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THE APPLICATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL
PHILOSOPHY OF RUDOLF STEINER TO
AN ART CLASS IN AN IRISH SECOND
LEVEL SCHOOL

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BY

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THE APPLICATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF RUDOLF STEINER
TO AN ART CLASS IN AN IRISH SECOND LEVEL SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

The visual arts play a large part in the curriculum today in Irish schools. The curriculum is structured in such a way that the students gain a wide variety of knowledge and experience. Art as a subject cultivates creativity and imagination in a way that no other subject is capable of achieving to the same degree. The arts curriculum cultivates all kinds of problem solving and thinking strategies which encourage and develop the mind. Yet the structure in the school environment prevents the arts from performing their real duty. There is however a curriculum which is art centred. The students are encouraged to appreciate the full meaning of creativity, its every aspect extending into other subjects. The Steiner curriculum is a non-discipline based programme which leads the students to learning through self-discipline. The emphasis on the development of the personality and personal values is of great importance in the Steiner curriculum. The importance of the personality of the students taking into consideration the nature of adolescents is another factor of the Steiner curriculum. Finally the role of the teacher in Steiner schools is different from that of the Irish curriculum. The preparation of Steiner teachers is investigated further in Chapter two. This preparation is centred on the student and art.

This Dissertation is an investigation into the application of these elements of Steiner Education to an Irish Secondary School Art Class. The intention was to observe the effects on the students and to see if the two approaches to teaching (one based on Steiner, the other on the traditional approach in Irish classrooms) might somehow be compatible.

Chapter One

- THE IRISH VISUAL ARTS IN THE CURRICULUM -

When investigating the visual arts in the curriculum in schools today it is important to look at a broad range of different schools in order to understand the subject as a whole. Beginning with the curriculum in Primary schools, a chronological investigation into the learning and teaching methods is essential.

- The White Paper -

The three main principles of the White Paper on Education concerning primary school are: firstly to promote full and harmonious development of the child with allowances made for individuality. Secondly, the central importance of activity and guided discovery in learning and teaching methods and, thirdly, that learning and teaching through investigation and activities are related to the child's development and environment, all of these factors take into account the child's needs and interests with concern to learning are of foremost importance.

Regarding the arts in Primary school education, the White Paper says that:

"Artistic and Aesthetic Education are key elements within the school experience of young people; such as, nurturing of creativity assists the young person to become tolerant, critically aware, socially committed citizen, who can live with confidence in the world. A good Arts education develops the imagination as a central source of human creativity and fosters important kinds of thinking and problem solving, as well as offering opportunities to symbolise, to play and to celebrate"

p.21

With regard to the arts education, the White Paper says that the development of critical judgement encourages a sense of personal responsibility in the young person. The benefits of which are firstly the development of intuition. Secondly, the cultivation of reason and feeling within artistic experiences. Thirdly, promoting a sense of the use of material and technology in a passively disciplined manner. The White Paper states that through working with materials the students may understand the experience of process that they must go through with regard to personal and impersonal projects.

Another approach to the curriculum set out by the NSEAD (National Society for Education in Art and Design) explains that children when enjoying being creative, respond to art by looking at the world with curiosity and begin to analyse it critically using personal judgement. The NSEAD (1) suggests that Art and Design Education ensures that children can contribute to their environment through art, through group work in their surroundings. The NSEAD also suggests by working with personal projects students can differentiate between feeling and character, giving the child personal identity. The child through art and design education can grasp a basic vocabulary of criticism helping them to develop views which in turn cultivates their individuality. Finally, pupils may understand representation, other cultures and subjects which give the outside world relevance to their own environment.

From a completely different view it is important to consider the curriculum of another culture. The 1978 curriculum framework for primary school education in New York recognises the fact that art education facilitates the child's needs for personal development based on the child's immediate life. It translates to the child the notion of human achievement through artistic

achievement by learning about artistic heritage which cultivates expression through the physical making of art and response to the knowledge given. Laura H. Chapman in "Approaches to Art Education in Primary School" writes that:

"there are relatively few opportunities for a child to express how his or her particular life feels, to discover what its special meanings are, or to comprehend why it is like no other person's life. Art Education can acquaint children with more subtle forms of feeling and more precise images of human spirit than they are likely to discover on their own"

p. 5

- Secondary School Curriculum -

The Irish Arts Curriculum in secondary schools (investigating as far as the junior cert) continues on from these principles of Primary School Education. As in all subjects the visual arts programme's key principles include Breadth (a wide range of different experiences), Balance (to establish connections between different aspects of the curriculum) and Coherence (broad and balanced programme).

