to Schamfenzon he was greeted warmly by ~~the~~ King Vergulacht. Gawain was left in the company of ~~the~~ King's charming young ^{sister} ~~daughter~~, Antikonie.

An old knight observed Gawain and Antikonie exchanging intimacies and turned the King's guard against them. At this moment Kingrimusel, who was supposed to be the only one to challenge Gawain, arrived.

Kingrimusel was fighting on behalf of Gawain when King Vergulacht returned. Vergulacht was reproached by his sister. One of the terms of what Gawain and Vergulacht worked out was that Gawain would take a task given to Vergulacht by a Red Knight in a forest. This task was to look for the grail. ✓



Book 9 Trevezent

During his journey, Parsifal learns the proper use of his sword. One day he comes to the home of a hermit. This hermit is his cousin Sigune. She is wearing a garnet ring. He told her of his ~~great~~ mistake at the grail castle and she tells him Kordrie had left not long ago and he might be able to follow her.

As Parsifal is following the trail a grail knight forbids him travelling any further. A fight ensues in which the grail knight is killed and Parsifal's horse is killed. Parsifal takes the knight's Grail horse.

After meeting a knight ~~on~~ on the road Parsifal's faith in God is a little restored and he trusts God to guide his horse. The horse takes him to another hermit, with whom he lives for 15 days.

Trevezent, the hermit, taught Parsifal about the Grail and Christianity. He also mentioned how a foolish knight had failed to heal the grail king, Anfortas. For a long while Parsifal was too ashamed to tell

Treuzent that this had been him but eventually he died. Treuzent realized that Parsifal needed help and when they parted Treuzent absolved Parsifal's sins.

Parsifal was now able to interpret the Celtic and Greek qualities he had gained in a Christian way. ✓

Book 10 Orgeuse

While travelling on his quest for the grail, Gawain came across a woman cowering over an injured knight. Being skilled in healing, Gawain helps the knight. He then sets out towards the city of Logrois to avenge him.

The town of Logrois is amazing as it appears to the observer to spin like a top. As Gawain is about to enter the city Gawain sees Orgeuse, a very beautiful but dangerous femme fatale. Despite her rudeness Gawain asks to be her knight. She requests that he finds her horse, who he will find in an orchard.

While he retrieved the horse many people warned him to have nothing to do with Orgeuse but he returned her horse to her and followed her when she rode away.

Orgeuse was very rude to Gawain and

only laughed when the knight who he had helped stole his horse.

Eventually the two come to the castle of wonders but before he could be ferried across the lake a knight who was enemies with Gawain came charging towards him. Gawain was victorious and had procured a horse who had once been his.

However Gawain was dissatisfied that Orgeluse had not stayed to watch him win. The ferryman, realizing this, offered Gawain to be his guest for the night.



Book 11 Arnive

The next morning the ferryman said that there was very little chance of Gawain coming out of the castle of wonders alive but Gawain insists that he must go. The ferryman gives Gawain a sword and shield to take with him. He also tells Gawain that he ferried Parsifal across the lake yesterday.

Once inside the castle Gawain manages to mount the Bed, which represents restlessness and things we need to take control of. The bed sheets about, mounted on ruby wheels, on a jasper floor which represents uncontrollable situations. He withstands, not without difficulty, a volley of stones, representing an attack on his etheric, and arrows, representing an attack on his ego.

Once this had ceased and the bed was still, a man clothed in fish scales, representing life threatening situations for the physical or spiritual, entered and declared that he would see that Gawain forfeits his life.

A huge lion is released into the hall but eventually Gawain slays it. However, Arnive,

~~And~~ the mother of Arthur fears that he has lost his life fighting the lion, which represents our dark, animal natures which we must overcome. ✓

3 Questions on Life

1. Are our destinies planned out for us
2. Can one ever be truly content
3. What is the point of the lessons learnt in life

My Loneliest Moment

I can't remember feeling more alone than sitting on my floor weeping, and knowing that no help would come. I put down the phone and the brave mask. "This is not so bad" I told myself, and I stood up. The shower is not so far away but I could not get there, I took one step and my knees buckled. I did not sink to the floor, this is not what happens, we are surrounded by air not water, so I fell. Hard. But I didn't feel any physical pain because my body was no longer important. I could not even convince it to get to the shower because I had no will left, there was no point and I could not force my mind to pretend long enough that there was one in order to get up off the floor. So I sat there and cried. I cried softly, as it is not wise to let others know you are so weak, but the tears still poured down my

face, until I was sure that I would become a pile of dust if they did not stop. I just kept there, ~~consumed~~ ^{consumed} by the huge, empty, ^{cold} black hole that had taken over the place where my star-speckled galaxy of soul should be.

