

The Riddle of Teacher Authority - its Role and Significance in Waldorf Education

In this essay, an argument will be made that the presence and practice of 'teacher authority' is an enduring principle of Waldorf Education, as conceived by Rudolf Steiner. Further, it will be argued that the concept of teacher authority is in the nature of a riddle. The conceptual basis of authority and teacher authority will be explored, with particular reference to Waldorf education.

The historical context spans eighty years, from 1919, when Steiner's educational principles were first articulated and implemented to the present, in which there are over 1,700 schools and early years centres working on the basis of Steiner's ideas, world-wide. The diverse nature and rapid pace of change in many areas over the last eighty years – technological, geo-political, social and economic, to name some – are key elements in the discussion of teacher authority. The dynamics of change also raise questions concerning the continuing relevance of the concept of authority itself.

The argument will include analysis of the case for teacher authority advanced by Steiner and supported by Waldorf educators and other commentators over the last eight decades. A comparison will be made of critiques and perspectives of teacher authority, or concepts which seem to be broadly similar.

The following sources will be employed: a review of Steiner's writing on education and a consideration of 'secondary' and contemporary Waldorf literature; a review of aspects of the theme as described and discussed in the wider educational community; evidence from the classroom that I have witnessed as an educational consultant to Waldorf schools over the course of ten years; personal experiences arising from an eight-year period of 'class teaching' in a Waldorf school in the United Kingdom in the 1980's and 1990's; and discussions with colleagues and students over a period of eight years as a tutor in higher education.

The notion of a riddle conjures up a picture of something that is hidden, or intangible. In etymological terms, 'riddle' is connected to 'read', which itself is an offshoot of the Sanskrit word 'radh', which means to accomplish, or glean. A riddle has meaning and solutions. Regarding the riddle of teacher authority, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that while it is possible to describe and explain authority (and teacher authority) in clear and unambiguous terms, the concept lends itself to a more searching and differentiated interpretation, particularly in the post-modern context.

While Waldorf education continues to identify the concept of teacher authority as a guiding principle in the education of the child between the ages of 7 and 14

(Steiner 1966, 1982a), the term is rarely included in writing in the wider educational community. There are several possible reasons for this: the waning of formal position and status in society over the last hundred years; the growth of progressive, liberal ideas in social and economic policy; the emergence of concepts of non-hierarchical forms of management and organization and the development of political and legal frameworks for the progressive realization of universal human rights and respect for the dignity of the individual. Against this mosaic of developments, the term authority has tended to be associated – rightly or wrongly – with outmoded concepts of power, position and patronage.

However, on a broad sociological level, Sennett (1980) describes authority as a basic human need:

"Children need authorities to guide and reassure them. Adults fulfill an essential part of themselves in being authorities; it is one way of expressing care for others." (p.15)

Sennett traces the root of the term authority to the Latin word *auctor*, signifying a person who can provide credible guarantees about the quality and effectiveness of what he or she does (pp.18 &19). There are clear links here to the person's integrity and authenticity. In general etymological terms, authority is linked in the English language to the word 'author', a concept which conjures up notions of independence, creativity and productivity. In mediaeval French there is a connection between the terms authority and 'gardener'. In contrast to these

positive associations, the term authoritarian is generally used to denote a person or system that is repressive and intolerant. In describing a regime or a teacher as authoritarian, the complex distinction between forcefulness and authority is at risk of becoming blurred. In this essay it is argued that authority is a more generous and potent quality than some of the black and white meanings offered above.

With due circumspect, it is proposed that self-cognition and self-consciousness are striking attributes of human authority. A human being is 'never' finished, but always in a state of becoming, particularly in the ethical-moral sphere. A person's human authority is inherently linked to an ever-present potential for conscious change and an inherent dynamic for progression that is neither instinctive, nor fired by the forces of nature.

Yet, it remains the case that in much of the literature focusing on a critical examination of various models of effective schooling and school improvement (Hopkins, Ainscow and West, 1994; Morley and Rassool, 1999), there are few references to 'teacher authority'. Mention is made of 'effective teaching' (Hopkins, p. 53) and Porter and Bradley (1988) go as far as to describe effective teachers as "semi-autonomous professionals".

Whether individuals are born to be teachers, or whether it is possible to train a

person into a teacher is a key question which stands behind a discussion on teacher authority. While it might be widely accepted that the development of reflectivity, reflexivity, self-disclosure, self-knowledge and self-understanding can create a *more* effective teacher, it is argued here that training cannot create an effective teacher. While a person can discover his or her professional task and calling, the identification of the 'teacher to be' is a necessary pre-condition for the learning teacher, the effective teacher, and the teacher authority.

