Waldorf Journal Project #6
June 2006
AWSNA

Shaping One's Life and Forming the World

Compiled and edited by

David Mitchell

> Love is higher than opinion. If people love one another, the most varied opinions can be reconciled. . . .
> This is one of the most important tasks for mankind today and in the future—that humankind should learn to live together and understand one another. If this human fellowship is not achieved, all talk of occult development is empty.
>
> — Rudolf Steiner
> "At the Gates of Spiritual Science"

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Contents

Foreword

The Waldorf Journal Project, sponsored by the Waldorf Curriculum Fund, brings to English-speaking audiences translations of essays, magazines, and specialized studies from around the world. This sixth edition of translations is comprised of articles intended for personal, faculty, and parent study. The focus here is shaping life. The first article examines a deep look into social conflict and how sub-natural forces in the earth relate to social interaction. The theme continues in three articles by Dr. Thomas Weiss and his wife Anke on the themes of crafts and morality and the cultivation of empathy. Wolfgang Schad guides us through the scientific basis of early child development and Arthur Auer leads us into his research on evolution and what it means to be a human being. We take a pause with a delightful tale from Switzerland from Conrad Englert-Faye. Englert was the founder of the Zürich Waldorf School and introduced Waldorf education to Norway. Available only in German his book of old Swiss tales that he collected while tramping about the Alps is a masterpiece.

We take a journey to South Africa through the eyes of James Pewtherer and look at the Waldorf school movement there. Also, we meet a special poem about South Africa penned by Magarethe Mehren. The final compelling piece is also by Magarethe Mehren and chronicles life as a child at the end of World War II and her eventual entry into the Waldorf school. This riveting piece of writing will captivate you from beginning to end. Finally, there is a section of Magarethe's story in German that can be used as a reader in language classes.

All the articles are available on-line at

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For those not interested in downloading the material, spiral bound copies are available from:

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The editor welcomes your comments on the articles selected. The editor would also be interested in hearing what areas you would like to see represented in future journal projects. If you know of specific articles that you would like to see translated, please contact me.

— David Mitchell, Editor
Waldorf Journal Projects

Social Conflict and the Influence of Sub-Natural Forces

by

Friedrich Glasl

Translated by Christiana Beaven

As a child of four I experienced the last battles for Vienna during World War II. Certain scenes of the fighting are still with me; how can people become so inhuman? When Austria was freed again by the Allies in 1955 and the Treaty signed in Belvedere Castle, I was a l4-year-old amongst the cheering thousands outside the castle, as glad as they were that Austria, like Switzerland, had declared its neutrality, no longer wanting an active part in war. In 1959 I became a conscientious objector and joined the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, a peace movement based on active Christian non-violence. My conscience, however, would not simply allow me to say 'no' to the horror of war, which seemed incomprehensible to me. I was looking for practical ways of coping with conflict, so I studied Political Science and, in particular, problems of war and peace. Later, my studies in anthroposophy gave me further insight into the nature of conflict that I now use in my work as a consultant with NPI (Institute of Organization Development, Zeist, Holland).

People make life hell for each other through conflict. They cause one another pain and have to wrestle with the most profound questions. As an adviser, I am often faced with existential questions: What does conflict mean in the lives of those involved and of those advising? What is its deeper meaning? Which forces are revealed in strife between people? What are our chances of developing through that strife?

Usually an adviser is called only in when the two opposing parties are already firmly entrenched in their position and threatening to be further drawn into the raging torrent heading for the abyss. Individually they can only resist with difficulty. What happens to people in conflict? My wartime questions re-emerge.

We experience how small tensions and frictions can grow into large-scale rows. At first we think these are under control, but when the differences are more pronounced, they become increasingly difficult to restrain. Both parties are gradually pulled down by the forces of conflict, their faculties of thought and judgment less and less differentiated. There is a polarization into black and white. Feelings become

extreme. The will is blocked or faced with apparently insurmountable obstacles. We are provoked into violent behavior and acts later irreconcilable with our conscience. Conflict always appeals to our darker side. Unknown, inhuman forces slumber in our subconscious and are awakened, further escalating the conflict.

Why are so many inhuman or sub-human urges released in us during conflict? Which forces are actually at work there?