216 words ✓

Eidegast Book 12

Gawain survived his encounter with the lion. While exploring the castle he came across a circular mirror which reflected the viewer's desires. While he was observing this mirror his grandmother, Arriwë, mother Sangivë, and two sisters, Kondrie and Itonjë, came to visit him but they did not recognise him as he had been very young when he went to serve in Arthur's court.

The amazing mirror had been stolen by the dark mage Klingeor from an eastern Queen who is married to Feirefis. In the mirror Gawain saw a knight riding with his beautiful Orgeluse.

Gawain at once rushed to challenge this knight, and despite his poor health, he was the victor. Orgeluse now commands that he leap the Ford Perilous and bring her a wreath from the tree that grew there.

Then Gawain attempted this his horse missed the far bank and they fell. ~~However then~~

When Orgeluse saw their peril she burst into tears. However, both horse and rider survived and Gawain ~~brought~~ picked a wreath from the tree.

At that moment, the owner of the tree, King Gramoflanz, rode up to challenge Gawain. Gramoflanz said he knew that ~~the~~ Gawain had been sent by Orgeluse to seek vengeance for her husband's murder.

It came about that, in recompense for the wreath, Gawain would make the match of his sister, Itonjë, and Gramoflanz, and he would fight Gramoflanz in eight days time.

Then Gawain made the return leap, Orgeluse fell weeping at his feet. However Gawain was no longer so blindly besotted with her. She told Gawain the story of how she had been seeking a knight to avenge her husband. One of the knights who had tried to fight Gramoflanz was Anfortas and this is how he had sustained his wound. Only one knight,

Porsifal, had been able to reject the beautiful Orgeluse's charm and in so doing he had paved the way for Gawain to win her over and break ~~the~~ the spell of destruction which had been put on her by the evil Klingsor.

Gawain sent out an invitation to the court of Arthur to come and watch his battle with Gramoflanz but he still kept his identity secret from the men of the castle. ✓

Book 13 Klingsor

Gawain is now revealed to be the true master of the castle of words. There is much hype over Gawain's coming battle with Gramoflanz and Gawain begins trying to make the match of Gramoflanz and his sister, Itonje. Many people from Arthur's court have come to watch the battle.

*

In the day Gawain rises early and hides alone across the field. He sees another rider approaching.

* Gawain learns from his good mother Arnie that the evil magician Klingsor is so embittered because, in revenge for Klingsor seducing his wife, the King of Sicily castrated Klingsor.

Book 14 Gramoflanz

Gawain begins fighting this knight, who he notices is wearing a wreath from the tree. However this was not, as all discovered when messengers passed on their way back, Gramoflanz. Gawain was so injured by this mysterious knight that the competition had to be

postponed to the next day.

However the next day the same mistake is made but the other way round, Gramoflanz fights the strange knight and Gawain offers a postponement to the next day.

During the afternoon Itonje finds out it is her brother and her love who are going to fight. through her influence over Gramoflanz and Orgeluse renouncing her hatred of Gramoflanz out of her love for Gawain the issue is resolved without a fight and Itonje is wedded to Gramoflanz.

Even though all were happy, Parsifal, who we think was the mysterious knight, was not. He left shortly after the wedding to let fortune show him what would be best for him to do.

Different Kinds of Love

Mother love (Herzeloide)

Sacrificial love (Jeschzabe)

Idealised love (Sigune)

True Love (Parsifal/Kondwiramur; Gawain/Orgeluse)

Spiritual Love (Anfortas)

Ask yourself these questions:

What have you faced?

I have ~~not~~ faced many things but I have yet to face the death of a close family member, and experience that ^{kind of} grief.

What have you transformed?

I have transformed a need to fit in, into comfort being my own person.

What have you unlearned?