As regards the teacher as authority, the confluence of mediaeval French gardening terminology and post-modern social and cultural trends offers a striking picture of the 'classroom-allotment', tended by the teacher who enables the children to grow, inwardly and outwardly, by fostering the development of intelligence in the broadest sense of the term – emotionally, cognitively, artistically, practically and socially. In this context, authority is more to do with the drama of developing full human-ness the children and oneself than it is to do with proffering expertise and subject-knowledge, important though these are. Teacher authority is concerned with leadership and service, autonomy and collaboration, knowledge and understanding, learning and honesty, a capacity to help and be helped.

The authorship of a lesson lies, essentially, with the teacher and the children,

together. Outwardly, it can appear to rest in the domain of regulatory and policy processes (Morley and Rassool, p.5), school systems and study programmes. The 'inner' reality is often more apparent in Steiner schools, where many of the features of 'institutional authority' are relatively undeveloped compared to the structures and processes of state-sector 'National Curriculum' schools. By contrast, the 'ideal' form of leadership and management in a Steiner school resides with the teachers (and to a lesser extent the whole 'learning community'), who endeavour to collaborate in a non-hierarchical, flat-management style of organisation and leadership, referred to as 'self-administration', or 'republicanism' (Gladstone, 1997).

The following incident occurred at a Waldorf School in Britain, in a class of 10 year olds:

During mid-morning break, £4 went missing from a pupil's coat pocket. The coat had been left by a tree in the play area. The incident was reported to the class teacher. No action was taken; the school day continued. That evening the class teacher telephoned the parents of the child whose money had disappeared. The following day, at the end of school, the teacher told the children an episode from her own childhood. The story recounted an incident of stealing and making amends. The tale was short, to the point, and attempted to convey the feelings of the different people involved. There was no explanation or discussion afterwards. With the story finished, the teacher mentioned that anyone who might be able to help find the 'lost money' could come and speak with her when they were ready. The class was dismissed. All the children filed out of the room and one child returned soon after to tell the teacher that she had found the money in the school garden and added that she had a tummy ache. Following this, phone calls were made, the next day friendships were restored and resumed and the incident was declared closed.

The manner in which the teacher handled this situation provides several indicators of teacher authority, as understood in Waldorf practice, and there are also echoes of what Hopkins (1997) refers to as an *'authentic relationship'* between the teacher and the pupils. According to Hopkins et al, one of the planks of an authentic teacher-pupil relationship is the intrinsic and *'unconditional positive regard'* (p.14) with which the teacher treats the pupils. Authentic relationships are provided for when the classroom is established

"as a safe and secure learning environment in which pupils can expect acceptance, respect and even warmth from their teachers, without having to earn these – they are intrinsic rights which are extended to pupils because they are there . . . the security and trust within the relationship will mean that the teacher is able to make demands on the pupils, because there is also support." (p.14)

The following events were observed at the beginning of the day in a class of 9 and 10 year olds in a Waldorf school in Britain. The pupils entered the classroom in a noisy and disorganized fashion. One pupil made the following comments when asked a second time to indicate his presence:

"She is so bloody dense. You daft woman! I'll throw you in the bin. This is crap, this is boring."

It took eight minutes to complete the register. During the remainder of the two-hour lesson, a poor culture prevailed. The hapless teacher struggled against constant back-chat, calling out and pervasive negativity. Many of the activities

collapsed, or were curtailed. At no point were the pupils engaged by the lesson. The teacher appeared to accept the unfolding events in a passive manner. Low expectations, disaffection, stubborn-ness and antipathy characterized the situation.

Within months, the incumbent teacher left. With a new teacher in place, the individual children and the class as a whole moved quickly into a different mode. Within a term, positive changes in the quality of classroom dynamics, the relationships between the children, the children's attitudes to their work, their learning, their teachers and themselves were observed.

Questions could be raised about the level of training (the teacher had completed Waldorf and 'state' teacher training courses), the failures in classroom management techniques and the level of special learning needs in the class. However, it is suggested that a faltering ability, on the part of the teacher, to engage positively with the pupils, combined with a lack of clarity, reflection and enthusiasm, created a scenario in which the children were unable to behave and the teacher was unable to cope. Fundamentally, it can be argued that an absence of teacher authority and authentic teacher-pupil relationships are demonstrated in this account. A basic condition of classroom health is missing. Both children and teacher are adversely affected when what Steiner (1982a)

refers to as "*unquestioned*" authority is beyond the teacher's reach.