The junior cycle curriculum aspires to put more emphasis on Arts Methodology and also to facilitate the sometimes difficult transition from Primary School to Secondary School, recognising the importance of transferring student profile cards from primary to secondary level, so that a deeper understanding of each student can be obtained. The primary objective of the junior cycle is to ensure that a broad range of subjects is experienced by each pupil relevant to the personal development of that student letting them attain a level of competence to proceed to senior cycle.

especially in a group related project (providing the schools are sufficiently stimulated) promotes good relationships between staff and students. In a relaxed atmosphere it becomes easier for the staff to set good example for the students in a social and personal manner. The arts programmes lend themselves to this very well. If this atmosphere is encouraged, the staff are in a better position to identify students at risk of outside school problems which could be affecting their performance within school time.

According to the rationale of 1983: (2)

"A key factor in the achievement of this aim is the work of the art teacher. It is in relation to an enthusiastic teacher that students interest in the arts is more likely to arise in the school setting. This assumes that their own education as teachers have been able to value and love the art form in question, and this experience sustains their enthusiasm which is a prerequisite for good arts education"

p. 6 & 7

This could be said of the teachers in primary school art education. The importance of art in primary school as a means of learning through play is essential, yet a large percentage of primary school teachers have gained an average grade D on ordinary level art in the Leaving Certificate (3). The importance of a high qualification in the arts would seem to be needed, not only in primary school but also in secondary school or the transition from junior school to secondary school should be as easy as possible. This can be achieved through art. Art, it would seem, plays a large part in primary school education, yet the imagination should be cultivated in secondary school equally in order to keep the student in touch with his/her youth and learn to develop it into

maturity rather than taking a jump from a primary creative learning process to an academic learning process with less emphasis on art. Yet the primary school teacher must work with large numbers of children - sometimes as many as forty at any given time. Art needs immediate attention between teacher and child. Clearly there are not enough teachers in primary education and there is a possibility that this could effect secondary school students.

FOOTNOTES

1. NSEAD - Art, Craft and Design in Primary School
- John Lancaster - p. 4
2. Ibid - p. 6 & 7
3. The Creative Child at School
- J.S. Bruner - p. 47

Chapter Two

- THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF RUDOLF STEINER -

- Social Background -

Rudolf Steiner studied chemistry, physics and mathematics in Vienna Technical High School. It was here that he investigated Gothes colour theories. In 1888 he prepared a part of Gothes natural scientific writings. His first book "A Knowledge Implicit in Gothes World Conception", was published in 1886. His second book "Philosophy of freedom - the basis elements of a modern work view - a result of observing the human soul as natural science observes nature" was in effect applying Gothes colour theories to human nature, that is human thinking. Steiner believed that the nature of colour transcended chemistry and relied on a spiritual scientific way of looking at the world. In regard to this Steiner (1) wrote:

"Human beings will make significant discoveries with regard to this in the future. They will in fact really unite in their ethical-spiritual part with the impressions brought them by their senses. A tremendous deepening of the human soul can be foreseen in this field".

p. 139

The first Independent Waldorf School was founded in 1919 in Berlin. Steiner called upon Dr. Erich Schwesbich, who was involved in the teaching profession, to the Waldorf School with the task of building up an aesthetic education for primary school level. Steiner believed that young people are a part of nature and within nature there should be freedom. He believed that individual

freedom should be introduced to counter-balance the natural laws in lessons at school and in life. He also believed that the practice of art brought about an awareness of the self and others. The Waldorf syllabus involves study and understanding through a process of specific lessons set by the teacher leading in a definite direction, similar to that of the Irish curriculum, yet no finished product was necessary and the process of working in arts education is all important. In the lower classes art plays a very large part in learning and in fact many subjects are taught through art and music. Steiner set specific lessons/exercises to acquaint the child with life and letting him/her become part of nature. Fairytales, myths and legends in Steiner schools are used as a rich source for the arts cultivating imagination, energy, culture and mystery, all integral elements of art itself.

- Steiner's Moral Basis of Art -

Concentrating on art, Steiner believed that art was misinterpreted in the previous two centuries and that people might fully understand the importance of art in the year 2000. He believed that art was investigated through scientific methods which made teaching soul-less. From this he believed that when art is taught it must be questioned not as a subject but for itself. In his lectures he began with the Greeks (Aristotle), who believed that art imitated nature. Following on from this the Christian Middle Ages were alienated from nature as it was no longer perceived as divine, nature became hedonistic, which split nature and art leading to what Steiner called "Artistic Confusion" (as he believed nature and art are essential together). The German philosophers Kant and Schelling (2) believed that art was not beautiful in itself as it was an image or concept of beauty. Art according to these philosophers was in fact science because science was based on physical aesthetics which they believed was beauty. Therefore according to Kant and Schelling, art had no significance in itself.