I have unlearned quietness in order to be unnoticeable.
I have unlearned the ~~wish~~ wish to be inconspicuous. ✓

Book 15 Feirefis

While Parsifal was travelling through the forest when he came across an Eastern warrior and they immediately engaged in combat. During the fight Parsifal's sword shattered and the stranger stood down. They began to talk and Parsifal discovers that the stranger is his half brother, Feirefis.

Parsifal suggested that Feirefis come to Arthur's court. Feirefis said that even though he had an army waiting for him they were well trained and would wait. Feirefis was received well at Arthur's court and the poet states the contrast between the finery of his clothes, which were said to be fire-magical, and the poverty of the knights. Parsifal is reunited with his wife and meets his sons.

At the end of this chapter Kundry comes and apologises to Parsifal for her earlier harshness. Parsifal and Feirefis set out for the Grail Castle. ✓

Book 16 Lohengrin The Different Sheaths

Parsifal and Feirefis were on their way to the grail castle but the fish-king Anfortas was close to giving up. Parsifal arrived at the castle and asked the Question, "what ails you?". This question immediately heals Anfortas and Parsifal is acknowledged as king of the Grail. He is then reunited fully with his wife and sons.

Kardores, the elder of Parsifal's twins, comes into his inheritance and reclaims much lost land. On their way back to the Grail Castle, Parsifal and his men find Sigurð is dead.

Feirefis falls in love with Repanse de Schoie and gladly converts to Christianity in order to marry her. Their child, Prester John, is said to have spread Christianity to the east and Africa.

Parsifal's other son, Lohengrin, aids in spreading the message of the Grail and the trend in independent city states.

The body of man is not only the physical body. Our physical body is surrounded by other bodies which incarnate and become active at different times and hold different qualities.

The first to become active is the etheric body, this becomes active at around 7 years of age with the change of teeth. The etheric body is related to the feeling realm.

The next body outwards is the astral body. This body is related to the thinking abilities of Man and becomes active at around 14 years of age.

At 21 years of age the ego becomes active. The ego is the body which establishes us as fully independent individuals in the world.

The further in a certain trait is in these bodies, the harder it is to change. Physical disorders sit in the physical body and are very hard to change. The four temperaments are related to habits and both sit in the etheric.



This means they are the second hardest to change. The seven soul types rest in the astral body.

The Four Temperaments

A person will have elements of all four temperaments in them but usually two will predominate, with one even stronger than the other. The quest of a person should be that later in life all the temperaments are balanced. There is a basic picture of the four temperaments.

Choleric

extroverted character
 element - fire
 animal - bull
 colour - red
 body connection - ~~liver~~ bile
 hot and dry
 short and stocky
 strong stride, heels first
 dark strong eyes, intense gaze
 strong, loud voice
 purposeful

aggressive
 dominant
 enormous energy
 don't tire easily
 workaholics
 like to order & take control
 good leaders
 brave
 take risks
 tyrannical
 react, don't respond.

Melancholic

introverted character

element - earth

animal - swan
 colour - blue
 body relation - black bile
 cold & dry
 tall & thin
 droopy shoulders
 earth bound - heavy step
 sad
 loners
 sympathetic

Sanguine
 extroverted character
 element - air
 animal - butterfly
 colour - yellow
 body relation - blood
 wet & warm
 slight
 light steps
 blue eyes, curly hair
 more lightly
 unreliable
 light & musical voices
 like variety.

not focussed on the present
 focused on pain and suffering of world
 hypochondriacs
 live & act out of fear
 can endure great pain & suffering
 finicky eater
 needs sugar
 thorough
 detail is important
 kind & compassionate
 not spontaneous.

short attention span
 scatterbrain
 bad memory
 dreamy
 good communicator
 social
 impulsive
 fickle
 sack of all trades but master of none
 bubbly energy
 no endurance
 never finish a task
 can live with chaos.

Phlegmatic
 introverted characters
 element - water
 colour - green
 animal - cow
 body relation - phlegm
 cold & wet
 soft, round bodies
 tend to be overweight
 slow
 in own world
 comfort orientated

not spontaneous
 very punctual
 rhythmical
 like to be left alone
 don't like to play games
 keen observers of detail
 like own space
 slow learners
 good memory
 worried about own digestion
 often good at maths

Parsifal Characters:

Parsifal: I think Parsifal goes through a journey through many ~~and~~ ^{temperaments} ~~types~~ however, he starts out his journey ~~with~~ with choleric tendencies, such as wanting to prove himself to the world.