This situation appears to support a contention made by Phillips (1996) that a 'moral vacuum' in society and in education has opened up in the last 50 years. Highlighting what she sees as "*the collapse of the authority of the teacher*" (p.50). Phillips (1995) points to a "*flight from authority*" on the part of teachers and parents as part of the legacy of decades of libertarian individualism. The nature of authority is described as conferring "*upon the individual the status of a repository of superior wisdom.*" (p.51). According to Phillips, the pursuit of individual adult freedom, untempered by a sense of responsibility, has created an empty space in place of parental authority. Children have been neglected in this process. With respect to education specifically, Phillips argues that the whole concept of education has become distorted by a doctrine of equality and individual rights:

"This fundamental egalitarianism has destroyed the hierarchy of authority between the generations. The relationship between adults and children in both family and school, between parents and their offspring or between teachers and their pupils, has gone into reverse with the effect of infantilising adults and making children assume adult responsibilities well before they are ready. All external authority has been demolished." (pp. 64 & 65)

Other commentators point to the fact that in many parts of the community, authority appears to be diminishing as a quality or attribute, almost with each passing year. In the 1990's Tisdall (1994) described a situation in which:

"shared confusion over values and standards, (and a) contemptible and contemptuous moral relativism, extends from the power corridors of Washington and Westminster to the meanest streets of South-Central Los Angeles and London's East End. It affects individuals both powerful and anonymous. And through their common irresponsibility they infect one another and the contagion spreads, most damagingly to the young".

Today's '24/7', hi-tech, fast-lane society may well offer more temptations opportunities for individuals - 'figures of authority' especially - to display "moral relativism" (Trigg, 2002) and a lack of presence. It is the case that we live in a more 'visible' society where 'exposures' and revelations of misconduct, weakness, and impropriety 'at the top' are reported on an almost daily basis. One difference from former times is that leaders today are less able to hide their manifold imperfections from a more conscious and more enquiring populace. Yet, far from being a phenomenon that affects a select few in the political and social limelight, it appears that the question of authority and accountability in human behaviour is a widespread, perhaps endemic, problem in the social culture.

Hargreaves (1994) summarises the post-modern world as *'fast, complex, compressed and uncertain'* (p.8). Current thinking and experience suggest that social and scientific progress are not inevitable, continuous or necessarily beneficial. Irregular phenomena abound – from weather patterns to family configurations – while universal theories and truths are more complex than indicated by the ideals of the Enlightenment period, which emphasised the

primacy of human reason and rational thinking, in preference to understanding based on tradition and deference to accepted ideas and approaches. There is a 'postmodern recognition' that theories and ideas are often directly related to - and influenced by - context and conditions, as well as tradition and reason. Stoll and

Fink (1996) describe the contemporary educational situation in graphic terms:

"It is within a context of unrest, questioning, diversity, complexity and changing concepts of time and space that schools must adjust to compelling but contradictory forces." (p. XII)

In common with other schools, Steiner schools are not isolated from the effects of these currents of social, cultural and economic change. There are questions concerning the role and form of 'the family', the structure of the school day, and the concept of school itself. There is discussion of emerging concepts such as 'lifelong learning', the '24/7' school and a range of policies in the 'rights sphere' – inclusion, child protection, health and safety, testing and record-keeping. There is consideration of the social aspects of changing employment patterns and work practices. There is an uneasy juxtaposition of calls for pluralism and localism in a global society of equal access, equal opportunity, accountability and shared standards. In such a wide-ranging and far-reaching context, no classroom or social organism is immune or isolated from such currents of change.

Against this background, the Waldorf teacher's perception and understanding of authority may now be considered, since the notion that the class teacher is a

figure of authority is woven into the fabric of the Steiner Waldorf method.