Steiner opposed these beliefs. He believed that the child should live in the art that he/she creates and this is why he underlined the importance of fairytales as they bring a child into a world in which he/she can relate. Fairytales bring a child and adult alike into an imaginary creative world where they remember how to play. Dr. W. Winnicott states in his book "Playing and Reality" (3) p. 12 - that within the realm of play the child or adult is in his most relaxed state of mind and because of this the child will naturally learn more. Steiner believed that children who were held back from their need for freedom, that is, children who are taught without feeling for their needs and who are restrained will become "rebels and dissatisfied people", people who do not know what they want because they were never allowed to enter their world of fantasy and that later in life will reject social order as a mirror image of the restrictions of their youth.

- Four Elements of the Waldorf Curriculum -

Considering four elements of Steiner education, firstly approaching disciplinary action towards students. As they stand these are disciplinary codes for students in Steiner education at secondary level. However in primary schooling Steiner believed that children should be instructed wholly before they become adolescents as when they reach puberty (the time at which Steiner maintained children are capable of making decisions, observations and theories for themselves) they fully appreciate their new found freedom, self-reliance, independence, self-determination, for them is a right. He also maintained that adolescents have reached the age of responsibility and that they should feel free of authority. He believed that this was an important stage for an adolescent and therefore should be obvious to them, otherwise, it slips past as an unimportant incident.

Steiner explained this by relating to his philosophies of nature. He believed that at puberty, children, because of the process of change, were a part of nature themselves. He believed that individual freedom should be introduced to counter-balance the natural laws in lessons and themselves.

All teachers in Steiner schools hold equal status. Although a Teachers Council exists to make implementation of decisions, there are no "scale posts" or hierarchy within the Steiner staff. This is due to Steiner's opposition of competitiveness. The pupils work on a basis of "self-discipline" similar to A.S. Neill's philosophy of discipline. Even within the children there is no hierarchy. There are no "houses" segregating the children. There are no prefects and the Class 12 students (equivalent of Leaving Certificate) are expected to assist in the supervision of younger students. With regard to the competitive element sports are avoided as are "differentiating rituals" such as:

"signs and tokens such as distinctive garments, cups, shields, prizes, stars, good and bad marks, house points, and such like are entirely absent"

- "Steiner Education"
Gilbert Childs p. 19.

An integral part of the success of this self-taught responsibility is the knowledge of the adolescent. The nature of the student is of foremost importance in the Steiner curriculum for it is the student that participates in the learning. Steiner believed that the school experience should be a therapeutic experience and he stated that this is what Waldorf pedagogy should be. Therefore the school experience should enrich and celebrate the adolescent and each student should enjoy and

want to attend school. Steiner concerned himself greatly with the students to a degree far larger than most other schools. Steiner's insight into the students give rise to the second and third elements of Steiner education, that is the true nature of the adolescent and the role of the teacher towards these students. In his many lectures and weekly meetings, Steiner talked and discussed adolescent behaviour of which the Waldorf teacher is required to have knowledge of. He believed that adolescents had four temperaments: melancholic, where attention is not easily aroused yet they are strongly persevering; phlegmatic, where a child who has little attention span yet is strongly persevering; choleric, where attention is most easily aroused and is not easily persevering; lastly sanguine, where attention is easily aroused yet little strength of perseverance is evident.

Steiner maintains that love plays an important part in adolescence and should be recognised. The time the child leaves the immature love he has for his parents and experiences a new kind of love. Steiner felt that adolescents "idolized another person usually the opposite sex which expresses itself in romantic love". Teenagers reject childhood as the past and seem to hold the future in high regard, therefore they live in the present. They take in the culture (youth culture) of the present and adopt it or "sympathise" with it and according to Steiner, this is why each era has its teenage "cult".

Steiner breaks down the male and female adolescent behaviour emphasising that the knowledge of this behaviour should be apparent to the teacher in order to understand the students adequately. He believed that girls are more in touch with their feelings than boys as young adolescents. After puberty (at the age of twenty one) girls try to find their real self. Girls are more sociable generally

at the puberty stage and are confident exploring the world in a frank manner, Girls also, according to Steiner, express their innermost qualities in behaviour and this is most obvious in the way an adolescent girl dresses. This can often extend into vanity, but usually is expressed through clothes, make-up, fashions etc. Boys on the other hand are less in touch with their innermost feelings and are less open to inner feelings and experiences than girls. He believes that the adolescent boy reverts into himself and conceals his ego. This shows itself as lack of social grace and is often exaggerated into bad manners, rough and boisterous behaviour and crudeness. He also says that an adolescent boy who at this age act clumsily or in a surly way is hiding his real personality and this is normal. Also, boys find it difficult to make connections with the outside world and tend to make these attempted connections by imitating individuals whom they admire (role models) in an attempt to add to their experience. He maintains that dangers concerning adolescents with regard to girls is that they may drift into superficiality and that boys develop into "hooligans" by letting go of their natural tendencies. Steiner feels that the child often becomes obsessed with eroticism and that if from an early age learns to express love for nature and creativity the child will be less likely to depend on their body for pleasurable experiences. It is also the role of the teacher to recognise the nature of adolescents and help them through their confusing adolescent traumas.