Kandiramar: Melancholic is the temperament which is best related to Kandiramar. We see this when she breaks down the night Parsifal stays in her castle.

Gawain: I think Gawain is a combination of Sanguine and Melancholic as he is kind and caring and a good communicator, however he is also very well balanced.

Herzeloide: I think Herzeloide is a Melancholic person as we see her reacting out of fear, taking Persifal into the forest.

Feirefis: Feirefis is a choleric person. We see the way he reacts to every stimulus as opposed to responding.

Anfortas: I think Anfortas has melancholic qualities, demonstrated by the way he bears his wound, as well as choleric ones, in the way he loses his composure towards the end of the story.

Siguné: Siguné exhibits Phlegmatic tendencies in her preference for solitude and her methodical existence of mourning for Schionatulander.

Repanse de Schoie: Because she is the grail Queen I am led to believe she is well balanced.

My Own Temperament

I found it very difficult to try to select one temperament which describes me. It depends on my mood which one I gravitate most towards.

It has been a personal struggle of mine to try to overcome my melancholic tendencies as, when I am in a bad mood I find it very easy to fall into self pity and depression. However this is not my standard temperament, ^{for example} I seldom complain to others about any hurt, physical or otherwise, even though I am very understanding of those of others. ✓

Another temperament I gravitate towards when I am in a bad mood is the choleric. I can be very reactive and aggressive when put in the situation to provoke that side of me. On the other hand, when I am in a good mood I am quite spontaneous and I take risks often when I shouldn't. ✓

Then I am relaxed and comfortable I assume a more sanguine temperament, being

a good communicator, impulsive, and dreamy. I am also a bit of a scatterbrain and I have a very short attention span and a bad memory for things that need to be done. I also have the appearance, gait and voice of a sanguine, although my words show my melancholic side. My room is very much one of a sanguine.

All in all I think that I exhibit a balance of all the temperaments (except phlegmatic, which I identify very little with, except being good at maths) even if they are not in balance within me all the time.

Good!

The Seven Planetary Soul Types

Along with the four temperaments we are all ruled by the seven soul types. The soul type of a person manifests at puberty along with the astral body. The soul type governs how we relate to the inner and outer worlds, it is involved with our thinking, feeling, judging and willing.

There are three ~~active~~ active types; the Self Conscious type, the dominant type, and the aggressive type and there are three passive soul types; the aesthetic type, the mobile type and the romantic type. Usually a person will be ruled by two soul types, an active one and a passive one. These pairings are usually as follows: Self conscious and aesthetic, Dominant and mobile and aggressive and ~~mobile~~ romantic. One can often see if a person's active soul type is dominant or their passive is dominant (ruling) by noticing whether their face (passive) or body (active) is more striking.

There is another soul type which is neither active nor passive, and neither extroverted or introverted but is in complete harmony in all its aspects and this is the radiant type, this is the ideal we shall

all strive for. Here is a look at the soul types:

Self Conscious

planet - Saturn
archangel - Orifael
introverted
active, inward looking
colour - blue
metal - lead
body part - spleen
cultivates inner life
poor relationship with outer world
poor decision maker
live in the past

they will not act until the stimulus
has become a memory
react slowly
melancholic/phlegmatic
not spontaneous
often large people
bowed appearance
loners
sensitive
under-achievers
virtue: loyalty
vice: Spite & eccentricity.