In the class teacher years, Steiner (1982a) emphasises that the teacher has the task of bringing 'unquestioned authority' into the class and stresses that discipline

in a class is created and maintained through the teacher's own life of feeling:

"in dealing with children of primary school age we must remember that at this age they long for the sway of authority from the innermost depths of their being. We shall educate badly if we are not in a position to hold our authority in this age." (Steiner 1966, p.126)

Here, it is important to stress that 'unquestioned authority' is not to be confused with teacher infallibility. In matters of expertise, a distinction is drawn between authority of position, which is a professional and human responsibility, and authority of knowledge, which is acquired, and often specialised. Authority is a generic teaching quality that is not the preserve or specialism of any particular method, system or philosophy. '*Unquestioned*' teacher authority is not dependent on external status, or power. It is an authority that is not, as Blunt (1995) points out, carried by reason, rule or compulsion. It is a human quality that is challenging to pin down semantically, though immediately identifiable (or rather its absence is), in a classroom setting.

Elkind (1999) argues that Waldorf education, and the concept of teacher authority, has one foot in the modern, or traditional era, while the other is set in our postmodern times. He observes how, in some respects, Steiner's educational

theory is 'modernist'. He argues that Steiner's thinking on education is located within his time and place, incorporating assumptions of social and scientific progress, regularity and order and the universality of certain guiding truths:

"Steiner took for granted that all children attending his school were from nuclear families. Such children did not have emotional problems, had not been abused, were well-fed and well-clothed and had received adequate medical and dental care. They had also been at home until they entered the Waldorf school and had not spent any time in out-of-home, day care facilities. Likewise, he could also assume that all the children in the school spoke the same language and came from roughly similar social, cultural and economic backgrounds." (p.6)

Paradoxically, according to Elkind, the practical application of Steiner's ideas reveals that they are flexible, innovative and relevant to these complex and changing times. In the area of teacher authority, Elkind identifies the centrality of 'extended teaching', whereby a teacher maintains a continuing, daily working relationship with a class over a period of several years, and ideally, through an eight-year cycle:

" the extended teacher-pupil relationship of the Waldorf school seems ideally suited to the needs of today's permeable family children . . . extended teaching can be a healthy antidote for the deprivations often experienced by children today in permeable families. In permeable families children often have little time with their parents, and many children have unhappy experiences in child care centers where there is frequently a rapid turnover of child care workers. School-age children need someone who knows them as totalities and who can reflect this wholeness back to them. Having the same teacher for a number of years is one of the best compensations for the often truncated interactions of postmodern, permeable family life." (p.8)

In a broader context, Waldorf educators work with the notion that the task of

helping children to learn and develop is inseparable from the path of the teacher's own learning and self-development. When, at the end of the *Study of Man* course, Steiner (1966) talks about the need for a teacher to have initiative, interest, courage for the truth, freshness and vigour he is referring directly to the inner world and the inner journey shared by teacher and pupils. For the teacher, authority is not to be assumed as a right or a privilege, but as a duty to be carried out in the interests of the child's psychological and educational development.

The epistemological basis for Steiner's emphasis on the general importance of individualized authority for the human being is expressed in one of his earliest works, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, published in 1894. Steiner focused directly on the living connection between human freedom and human morality (1979). He argued that the latter was the fruit of an individual's striving to attain freedom, or self-mastery. Every action

*"carried out under the compulsion of nature or under the obligation of a moral standard, is felt to be **unfree**. Man is free in so far as he is able to obey himself in every moment of his life. A moral deed is **my** deed only if it can be called a free one in this sense."* (p.138)

From this, it might be inferred that human freedom – the teacher's freedom – is accorded a higher priority, or value, than morality – the teacher's professional responsibility. Steiner maintains this is not the case:

"Acting out of freedom does not exclude the moral laws; it includes them, but shows itself to be on a higher level than those actions which are merely dictated by such laws." (p.138)

Aeppli (1986) supports the view that the bearing of authority is fundamentally a process of individual inner development:

"Authority cannot be given. It can be gained only by personal inner striving." (p. 9)

Harwood (1958) highlights a mysterious element in teaching, whereby one teacher appears able to keep order in a class almost naturally, while another has a huge struggle. Harwood describes the *"intangible quality of understanding children"* (p. 84). Childs (1995) refers to how the 'primary school' child has a *'natural yearning for authority . . . and looks up to the teacher as a model'* (p.85). He describes how the effective teacher strives to be authoritative, not authoritarian, and how this authority is developed through the *art* of teaching. Blunt (1995) refers to the teacher exuding authority in the classroom by demonstrating *"artistic mastery of the curriculum."* (p.119) Edmunds (1992) also emphasizes the importance of the teacher's authority being rooted in an artistic engagement with the children and the material.