By 1991 there were five hundred Waldorf schools in Europe. The teachers were required to take on compulsory training on childhood as a part of human development within "body, soul and spirit" (4). Steiner expected each teacher to get to know each student individually and allow for each child's quirks and idiosyncracies. Steiner expected a huge amount from his teachers and he pushed them to take a keen interest in current affairs believing that the teachers must be in contact

with reality. Steiner's criteria of a given teachers personality required that they were honest to themselves and their students, they must be individuals, they must be lively, fresh and above all have a sense of humour as:

"This means keeping alive one's powers of imagination and fantasy and now allowing oneself to deal in dry abstractions and purely intellectual ideas"

- "Steiner Education"
Gilbert Childs p. 97.

Steiner objected wholly to the use of a textbook and believed that teachers should not use them in a class as it reflects a lack of knowledge of the subject. He believed that teaching aid, such as computer - software are distractions from the teachers personality and encouraged anti-social behaviour. His emphasis on the imagination as a key to learning is explained by his opposition to teaching aids such as computers and his affirmation that it is for the teacher to generate to soul and spirit of imagination and atmosphere within the class.

All Waldorf teachers took compulsory training in the Waldorf Curriculum with its creative pedagogical approach. They studied the evolution of artistic and imaginative developments of painting, drawing, modelling, speech and drama, music and everything (the study of movement), the management of the school, teacher/parent relationships. Finally all teachers in Waldorf education must have some kind of artistic training.

The final element of Steiner education to consider is that of the arts themselves in Steiner curriculum. Steiner broke art into two forms; the plastically formative and the musically poetical. The former involves painting, drawing, sculpture and architectural forms. The latter involving harmonies, melodies and rhythms and speech concerning drama and poetry. The former he maintained individualises people, the latter furthers social interactions.

The arts in Waldorf schools are important as the child demands artistic satisfaction, the child from an early age begins to learn with its hands and this should follow through until the last day of school at most. Steiner pointed out in his lectures that life brings increasing and decreasing expectations and disappointments which are similar to the way in which musical melodies have crescendi and diminuendi. From age seven until ten the child wants to experience rhythm which corresponds with breathing. He also says that music "stirs a sense of human feeling". He believed that the plastic-formative arts make man take experiences or forms from the outer world and relate them to his own experiences, making them see sense out of their own nature.

He maintained that the "draw what you see theory" was wrong because especially young children do not draw what they see, they draw what they know. Yet the difference between this and drawing from life must be clarified and a sensible explanation must be given in order for the children to fully appreciate what they are doing and why. Steiner used the example of line drawings to reinforce this. Lines do not exist in nature yet when children are asked to draw what they see with line how can they as line does not exist in nature.

Steiner's emphasis on nature and art as we have seen earlier extends to the learning in almost every sense:

"The loving relationships which are part of the home experience should be extended to take in the things in nature - animals, flowers and plants, insects, wind, rain, snow, clouds, sun, moon, and stars - all created things and at the same time feelings of gratitude should be encouraged"

p. 124

- "Drawing & Painting in Rudolf Steiner Schools"
Marguit Junemann

Colour in the Waldorf Art Education is of utmost importance. According to Steiner it is closely related to feeling (warm and cold colours). The primary education art curriculum is based in colour alone. The initial classes on art begin by concentrating solely on colour. The children learn about mood, expression, symbolism and feeling through colour. Children have a high sense of colour and again it is used to describe all elements of nature, the rising and setting sun, the blue sky, green fields, a red poppy, purple mountains in an attempt to make the world into a colourful and beautiful place. The emphasis on the appreciation of the world and nature have a huge part to play in Waldorf education and the curriculum encompasses the inner feeling of the student that is the nature of the adolescent, psychological and body needs of that student, to teach what is relative to contemporary society and also the class and social structure of each student is irrelevant within the school. Steiner's theory was that of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity".

FOOTNOTES

1. "Drawing and Painting in Rudolf Steiner Schools"
- Margrit Junemann
2. "Steiner Education"
- Gilbert Childs - p.7.
3. "Playing and Reality"
- Dr. W. Winnicott - p. 12.
4. "Steiner Education"
- Gilbert Childs - p. 38.