Nine Stages in Conflict Escalation

In my work with conflict I notice that conflicts escalate according to certain laws.[1] They become more intense stage by stage. At each stage a threshold is crossed where one realizes that, as a party to the conflict, one could call a halt and turn back. Each phase of the escalation has several "landmarks"[2] that relate in a consistent pattern. These landmarks are as follows. The first three stages are concerned with co-operation and competition.

Stage 1: Tension and Crystallization

In discussion, differing points of view harden and 'crystallize' apart. The two parties in opposition shut themselves off and their stance becomes fixed. They oscillate between co-operative and competitive attitudes and become increasingly embarrassed and tense. Discussion comes to a halt. Then both sides make an effort to continue the conversation.

Stage 2: Debate

Differing points of view make for lively exchange; there is a natural ebb and flow between them. But, at some point, things change and we have conflict. Now they become extremely polarized and fixed. Thinking, feeling, and willing move to extremes, and become mutually exclusive. Each party speaks its own language and cannot listen to the other without prejudice. The disagreement is determined by pseudo-logical tactics and tricks: arguments are used to deal the opponent a blow in the emotions, making him feel ridiculous or insecure. The disagreement is no longer creative, but rather mechanical. An argument is answered by a counter-argument, which is followed by yet another – an intellectual game of tennis that could go on indefinitely, with both sides wanting to demonstrate their intellectual superiority.

Stage 3: Confrontation with a "fait accompli"

By now the two parties can no longer reach and convince each other with words. Because of this, they simply proceed as they think right and then present the opposing side with a completed set of facts. Each side observes what the other has done, interpreting it with great suspicion. As enclosed groups, the

parties mutually exclude each other. Empathy is totally lost; one side no longer cares about the thoughts and feelings of the other. Each group begins to bear the stamp of conformity, with its implicit concept of 'us-and-them.'

In the following stages four to six it is a matter of winning or losing. Both parties think they can no longer resolve the conflict.

Stage 4: Image and Coalition-Forming

Each party forms a particularly positive picture of its own side, and a correspondingly negative picture of the opposition. The latter knows less, is less able, is less attractive, and so forth. These images become firmly fixed and, when meeting the opponent, can no longer be corrected by additional information: one only sees one' s original prejudice confirmed. Such prejudice is primarily a result of psychological projection: we recognize in our opponent the very qualities we subconsciously find so annoying in ourselves. We see the mote in our neighbor's eye in order to ignore the beam in our own.

Both sides also try to spread the conflict into the surroundings, enlisting the support of like-minded sympathizers. Both maneuver each other into extreme roles and fight in just this capacity.

Stage 5: Head-on Attack and Loss of Face

The moral integrity of the opponent is now attacked. Both 'de-mask' each other, seeing there only the 'Double,' that sum of negative personal attributes, and no longer the higher Self. And now passionate rejection rituals are enacted. Each side thinks it their sacred duty to condemn the opponent as the personification of evil. The rejected party is socially isolated and buries him- or herself in self-pity, seeking no more than rehabilitation, because his/her self-confidence has been deeply shaken.

Stage 6: Threats Prevail

The conflicting parties now want to force each other to surrender, and challenge one another. If this is not taken up, drastic action, which will cause considerable damage, is threatened. This is intended to impress the opponent and, in order that it is taken seriously, the threat must be in part carried out. Both parties identifying personally and publicly with their threats increase the pressure. In this way there can be no turning back, even if the whole process is later seen to be senseless or even personally damaging. Time pressure is increased, both sides issuing an ultimatum.

More coalition partners are actively drawn into the conflict, the consequences of the threat become increasingly far-reaching, and it becomes more difficult than ever to halt.

In the last three stages of escalation it is only a question of loss and losing. Both parties think the opposition has to be put out of action, and only then will there be an end to the conflict.

Stage 7: Limited Destruction

Threats turn into action to prevent the opponent from carrying out his counter threat. At first, only the means of carrying out the threatened sanctions are destroyed. Both sides have abandoned their belief in the human dignity of their enemy. He/she is merely a thing, an object; there is nothing more to be gained.

If the enemy has suffered greater loss than us, this is experienced as winning. Loss becomes joy, gloating (*schadenfreude*). The opponent is forced to pay his/her pound of flesh. The lie becomes a virtue of war, and moral values are reversed.

Stage 8: Destroying the Enemy

If those in conflict are groups or departments, then their vital functions are attacked and rendered useless. The relationship of the prime opponents with those in the background is severed. Through weakening the inner cohesion and laming important functions the opposition is beaten and disintegrates, spiritually and physically, past the point of regeneration.