Aesthetic

planet - Venus
archangel - Anael
body part - kidneys
metal - copper
colour - green
passive but intimate
relationship with outer world
reacts out of soul sphere
often in conflict with world
supple
pleasant to look at

well shaped bodily features
oval face
phlegmatic/melancholic
virtue: loveliness
vice: greed

Dominant

planet - Jupiter
extrovert
archangel - Zachariel
body part - Liver
metal - tin
colour - orange
not a common type
act with calm assurance
big head (physically)
high forehead
strong features
individualistic

regal appearance
balance between inner & outer worlds
take hold of circumstances through
strength of inner life.
intervene in chaotic situations
desire order and create order
like to solve problems straightaway
magnificent repose - they are
striking in the way they
carry themselves.
virtue: capacity for hope
vice: arrogance

Mobile

planet - Mercury
archangel - Raphael
body part - lungs
colour - yellow
passive inner being
good at business
appear active
no form or routine in their lives
unreliable
forgive easily
small build
small head
round features

inner and outer activity
can live with chaos in their homes
make lots of friends
sanguine
easy to get along with
detail is important
led by feelings and circumstances
fickle
sympathetic
dark
virtue: cleverness
vice: dishonest & superficial.

Aggressive

planet - mars
extract
colour - red
body part - gull bladder
metal - iron
archangel - Samuel
outer world is paramount
forceful outbursts
virtue: courageous

Romantic

planet - moon
archangel - Gabriel
colour - silver/violet
body part - brain
introverted
inner passivity
round face
mirrors outer world

Radiant

planet - sun
archangel - Michael
metal - gold
colour - white
very rare
inner & outer worlds in harmony
balanced introvertedness and extrovertedness

act immediately
talk alot
broad features
goal orientated
clash with others
push aside difficulties
choleric
good at maths and geometry
vice: violent

no defence against outer world
dreamy
pneumatic
sluggish
slow
overweight, shapeless
virtue: Artistic
vice: Passivity

combines the positive attributes of all the types
feeling & intellect work together
intellectual
artistically gifted
socially popular

Parsifal Characters

Parsifal: I think parsifal's soul type is an aggressive one as throughout the story he has some sort of goal and he always acts immediately

Kondwiramur: She is the aesthetic type because she knew exactly why ~~the~~ King Klamide was attacking her kingdom but did not do anything about it.

Gauvain: Gauvain is the aggressive type as he is very goal orientated and courageous

Herzeleide: Aesthetic best describes Herzeleide because she deals passively with the dangers to parsifal by running away to the forest.

Feirefis: Feirefis is the dominant type, which we see from his good command over his followers.

Anfortas: I think Anfortas is the self conscious type as he cultivates his inner life.

Sigune: I think Sigune appears to be Romantic as she is very passive & introverted.

Repanse le Schae: Mobile best describes Repanse de Schae as we see she is angry to get along with as she was elected grail queen.

My Own Soul Types

None of the soul types describe me perfectly ~~here~~ and I feel I identify with more than just two main ones. I exhibit tendencies from all of them.

However if I have to choose ^{those} which I swing most strongly towards I would choose: Aesthetic, because I do tend to just observe the world, and often be in conflict with it.

I also relate quite strongly to the dominant soul type in that I balance ~~my~~ the inner and outer worlds, I like to deal with problems immediately, I hate a chaotic situation, and I will try to bring order to it. I also have the good quality of being able to act with calm assurance.

The mobile type also suits me very well. I am quite clever, but I can be manipulative, and superficial. ~~I also have no order in my life or routine. I am also sympathetic and I forgive very easily.~~ I also have no order in my life or routine. I am also sympathetic and I forgive very easily.

Good.

Character List

- Feirefis: Parsifal's half brother
- Gamuret: Parsifal's father
- Belakune: Gamuret's wife
- Merzeleide: Parsifal's mother
- Parsifal: Hero of the story
- Jeschute: Wife of Orilus
- Orilus: a knight Parsifal conquers
- Sigunē: Parsifal's cousin
- Kunneware: a Lady of Arthur's court
- Gunnemanz: Parsifal's teacher
- Liaese: Gunnemanz's daughter
- Kondwincsur: Parsifal's wife
- Anfortas: Fisher King
- Repanse de Schoie: Grail Queen
- Arthur: King of England
- Kondrie: Messenger of the grail
- Gawain: Knight of the round table, another Hero
- Obilots: a young princess
- Obie: Obilots' older sister
- Antikorie: A woman Gawain meets on his travels
- Treuzent: A hermit and another of Parsifal's teachers
- Orgeluse: Gawain's lover
- Arrive: Arthur's mother
- Gramoflanz: enemy of Orgeluse, later Itonjē's husband
- Itonjē: sister of Gawain
- Klingsor: An evil wizard
- Lohengrin: Parsifal's younger son
- Kurdiess: Parsifal's older son

Unfreezing

Astrid walked in from the stable, her mother had prepared hot broth and bread but Astrid was late and hers was cold. She held the wooden bowl in her hands and thought it hot. Steam rose from the surface and Astrid hungrily drank up the thin soup. Astrid was one of the few Free People who could still practice magic without the needing the collective will and power of a coven. She did not know it, but Astrid was also the strongest mage to be born since the Freezing.