Chapter Three

- THE APPLICATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF RUDOLF STEINER TO AN ART CLASS FROM IRISH SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL -

- Project Outline -

A class of fourteen second year students studying in "Our Lady's Grove" in Goatstown was the medium to conduct an observation of two contrasting teaching philosophies. The class is small, easily observed and individual attention is possible. The class were given two projects and two different methods of working. The initial project was fully instructed and in a sense was an exercise rather than an art project. They began by drawing self-portraits from life with strict guidelines and following various classes on tone, were instructed to make a collage, on top of a careful hand-rendered enlargement of their drawing, using faces cut out from magazines. They were instructed to cut out hair for the hair, large (life-sized) eyes for the eyes, etc. The finished result was impressive somewhat predictable, yet calculated. The task consisted of approximately nine weeks working time of two single forty minute classes each week, so the students had to be pushed very hard to produce work for the deadline.

The second project was a much fuller task. The students were given formal introductions to plaster of paris and mask making initially. They were to cast their masks using papier mache.

When the papier mache cast was completed, they were given a formal introduction to design and asked to choose one or two animals which reflected their character and design a "tribal" mark, using paint to decorate their mark. The introductions in following classes became less informative and they were encouraged to use their imagination. The students were not left to their own devices completely. They were free to develop the imaginative content of their idea. This proved to be quite difficult for them and the teacher wondered if the difficulty was due to youth and inexperience.

- Significant Elements of Waldorf Curriculum -

Considering the four elements discussed in chapter two regarding Rudolf Steiner's teaching philosophies, firstly the discipline of the students obviously had to be adapted in the second task as school rules had to be adhered to. There are prefects, class tutors and the principal, yet reprimanding was kept to a minimum.

The second element in Steiner Education to be applied to this class of second year students was what was to be required of the teacher. The Irish school curriculum requires the teacher to instill a knowledge of art in the students in the hope of cultivating "decision-making", "innovation", "intuition", "reason and feeling in artistic experiences" (1) amongst other things and to guide the student toward his/her exams. In chapter eight of the White Paper (which is concerned with the teaching profession), little notice is taken of the psychological requirements of the teacher with regard to the students. The first page discusses the importance of teacher training and the importance of maintaining salary guidelines to ensure a high standard of teachers. The following

pages consider the pre-service training, Induction Year for first year teachers, in career development, review of effectiveness, conditions of service etc. As seen earlier Waldorf teachers must have a knowledge of the psychology of the students and must study the behaviour of adolescents. There is little emphasis on this in the White Paper, though one might excuse the omission in a policy document.

However, the class atmosphere in the second project was less formal. Discussion arose of the students personal lives in connection with the theme of the project. This led to an enjoyable, fun working atmosphere where the students were uninhibited and asked questions more freely. Due to the individual attention given to each student their work became more important to them. In another attempt to relax the class atmosphere, discussion was introduced about the choice of animal by each student. This caused much amusement and became a really fun part of the exercise. The first task lacked this altogether as the project opened very little discussion and the students towards the end became almost drone-like and bored.

This brings up the third element explored in chapter two of Steiner Education, that of the nature of the adolescent. The two projects were purposely directed towards the student herself, working from Steiner's philosophy of the adolescent being self-aware as seen by generating an atmosphere that is student centred a better working atmosphere was achieved. The nature of the adolescent and the nature of art can at this point be considered together, as both need freedom to develop and it is a more free and flexible curriculum being applied to these students in their art class. The more restrictions put upon the adolescent the more he/she will rebel and the more

restrictions put on art, the less likely it will cultivate creativity. Since the child at school in art, is learning to be creative, and the subject itself entails creativity, they can be discussed hand in hand.

Considering firstly creativity (the nature of art). A simple definition by Dr. W. Winnicott is that which motivates the individual for worthwhile living (2). He maintains that anyone can be creative if when doing something willingly they have a particular reason for doing it, for example, he states that if a child cries for a reason it is creative. In his compassion to creativity he defines uncreativity as an aid to define creativity, as a reality for the individual as something to conform with, or being caught up with the creativeness of someone else. Therefore a creative act is a deliberate and willing act.

Getzels and Jackson (3) maintain that creative people take a stand against the dominant values of our culture. Catell and Drevdahl (4) in 1955 found that creative people were also highly intelligent, independent of mind and dominant as well as sensible in a psychological sense. Artists especially were outstandingly Bohemian. Getzels and Jackson also noted that creative people were humorous and playful and because of their non-conforming ways were unpopular with teachers.

It is exactly this kind of people that Steiner encourages and that work well in Steiner's Education. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of these people and cultivate their way of thinking.