Stage 9: Destruction and Self-Destruction

There is no return. The final confrontation aims at the total destruction of the enemy, and both sides are prepared to do the ultimate, even if this involves self-destruction. In their downfall they experience triumph that with them the enemy is thrown into the abyss.

With Which Forces Are We Dealing in Conflict Escalation?

In escalating conflict we can, as humans, give access and mobility to certain inhuman, subconscious forces. Once active in social life, they threaten to tear us along with them. And yet conflict does not always escalate automatically through to the last phase. At the threshold between each stage we can wake up and prevent further escalation, if we so wish. But if we ignore these alarm-calls to consciousness, and succumb to the emerging drives and passions, the scale of the destruction will grow immediately.

In my practical work and research over many years, I recognized and described empirically these nine stages of conflict escalation. It was only then that a colleague made me aware of Rudolf Steiner's description of the nine layers of the Earth's interior and their connection with evil.[3] Steiner shows that

in the Earth's spiritual interior, nine layers of Ahriman's influence can be distinguished. Human failings enable these spiritual forces of opposition to work through us: They enlarge and develop what we humans initiate, blinding and fettering us, dimming our consciousness unawares.

Through conflict we descend into the underworld, into Dante's nine regions of the Inferno, and awaken there powerful monsters, which rush into our quarrels.[4] Unconsciously, then, we possess great negative potential, which makes us capable of terrible, inhuman deeds.

The Nine Layers of the Earth's Interior

These can only be briefly characterized here:

First Layer: "Mineral Earth"

Life and movement are crystallized, just as the mineral layer of the earth is rigidified. This is shown clearly in the first stage of conflict!

Second Layer: "Liquid Earth"

Through the activity of the beings in this layer, all life is driven out of the living. Organic movement becomes mechanical. Polarity becomes polarization. As with electricity, the poles cancel, or destroy, each other when they come into contact.[5]

Third Layer: "Air-Earth," "Steam-Earth"

These beings cause sensation to die away. Coldness of feeling and insensitivity predominate. As humans, we shut ourselves off in our own thinking, feeling and willing.

Fourth Layer: "Water-Earth," "Form-Earth"

What lives in the inner world is transposed into the outer world. In conflicts this takes the form of establishing coalitions and shows itself in the process of psychological projection. Forms are changed into their opposites. The stereotyped pictures of our self and our group become a substitute for our own ego.

Fifth Layer: "Fire-Earth"

The beings of this layer of the earth insinuate themselves into our passions, lending them additional negativity. Where strong feelings are rampant these beings become rebellious and force their way into our will, which they increasingly darken.

Sixth Layer: "Fruit-Earth"

These forces lead everything into self-destructive and limitless growth, just as cancers grow blindly and malignantly in the human organism. This is growth without sense, without guiding wisdom. In the fifth and sixth layers magnetic forces are active that want to imprison everything within their sphere of influence.

Seventh Layer: "Earth-Reflector," "Earth-Mirror"

These evil forces pervert qualities and virtues into their opposite. Joy at pain, glee at the downfall of others, and so forth, are all characteristic of conflict in its seventh stage.

Eighth Layer: "The Fragmenter"

Here everything is split into senseless particles, disintegrates and breaks apart. These forces also work in radioactive decay.[6]

Ninth Layer: "The Core of the Earth"

The seat of archetypal evil, source of black magic—it is anti-evolution itself. Archetypal evil strives to destroy irrevocably the fruits of mankind's development up to the present.

Provoking Sub-Nature

Rudolf Steiner only gives a short description of these powers. But their effects were of greatest concern to him right until his death. Even in the last of the *Michael Letters*[7] he calls on us all with great urgency to grapple with these sub-natural forces.

Through modern technology, these beings affect our culture to an ever-greater extent. In conflict we allow these powers access into social life via our souls. The effects of evil do, however, have their significance in human evolution. For progress does not come about as a matter of course.[8] Only in the struggle with the forces that drag us downwards can consciousness and progress develop. We must wrest this progress inch by inch from the powers of machinations possessed within these powers and, with our own morality, assert ourselves against their influence in our souls—only then is progress possible.

In social conflict we also confront the effects of evil beings. To overcome them we have to make every effort to rise as far in our awareness of spiritual beings as the forces of evil want to drag us downwards.[9] What does this mean?