A few days later Astrid was riding along an old, disused road. It was a lovely day, as far as she was concerned, she could see nothing but fog ahead, emerald green grass at her sides and rich dark brown mud beneath her horse's feet. The horse, whose name was Shiuva, presently said, "There is some animal up ahead, but I can't see what it is through this fog, same fog every day, wet & foggy..." "Alright Shiuva" replied Astrid, "lets just see what this animal is"

The mist cleared ahead of them to reveal an enormous black cat, sitting on a rock in the middle of the road lazily licking a paw. "Astrid" said the cat, looking up

and, without waiting for a reply, said "Good, please come with me." But this was not a request, it was a command, infused with a certain amount of magic and Astrid felt the way home close behind her. Shiuva began to walk forwards. She was the first to recover her senses. "Where are we going?" she asked the green-eyed cat politely. "We are going to The Source so that your mistress can unfreeze it and restore magic to the Free People." "Oh" replied Shiuva. Astrid thought dumbly that this statement confirmed that she was dreaming.

A week later in the middle of the midlands desert Astrid had dispelled this notion. Cat had explained to her that she was the only foretold mage, who was born exactly 200 years after the first New Person arrived and the first icicle appeared on The Source. The Source was an ancient standing stone, huge and beautiful, from which all magic was drawn. Since then, the coming of the New People, the Source was frosted over with an ever-increasing layer of ice. The ice now-days was so thick that hardly any magic could be performed by the average Free Person. The New People did not believe in magic. Shiuva, Astrid, and Cat were on their way to stop and reverse this freezing.

As they travelled the wrelenting humid heat changed to an even worse chafing dryness and,

eventually, as they moved closer to the glacier covering the Source, a piercing, dry cold.

Astrid was shocked to find the New People class were far smaller than in the tales she had heard. She saw how the people had tried to move away from the supernaturally cold lines of ice which ran from their villages to the source, but to no avail. The lines moved as the villages did. They were slowly freezing to death from the cold they were creating.

Astrid called a meeting and she explained all this to the class leaders. She explained that magic was not evil, it was only a natural thing. Only the people who wielded it could be evil. She explained that The Source was not, as it was named, the Source, but rather a tap or channel.

They believed and accepted what she said. She told them that they too could perform magic by using their Conscious Will. They combined their Conscious Will, as Astrid taught them, and melted the glacier. Magic was restored to the world.

The Symbols

The symbolism in the story is simple; the magic-less world is the world we live in today, with spirituality represented by magic. The New People represent

the unspiritual, materialistic trend in the world, which is "freezing over" spirituality, not only for itself but for everyone. And, in the process of freezing over the source, the New People are damaging themselves, as are the materialistic people in the world.

Good.

Mine & Parsifal's Life

It is possible for anyone to draw a parallel between their own life and that of Parsifal, as, like Parsifal, we all have overcome or too personal to put in this essay. However, I can illustrate a few parallels with a few examples.

One of the most common experiences Parsifal goes through, which I too have ~~experienced~~ endured, is the loss of happiness at a point in my life. I have also experienced leaving a mother figure when our class parted from Mrs. Oslee.

The other experience that Parsifal endures is unsatisfied longing for another. This experience is very common for all teenagers. ✓

Although these parallels can be drawn, I feel that at this point in my life I am too young to have experienced the kind of journey that Parsifal went through. I feel I am only starting out my journey in life and there are many more obstacles to overcome. ✓

An exceptionally beautiful book, Sarah! You went to a lot of trouble in the presentation. The borders and drawings are lovely. You maintained a high standard of work, and analysed yourself well. You wrote a lovely story, and did very well in the test.

Test: $\frac{75}{80}$ } 93% 22
 Book: $\frac{18}{20}$ }