Art as a subject strives for creativity as we have seen earlier from the White Paper. Art is to promote "Creativity", "Expression", "Individually" yet in chapter five of "The Creative Child at School":

"schools are institutions dedicated to the transmission of culture and social norms and to the development of the individual within this culture and its rationality".

p. 92

following on to say that Institutions are slow to change to new ideas and only tolerate a certain amount of deviation from the rules. Therefore:

"Institutions and creative individuals are natural opposites".

p. 93

The nature of the adolescent should be treated somewhat like creativity and allowed to grow and develop without restrictions. Adolescents by nature are buoyant, sometimes rebellious, possibly even cheeky and within the classroom they have a natural tendency, it would seem, to oppose the teacher. Their energy and creativity might be re-directed if the adolescent was less restricted and treated like an adult in some respects. In the second project done with the girls in "Our Lady's Grove", some responsibility was given to the students in an attempt to make them feel self-reliant within their own creativity. For example if a student was unsure of what she was doing, the students who had grasped the concept well were invited to explain to the weaker student. This worked very well within this class as the pupils taught each other and these 'pupil teachers' were

aware of the importance of their knowledge because a few students were taking seriously what they were doing, it seemed to spread throughout the class. The atmosphere then changed from one where a teacher informed the pupils to a more co-operative atmosphere. The classroom turned into a workplace filled with excitement and energy. This is where Steiner's theory of self-responsibility was noticeable and successful. Although it was marginal in comparison to actual Waldorf schools, the students were aware of being treated like adults and commented on how they enjoyed it.

Due to the fact that the class chosen for the study was not an exam class, the opportunity for freedom was greater. It may be that art itself is stunted within the school atmosphere because of the exams. Students in higher years seem to become obsessed by "what the examiners want to see" which may take away their natural process of working. It seems odd that the students are constantly trying to meet the criteria of the examiners when art has individual standards for individual students. Most schools are examination orientated. Phillida Salmon in 1981 wrote in "Psychology for Teachers - an alternative approach":

"The curriculum is increasingly dominated by exams and therefore fraught with pressure, tension and fear, rather than suffused with personal enjoyment"

p. 61

This conjures up the notion of play and learning referred to earlier in Winnicott's theories of play and reality. There is a similarity between children, adolescents and adults concerning play. Every individual whatever age enjoys and learns through play, therefore we can look at children to

reiterate the importance of play (especially within art) in learning and relate this to adolescents learning in the school environment. Miller (1973) says:

"characteristic of play is the temporary moratorium on frustration that it affords the player. Because process takes precedence over product, an obstacle that would be deplored if met while problem solving is met in play with equanimity or even glee".
(5)

Within all facets of art, the process is most important, for it is the nature of art to enjoy the experience. This takes priority in Steiner Education which allows more freedom as it is not exam orientated. Freidrick Schiller has written:

"Art is play which has no purpose, nor result, only the joy and love of doing the process"
(6)

In the second project (maskmaking) with the students, the process was emphasised through painting technique demonstrations , i.e., sponging, dragging, etc. This gave the students much enjoyment as this enabled them to play with the paint in an informal manner and acquainted them with the medium in an alternative approach to the paintbrush. Again, this resulted in discussion and lead them to ideas of other objects that could be used to paint with and they became quite obsessed with finding other objects to use, almost forgetting the task in hand as opposed to the previous project which was quite restricted. In the second project art became art for its own sake, the first project art became learning in a formal manner. In project one the pupils were directed fairly systematically by the teacher. In project two the teacher ensured the pupils had the necessary skills to accomplish the tasks, but the emphasis was on pupil creativity and the uniqueness of each approach to the work.

FOOTNOTES

1. The White Paper on Education - p. 21
2. "Playing & Reality" - p. 26
3. "Personality, Development & Learning" - Peter Barnes - p. 56
4. Ibid. p. 59
5. "Personality, Development & Learning" - Peter Barnes - p. 55
6. "Drawing & Painting in Rudolf Steiner Schools" Foreword.

CONCLUSION

Within the school situation we have a need for a subject involving creative thinking (yet creative thinkers naturally are unpopular with teachers), in an institution opposing creativity and a system grading a subject which is process and product orientated, which by its very nature should not be graded. Creativity opposes rigidity and this should be projected in the art room. Considering both schools of thought; Steiner Education and the Irish Art and Design Education, Steiner Education seems to be prioritising creativity within the arts, Irish Art curriculum seems to be more based while also promoting creativity.