The evil beings in their nine-layered subterranean habitat are the counter forces to the Spiritual Hierarchies. The "mineral Earth" wants to lead the life forces of the Angels into ossification. The Archangels—Spirits of groups, peoples, and languages—find their antithesis in the life-banishing powers of the "Liquid-Earth." The free deeds of the Archai, Spirits of Personality, are inverted in the realm of the "Air-Earth." The effects of the Exusiai, Spirits of Form, are turned into their opposite within the "Form-Earth." The caricature of the Dynamis, the Spirits of Movement, is found in the "Fire-Earth," where the unbridled passions are let loose. In the cancer-like, rampant growth of the "Fruit-Earth," the reversed effects of the Kyrioleles, Spirits of Wisdom, are to be seen. The seventh layer, the "Earth-Reflector," perverts virtue and sacrifice into their opposite qualities, so that the sacrificial deeds of the Thrones, Spirits of Will, threaten to be undone. The anti-image of the Cherubim, Spirits of Harmony, is "the Fragmenter" who tries to create total dissonance and chaos. The deeds of love of the Seraphim stand opposite the negation of development as nurtured by the powers in the "Core of the Earth."

As human beings we constantly stand between these mighty beings. We can give access to, and strengthen, one side or the other. We can also transform the evil within us because benevolent beings give us the power of redemption. This can also happen in social conflict if we are sufficiently awake and take a stand based on our own morality.

Just as illness offers us the possibility of developing soul and spirit, so social conflicts challenge us to take the necessary developmental steps in our consciousness soul.

At present we are placed right in the middle of these challenges. They will increase over the next years: technology, energy problems, economic and social conflicts, and wars—in all these we will have to struggle directly with the powers of evil. Through this we will also be able to discover and develop the necessary remedy in ourselves. Anthroposophy provides the most important aids to knowledge for this task.

Friedrich Glasl was born in Vienna in 1941. He has worked in publishing and in local government, and was Austrian Secretary of the International Voluntary Service. Since 1967 he has worked with NPI in Holland and holds an annual seminar on Conflict Management at the Center for Social Development Emerson College in Forest Row, England.

Footnotes:

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2 Glasl, F. "The Process of Escalation of Conflicts and the Roles of Third Parties in Conflict Management and Industrial Relations," ed. by G. Bomers/R. G. Peterson, 1982.

3 Steiner, R. *Vor dem Tore der Theosophie* (At the Gates of Spiritual Science), Vortrag 4, September 1906.

4 Gleich, S. von. *Die Umwandlung des Bösen*, Basel: 1975.

5 Jurriaanse, T. "De innerlijke kwaliteiten van electriciteit, magnetisme en kernenergie," in *Mededelingen van de anthroposophische vereniging in Nederland*, September 1978.

6 Blattman, G. *Strahlende Materie*, Stuttgart: 1979.

7 Steiner, R. *Briefe an die Mitglieder, Anthroposophische Leitzsatze*, Nr. 183 bis 185 (12 April 1925) "Von der Natur zur Unter-Natur," March 1925 (*Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, Nos. 183-185 "From Nature to Sub-Nature."

8 Steiner, R. *Entsprechungen zwischen Mikrokosmos und Makrokosmos*, 15 Vortrag Dornach, May 15, 1920 (*Correspondences between Microcosm and Macrocosm*).

9 Bittleston, A. *Our Spiritual Companions*, Edinburgh: 1980.

Craft and Morality

by

Dr. Thomas Weiss

From *The Cresset*, Vol. 14, No. 4

I have always known that there is an intimate connection between craft and morality.

Everyone knows that in craftsmanship, in its activity and aura, something utterly moral is centered. But just why there is this connection is not easy to answer because morality has become a very problematic and exclusive concept.

I will try first to turn to the question of crafts and would like to look at the problem from the point of view of history and of mankind. Then I would like to go into the question of morality and the connection between craft and morality to the individual.

It is difficult to find the first beginnings of craft. We know that it was at its height during the Middle Ages. But if one looks back into primeval times one finds that craft did not exist separately, and it is probable that man's creativity started as art and not craft. The more that becomes now known of primeval human activity the more one sees that in the beginning of time, humans created artifacts, things they made with their own hands, for magical but not practical purposes. Probably the first dwellings were not built for men but for the gods to inhabit. Probably the first things were made in an attempt to communicate with divine beings and forces rather than to deal with the needs of earthly existence. We know countless paintings that are 10, 15, and 20,000 years old. We know sculptures of these times as well as articles of daily use. But as far as one can assess the primeval epochs of mankind, it seems that the physical material creations were, to begin with, of a religious and cultic nature and only gradually of a practical nature. This would seem to be an indication that craft may be a further step from art.