Waldorf educators draw a link between the bearing of teacher authority and the cultivation of such authority through an artistic sense for teaching. The innovative and creative interpretation and forming of the lesson content is regarded as a

vital aspect of a teacher's authority. The blending of 'serving leadership' – in the sense that it is seen as responding to the needs of the developing child – and 'pedagogical creativity' is regarded as one of the key-notes in the approach to effective teaching and learning.

Such ideas resonate with thinking in the wider educational discourse, as demonstrated by the work of Fisher (1995). He argues that in addition to crafting the lesson content and developing knowledge of the material, the effective teacher exhibits a range of skills and competences, which can be broadly defined as pedagogical technique. To these are added a willingness and an ability to foster caring and competent relationships with children and colleagues:

"Effective teaching is a complex activity which needs . . . personal qualities such as imagination, creativity and sensitivity to stimulate, support and encourage learning." (p. 147)

A conceptual basis for an artistic approach and method lies in Steiner's argument (1972, 1982a) that education is an art, fundamentally, and the teacher is an artist in education:

"we must as teachers become artists. Just as it is quite impossible for the artist to take a book on aesthetics in hand, and then to paint or carve according to the principles laid down there, so should it be quite impossible for the teacher to use one of those instructors' manuals in order to teach." (p.9, 1982b)

This artistic activity in education is particularly important for the teacher of children in the 7 – 14 age-range:

"the child now wants to have everything brought before him in an artistic, pictorial way, the teacher must come to the child as one who gives artistic form to what he imparts . . . Between the change of teeth and puberty an artistic element must flow between teacher and growing child." (Steiner 1982c, p. 44)

There is thus a clear and essential link between what has been described as an 'art of education' and the presence and exercise of teacher authority in Waldorf educational thinking and practice.

Where the figure of authority is absent for the child in the class-teacher years, Steiner (1969) indicates that a child is denied opportunities to develop a sense for 'fairness' in social relations and justice. In demonstrating authority the teacher seeks to reflect back to the children a picture of fairness and order which they can inwardly recognise. In a sense, the members of a class are apprentices in the study and practice of human rights. Children will not realise human values and prepare the ground for the development of individualised authority either by sanction, or within an unguided moral vacuum. Human values cannot be superimposed on children. Kelly (1994) underlines this point:

"we cannot, for example, set out to socialise pupils into certain values, attitudes, beliefs and ways of thinking, while at the same time endeavouring to promote their development as autonomous, free-thinking, self-determined individuals." (p.29)

Davy (1985) describes how regardless of age, wealth, nationality, education, circumstance and heredity we are all equal as human beings:

"by virtue of all being different, and yet being human, we are all equal".

When a teacher stands before a class and
"makes judgments not out of favouritism or prejudice, but out of a recognition of the emerging spirit in each child, he thereby confirms for the child that an equal spirit lives in his teacher" (p.190).

This line of argument offers a markedly different picture of the issue of equal rights, as it pertains to children and classrooms, than the pictures offered by advocates of 'democratic' methods of teaching. Over the last four or five decades the broad educational debate has focused attention on democratic means and methods of teaching and learning. Writers such as Dreikurs (1991) and Balson (1982) have identified a movement from a traditional autocratic model of teaching towards a democratic model based on values of equality, cooperation, respect and shared responsibility between teachers and pupils.

The tenets of Waldorf education embrace these values implicitly, while rejecting the notion that a classroom is a democratic setting, or that an authentic relationship between teacher and pupils is necessarily a democratic relationship. Harwood (1958) refers to an apparent philosophical and intellectual discrepancy between Steiner's avowal of teacher authority satisfying the child's natural impulse for adult guidance, and the focus of 'democratic educators' on learning through social activity and rational explanation.

The idea that children are emergent adults and that the classroom should,

therefore, be run according to democratic forms and principles, such as one would hope to find in adult civic society, is explicitly rejected by Steiner (1983)

himself:

"a great deal of what is taught a child in his eight or ninth year will be accepted only if the child feels himself in the presence of a beloved teacher, confronted by an obvious authority. The teacher should represent to the child the whole world of truth, beauty and goodness This obvious authority, during the period between the change of teeth and puberty, must be the basis of all the teaching." (p. 42)

The principles and practice of teacher authority steer a course between the positions of autocracy and permissiveness, as outlined by Dreikurs (1991):

"A teacher who is committed to 'making' pupils do as they are told, forcing them to learn, berating them when they don't, punishing any misdemeanor and denying any creative freedom of expression, is an autocratic boss." (p. 15)

"As a permissive teacher, you do not regard any child as wrong; you condone everything he does with the idea that he will turn out eventually to be a good and worthwhile member of society. "

(p. 16)

In fact, Dreikurs' preferred stance, that of the 'democratic leader', has apparent similarities with the qualities one might expect to find in the 'teacher authority'.