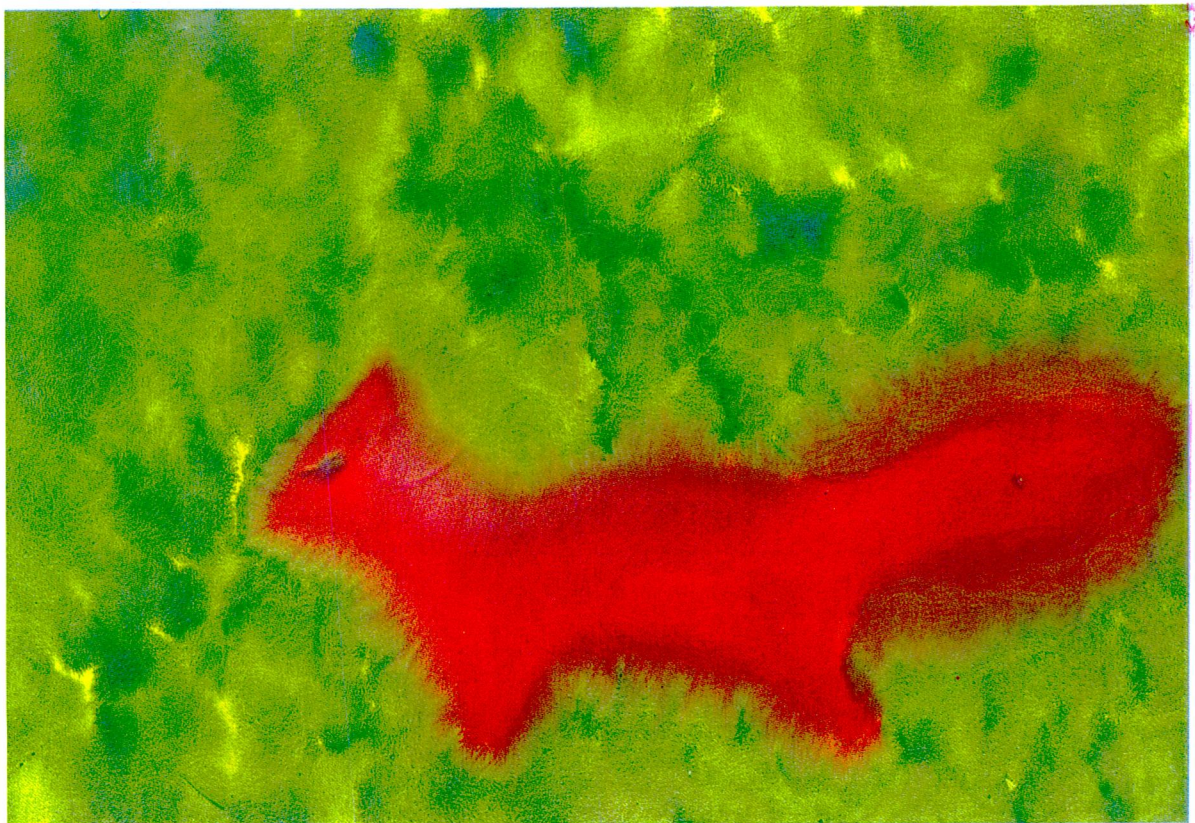
One could not say that one school of thought is more effective than the other as different students work well under circumstances that suit them. Some students, if we take the two projects given to the students in "Our Lady's Grove", work well under instruction and others prefer to work for themselves. Creative thinkers do not always work well within the Irish School curriculum and some undivergent thinkers do not suit Steiner schools, so could it be said that each school should be left to its own devices? There is the possibility that the Irish Art Curriculum is compromising itself by not letting art flourish to its full extent. If the restrictions of the curriculum that conflict with the nature of art were taken away, maybe a mid-ground could be achieved in a system which, as it stands, does not cater for all needs. If the final formal examination was abandoned in art, the possibility of the subject taking on a life of its own could become a reality, also, the process could be exploited. The Steiner philosophy of freedom for the students by means of a teacher in full knowledge of the

intracacies of the students. It is the understanding of Rudolf Steiner that Waldorf Education will only succeed if children have begun education in Steiner schools from a young age, so that the philosophies become a normal way of life for them. If some of the Steiner theories were adapted to the art class in Irish secondary schools, the students would have to be made aware of the reasons why the art class is different from other classes through a process of metacognition (by drawing on the childrens own mental process for explanation) so the understanding of the subject would not be lost in an "easy" class situation.

Creativity does not happen for the majority of a population or even of an art class. The teacher needs to plan for it in the sense that he/she designs the classroom. In project two the atmosphere was created with creativity as a goal. The students had to be introduced to creativity by constant questioning of themselves and how that related to their work. To be creative does not mean to be ignorant of skills. The skills were introduced in project one, yet they did not disappear in project two. the importance of grading the students by introducing an element for each stage of the project was essential in order to keep the energy of the work continuous. Creative atmosphere is more conducive to enjoyment as seen in project two. This is evident in the students work. In project one the similarity of the students work is evident yet in project two the variety is most apparent - fig (1) page 3.

If teachers are to plan for creativity in the art room there are implications for the pre-service and in-service training.

An article in the "Irish Times" dated April 9th, 1996, investigated the In-Career Development Unit



of the Department of Education with regard to the £35 million budget. The spending of this money should bring about a deliberate design to equip teachers with strategies for behaviour with a purpose, that is to focus on classroom atmosphere and how to create a good learning environment between pupil and teacher. Planning for creativity may be more demanding of the teacher but professional satisfaction as seen from project two should be an important goal for all teachers. This atmosphere of teaching for the enjoyment of teacher and pupil should be included as an in-service programme as an essential part of school training.