Among the very early artifacts of art or craft there are symbols, symbolic forms and shapes. One of the earliest and most frequent is the human hand. In some French and Spanish caves containing primeval paintings, hands are depicted in all kinds of positions. In some caves hundreds, thousands, of hands are painted: in others just one hand. Some walls are painted with abstract hand and finger forms. Not only in Europe but also in other countries of primeval

times one finds the symbol of the human hand. Other symbols of the early artistry of humankind are the female and male and the animal but amongst these forms the hand seems to be the most widespread and possibly the oldest.

Some of you will know the German word for craft is *Handwerk*—a very expressive word because craft is bound to the hand. Only things made with the hand are objects of craft. The hand is the organ, the place, the origin, and even the meaning of craft. The hand is a unique organ and distinguishes Man from all other kingdoms of nature. It is an organ that to begin with did not belong to the earth: it was originally an organ of sense and communication. It was not meant to work but to speak, to sense, and to experience the world. Thus craft might be seen as the result of a sacrifice on the part of the hand in giving itself to the needs of the earth.

In the earliest cultures of which we know, Sumer, Egypt, Ur, one can distinguish definite craftsmanship of the highest skill and achievement. We see in some of the magnificent Egyptian, Sumerian, and Chaldean sculptures and earthenware in the British and other museums how the hardest and most resistant of materials were shaped and formed to utmost perfection. Much was not done as works of art but as crafts.

What do we mean today when we refer to arts and crafts? These two concepts have changed and moved to some extent and when I mention the old art and craft I use terms as we use them today. But we mean something different and the essential difference is the following:

We have an object of craft when we know exactly what we wanted to make and proceeded to make it as exactly to our plan as possible. Therein lies the craft. For example, a cabinet maker may plan to make a table knowing exactly what it will be like, but if it turns out to be a bed he is a bad craftsman. Equally if a man sets out to make an ashtray and makes it exactly as planned he is not an artist but may be a good craftsman. The essence of art is that something new arises, not only materially according to a given plan or form, but that between the artist and a. wide realm of influences something entirely new appears. It may be a work of art if the artist develops a new form. He may have it completely in his head but if he has not developed it in connection with a particular material again he is no artist.

The craftsman wrestles for the expression of an existing entity, and it is the process of incarnation into material existence with which he deals. The artist wrestles for new form, new content that is to come about between him and the world. Probably because of artistic endeavor, crafts have developed. But craft is a further step and enters into a sphere different from that of art.

I have already said that in ancient history craft existed in the sense of my attempt to separate it, somewhat artificially, from merely artistic activity. The iconoclastic aspect of art is the craft aspect, which has played the greatest part throughout the history of mankind. The task of art was the material incarnation of forces determined out of the human being's spiritual and religious life.

In our present day meaning, crafts reached their height and fulfillment in the Middle Ages. In it an interesting occupation played an astonishing part and that was the work of the mason. In connection with building and a revival of primeval impulses of building not for the sake of shelter but for the sheltering of divinity, the houses of God, quite a phase in the development of craft began: the fact that one man can make an object with his hands out of material. It is not an object assembled but one made from material by one man with his own hands. The great cathedrals of Europe were built in this way. One man carved a stone wanting it to be as perfect as possible and put it in place. They began to acquire perfection not as artists or sculptors wanting to bring about something new but wanting their hand-made stone to be a worthy part of the House of God, which they were helping to build. That is the origin of the magnificent sculptures of Romanesque and Gothic Churches all over Europe. And in other fields, too,this striving of one man to perfect his handiwork developed .

Schools were set up in which these skills were taught, not only physical skills but skills in spiritual knowledge. You will understand the development of craft life at that time if you think of another activity that was developing at the same time. Men's professions were varied: there were always hunters, soldiers, traders and those who rendered services, the carters, the barbers who were the surgeons and doctors, and the clergy. In medieval society the tendency to dissipate life was very marked not only amongst soldiers and traders but also amongst the c1ergy and generally what one calls morality was weakened and endangered. Within this society there were two groups of people who developed very earnest schools of moral training: the craft guilds and the alchemists.