The 'democratic leader' is a teacher who is:

"kind but firm, who motivates pupils to learn what they ought to learn, who encourages pupils when they make mistakes, who maintains order and routine by letting each child participate in decision-making." (p. 18)

The teacher's task consists of creating a structure and providing a space. The first is an act of responsibility; the second offers the possibility for independent or collaborative learning. A process is authored whereby something new can be

created. The pupil is perceived as an apprentice with a three-fold educational need: firstly, to be shown technique and method, secondly, to be guided in the practice of these, and thirdly, for the artistic imagination and enthusiasm for maths, art, physics or English to be kindled within.

Jersild (1955) posits a relationship between the inner development and the self-understanding of the teacher and the purposes of education:

"The teacher's understanding and acceptance of himself is the most important requirement in any effort he makes to help students to know themselves and to gain healthy attitudes of self-acceptance." (p.3)

Further, Jersild explores the necessary search for self-understanding and meaning which is a vital part of a teacher's approach to their work. He describes how this search is often a solitary, if not a lonely one, that includes uncertainty and anxiety. It is a search that requires the teacher to look *"inward upon himself"*

(p.5) and to ask fundamental questions:

"What really counts, for me? What values am I seeking? What in my existence as a person, in my relations with others, in my work as a teacher, is of real concern to me, perhaps of ultimate concern to me? . . . as I try to help young people to discover meaning, have I perhaps evaded the question of what life might mean to me?" (p.4)

Jersild asserts three main points. Firstly, a core function of education is to enhance a process of self-knowledge and self-understanding in the learner. Secondly, a teacher cannot participate meaningfully in this process unless he or she is prepared to be a self-knowing, self-understanding learner too. Thirdly, the

search for meaning and self-knowledge is related to knowledge and scholarly learning, but it is more intimate and closer to the learner's bones. It is a process that cannot be taught or delivered. It is a search in which the learner has to be involved and committed.

These thoughts touch the kernel of the riddle of teacher authority. Understood in this spirit, the teacher presents the children with a living, working model of noble and truthful ideals: professional courage, commitment and interest; human vulnerability, fallibility and enthusiasm and the certainty that uncertainty and doubt must be faced and engaged.

Viewed in this light, the teacher's "*inward looking*" to find a foundation for learning and development and a sense of meaning resonates with the idea advanced by Lusseyran (1975), that the true being, or the essential authority of a person is not only young and tender, but also a power that is emergent, tentative, yet undeniable:

"It is, in sum, a force that imbues me with a power afforded by no other force on earth: the power to live without waiting for life to come to me. The ego needs the greatest possible number of things – be they money, fame, approbation, power, reward. The 'I' makes no such demands. When it is present, when it is at work, it sets its own world up against the other world, the world of things. The 'I' is wealth in the midst of poverty. It is vital interest when all around are bored. It is hope, when all rational basis for hope is gone. From out of the 'I' springs man's whole world of invention. And, finally, it is what we still have left when all else has been taken from us, when nothing comes to us from the outside and yet our forces are sufficient to overcome the void." (pp. 13-14)

Authority is a human quality that is on the 'inside' of a person, in that it is not to do with a skill, a possession or a badge of office. It is concerned with self-image and esteem. It is the outcome of a person's continuous inner reckoning. The riddle of human authority and specifically, teacher authority, is that it is a quality that is at its most powerful and helpful when it is outwardly unnoticeable, unremarkable and intangible. Authority cannot be traced on the surface; it is not merely a professional technique or teaching strategy. Authority dwells in the being of the teacher and it is in the deeds of the teacher that the authority of that teacher is made manifest.

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The founder of Waldorf education, Steiner was born in 1861, in what is now Croatia

The first Waldorf School opened in Stuttgart in 1919. Prior to the opening of the school, the first Waldorf teacher education course took place in August 1919

Source: Pedagogical Section, *Das Goetheanum*, Dornach, Switzerland, 2002

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the 'class teacher' years constitute an eight-year programme of main lessons, which a class teacher aims to bring to a class of children as they progress from class one (6/7 years), to class eight (13/14 years)

The incident was related to the author by a colleague

The author was present as an observer

PAGE

PAGE 16