Many trained teachers admit the best way to learn is to teach. On that basis 'pupil teachers' are a helpful method to creating a good working atmosphere that generates a "co-operative" classroom. Reflection of project two emphasises this point as the students enjoyed the importance of being put in the position of the teacher. Team learning comes into play here as the students need to feel their credibility as intelligent individuals, rather than be dictated to from the top of the class. The extent of this study was insufficient to make national claims to knowledge. Nevertheless, what is true is that the pupils, when working in project two, enjoyed their work more and were more creative and unique than they were in project one.

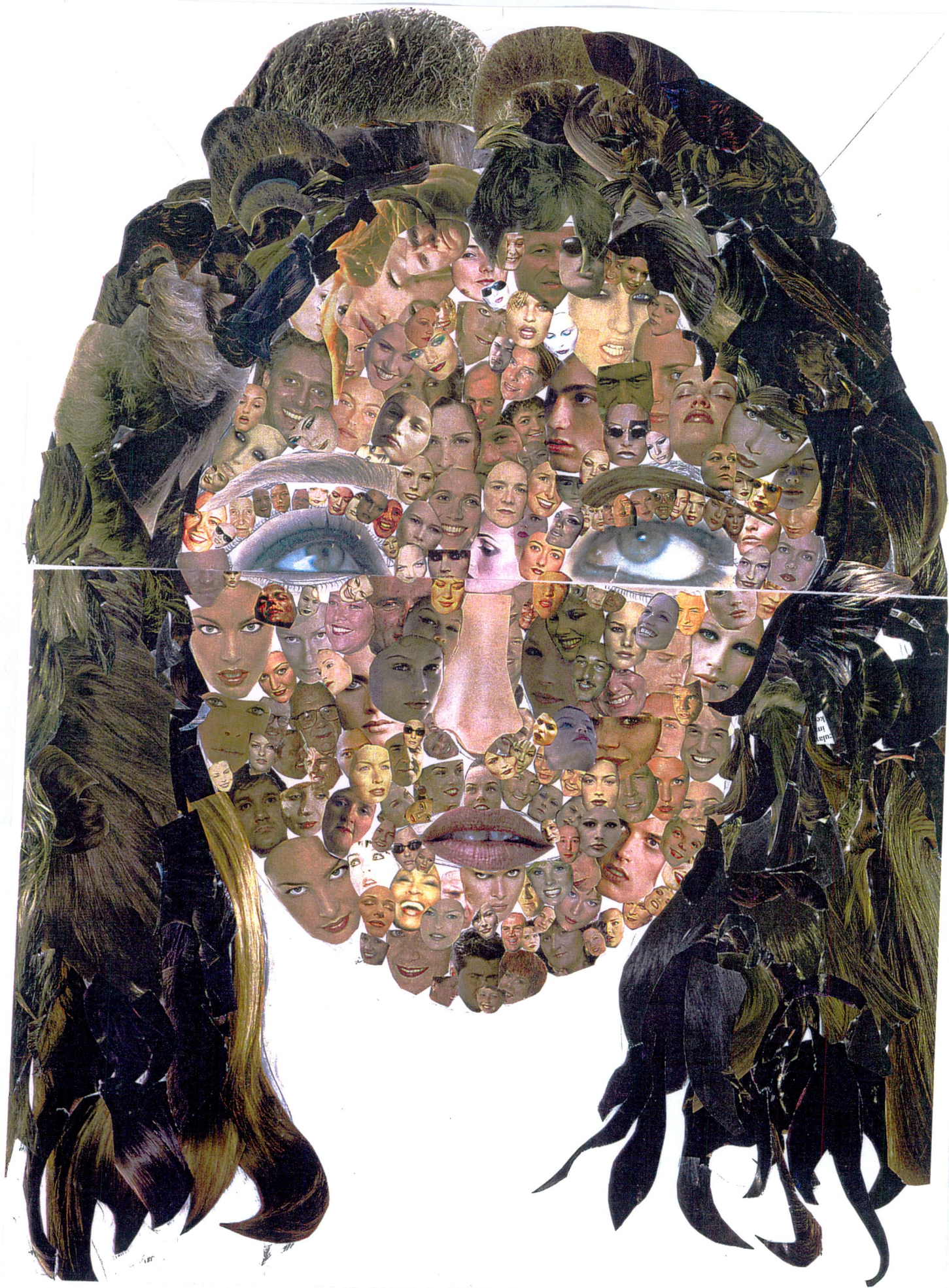
In a structured society an individual needs to release or relax through play. If there was a subject in the school curriculum that was taught purely for enjoyment and for the sake of itself, surely it would make this subject a more worthwhile process allowing students to direct more energy towards other subjects, therefore maybe a few elements of Steiner Education should be applied to the existing system within the art class.



PROJECT 1



PROJECT 2



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