The alchemists are remembered largely on the basis of misunderstanding. They were the scientists of that time who tried to study processes of nature as examples of the development of the human soul. What has been described and handed down as secret knowledge of the purification and transformation of base metals into gold was an attempt to train the individual human soul, to enable its base qualities by observing chemical processes in nature that seemed to illustrate processes of inner development. This was one attempt to improve the moral nature of the human being.

The other attempt was the craft guilds. The schools of alchemy largely failed whilst the schools of craft produced notable and striking success. Throughout

Europe the craft guilds established schools and training centers to which young people were admitted as apprentices. After a number of years of training, including menial tasks necessary to the craft, they ascended to the second degree of fellow, mate, or journeyman. To this craft training was linked the fascinating wisdom that home, town and country had to be left. The fellow or mate after achieving a certain amount of learning had to set out on a long journey spanning a number of years and covering a considerable area of Europe. This was done because the type of training given by a craft guild would unavoidably bind, and limit that craftsman to a certain place in society. Before that sacrifice could be made it was necessary for the learning craftsman to have time to wander and encounter as much of the world as possible. The third degree of training was that of master, the one who achieved the perfect incarnation of the plan into a given material.

Try to hold onto the few basic ideas, which we have encountered: that craft incarnates, through the organ of the human hand, a pre-existing form into earthly material. You can sense here a fundamental Christian principle. Christ in His youth, as the Man Jesus, can be imagined as the Craftsman: in all cultures it is the image in which he is seen. And Craft is the exercise that implants, through the hand, spirit into matter. We may feel that this has something to do with morality in the highest sense. The problem which arises in our time is that we have not found a new way to do what the crafts from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, or the beginning of this century, did for the moral existence of the human being. The development that started with the Industrial Revolution caused the physical economic justification of craft to disappear. What was done as a purely spiritual exercise and at the same time, satisfied man's basic material need, was pushed away through the developments at the end of the last century. Modern production methods have made craft impossible and have not as yet allowed the development of any other form in whieh to realize the spiritual and moral aspect of craft.

Britain and other countries are now looked upon as being lazy and incapable of competing with work. Large groups of men frequently come out in protest knowing that this will cause serious hardship to their country. The reason is hardly the desire for increased monetary return for their labor. They earn more each year but, with rising cost of living, their earning remains more or less the same. But this is not the issue. The issue is that they are men and though they may have a bit more to eat and wear and have cars, they must also find their moral dignity and they cannot find it. They hope to find it by setting off one guild trade union against another. They try to introduce differentials, to work slowly and deliberately because, that instills the memory of craftwork in them .

Craftwork cannot be done in a hurry. Craftwork is basically a differentiated organized way of incarnating spirit into matter. This happens individually in the craftsman when he relates his work to his hands. He may not know it, but it happens. When man is robbed of it he senses his deprivation and degradation. He needs what only the craft can do—creation of moral substance.

I would like to describe the skeletal nature of the human hand. We can hold our palms so that it looks upward, or so that the palm looks downwards—it is called subination and pronation. We can do this because between the upper arm and hand there are two bones, the radius and ulna. When the two are parallel our hand looks upwards, when crossed, downwards. The foot is similarly built but we cannot lift the foot anymore. It is permanently turned down onto the earth. This has been done by the two bones, which cross when we turn the hand down having been broken and grown together. In the foot the bones now stand permanently.

You know that when Good Friday is described in the Gospels, it says that the Roman soldiers broke the bones of the two who were crucified on either side of the Christ but they did not break His bones, it was said in the Scriptures: “His bones shall not be broken.” This does not refer only to the external but to the archetypal fact that our feet were unbroken before we descended to earth. We have retained the freedom of turning up to the world of our origin only in our hands. Craft uses this organ to descend in freedom into the bondage of earthly matter thus expressing the divine essence of the human being.

II

We want to face the very difficult question of morality so that we can see its connection to craft. When we consider the beginning of morality, how it emerged out of primeval time and displayed itself in history, it is quite obvious that the question of morality arises with that of good and evil. You know the magnificent description in Genesis of the birth of Good and Evil in the consciousness of man when, living in Paradise under the direct guidance of divinity, he transgressed the original command and ate of the forbidden fruit of knowledge. This is the moment when his eyes were opened and he knew Good and Evil. Morality has throughout history been variously linked, and especially in our time, to the question of sex, however, it is written that when Adam ate of the Tree of Knowledge his eyes were opened, the world appeared and he knew that he too could be seen by the light. Thus the problem of Good and Evil is the problem of knowledge. But is the problem of morality one of knowledge? I do not think that it is. I think that morality is the opposite of knowledge.

In modern development we have learned to value highly pure intelligence. We educate our children to the greatest possible intellectual independence. They learn to look up all answers in textbooks so that they become as self-reliant as possible. They become ever more clever and when they leave school they understand that they are now meant to be successful. They set out to find out how they can best provide money, they read papers, statistics, and they inform themselves. Obviously morality does not flow from that source. I describe this to show that it is not so simple to interpret the primeval story of eating the apple of knowledge as morality. It is a most puzzling and difficult problem.

Various widely divergent moral codes exist. Probably all of us and the majority of the population of the Western World would agree that high-jacking trucks filled with electronic media is not moral. Among Eskimo tribes they have the practice of allowing their elderly to leave their camps to go outside in the wilderness to be eaten by wild animals. The old people accept this as their duty. For us it is shocking. In certain African tribes when a child is born and before it is fed, it is shown to the father: if he considers it to be imperfect it is destroyed.

Another thing that seems to have been universal up to the time of Christ, and is still held as a high moral code by some small groups of modern man, was the principle of vengeance. The value of a man was measured by the degree of persistence in avenging any offence done to his family. A man who would take an offence unrevenged would become an outcast. It is still the ease in some parts of Sicily and is so intensely valued as a moral code that imprisonment for life as a result of an act of revenge is accepted. The interesting thing is that to many revenge is not only not a very high principle but the more modern we are the less we possess the power of revenge. Those of us who still have a strong heritage from the past have slightly greater powers of revenge but a truly modern person forgets an offence. [An exception is the modern Moslem and Israeli world that still takes revenge very seriously.] This is a mysterious fact. Moral values seem to arise from a far greater depth than our ideas.

Moral codes may vary tremendously in the course of time—and equally in different cultures and societies. They vary even within the same society, in different levels and different age groups.

Cultured Asian people are trained to say that which the other wishes to hear: it would not occur to them to think that they must say the factual truth. This would be regarded as impolite. They feel morally obliged to tell lies for reasons of politeness and do so every day.

We have made the problem still more confused. I should like briefly to describe something that Rudolf Steiner said in a lecture course to teachers of the first Waldorf school about morality. He spoke then not about morality but about

will: the problem of morality is actually a problem of the will and not of the thinking. Rudolf Steiner said that there are three aspects in the forces of the human soul: thinking, feeling, and willing. Thinking is the soul's ability to relate images in the soul in an ordered way. Will is the source of action but is completely hidden from consciousness. If I lift a glass of water it is an action of my body. The glass of water can be in my consciousness and I can have the intention of lifting it—but nothing happens. There is a difference between intention and action. And this difference we call will. If I will to lift the glass I lift it, but if I only think about it I may not lift it. Obviously there is a world of difference in the will and yet it is a world that does not appear in my consciousness. This is an essential aspect of morality—we are apparently involved fundamentally in a realm, which to begin with is not accessible to our consciousness. Our will is completely asleep and is yet the most real and consequential way in which we are put into this world.

Rudolf Steiner describes something very interesting about the polarity of thinking and willing. Our feeling is interplay between the two. Our feeling is will that has not yet stepped into the reality of action; if intensified towards reality it becomes will. Further, our feeling is a confluence in which a certain slight will tendency meets the image tendency in our thinking so that our soul experiences, though not consciously as a thought, but in a kind of dream consciousness. Steiner then makes the following statement: Our existence on earth is determined from two sides. The physical body is prepared from heredity through our parents in order that something of a purely spiritual nature can manifest. This is very much the picture of craft! There must be a plan. A table must exist in concept, an ideal. Once tables exist the craftsman can, with the help of suitable materials, with tools, bring about the materialization of the idea of a table. Equally, if the individuality of man did not spiritually exist we could not incarnate as infants and develop as persons on earth.

Our type of thinking, feeling, and willing are not part of the eternal idea of man but are part of incarnated man on earth. Rudolf Steiner says that we enter from a purely spiritual existence through birth and begin to work in our physical hereditary body. In a given environment we work out our destiny on earth and unfold the three soul forces. We have been thrust out of a previous existence and the door shut. Hardly any man on earth has any memory of what he was before he was born though a very few poets have a faint glimpse of this pre-birth existence. It belongs to our human existence on earth that the door is shut: we are really thrown out. The force that closes the door when we are born is the source of the force within us, which gradually develops in us the power of a mirror.

Do we know why we see ourselves in a mirror? What makes a mirror show us ourselves? Why do not other substances reflect? It must be a mirror, a polished surface. As long as substance or a piece of material receives the light that falls upon it it does not mirror. But once it becomes shut off from the light everything is thrown back and the approaching light is straight away repulsed. This is the nature of a mirror: this is the nature of thinking. It is a mistake when someone takes the grimace in the mirror as a threat and hits back. Very many wars arise not because we want to hurt one another but because we are frightened that the other may hurt us. This is a most typical situation in man's destiny: that he does not know himself, that he does not know that the fear in the other is the mirror picture of himself. This is the force of thinking, the mirror force arises because when we were born we left and were shut out from the other world. We bear that force with us and the further away from the other world we grow the stronger the mirroring force.

But we go towards another gate, that of death. In reality with our first breath we go towards death. That is will. If we think that to be born is not to die we delude ourselves—but the harmony, which arises between the two is our feeling.

Why have I told you all this? It is basic but has little to do with morality. Steiner says the following: The will which leads us back to our own existence is the only thing in us which is individual. Thinking is universal, we share our thinking with all human beings. If we read today Plato or Aristotle we can ask whether we have really developed. Comparing any philosopher of the past with those of the present we have to admit that they knew it all. There is no real progress in thinking. But read Plato and you will see that in his time there were slaves. Divine authority ordained this. Read Paul, that most modern of men, and see that he advises slaves to do what their masters tell them and to be grateful because they are his masters. How we would revolt against such feelings. Our feelings and values are totally different. We have made fantastic strides feeling-wise. Why? Because this is tru1y individual: it leads always to the future.

We do not hold moral codes in common with mankind. We hold such codes in common with groups of men because they flow from the will and begin to dawn in our feeling man. How is it with the source of morality that we suspect belongs here? Morality is mine: that makes it morality. It is not that I conform to a social code: this I may do but I know that it is not my morality. My morality is that little wellspring, utterly individual, that I do it. The agreed norm is not morality but that at a special moment I do this—that is morality.

Rudolf Steiner says the following interesting thing: Will works in everything that is alive —not only in man but in everything that is divine and incarnated. It works in man through his fourfold nature: through his physical organization,

into his living, etheric organization, into his emotional, astral organization as well as into human ego nature.

What does the will do in the physical body? It creates instinct. The fact that beavers can fell trees so that they fall to form a dam, or that bees collect pollen from far distant plants, produce, and deposit the wax in such a way that a honeycomb—one of the most highly differentiated, mechanical structures—arises.

This is instinct. Will working in the physical. Will working in the life processes creates drive, forces that govern modern life, govern nutrition, the excreting of substances, procreation. Will working in the emotional creates desires, longings, passions. Will working in our essentially ego nature creates something that, though it is probably the most important aspect of human existence, is hardly known as a word—motivation.

In our schools we have increasing numbers of children who are very intelligent—more so than their teachers—yet they are completely incapable of living harmoniously with other people and fitting into society. They may be able to do very intricate things but they perhaps cannot eat at a table with other people. Sometimes one says that they are emotionally disturbed children but sometimes they are completely undisturbed and undisturbable, because if motivation rolls too far no feeling arises. They are not disturbed in their feeling, they are impartial.

There are many things that you are capable of doing but would not do because you have a harmoniously integrated motivation. This means you are in one world with everybody else. We have a highly integrated, well-fitting common world out of our organized, differentiated motivation. Imagine that we were a group of twenty lions, five cows, three seagulls, and so forth. It is not the lack of intelligence in the seagull that would cause the problem but a completely different motivation. We are only capable of living together as human beings because there is an all-pervading motivation among us. Most crimes of today are a breakdown in motivation. They can be brilliantly engineered and efforts are made not to injure anyone. What they want to do obviously must be done in the best way possible.

Not only does the will in the human create motivation, it does something else. Steiner says that though will brings about motivation there is by necessity a slight discrepancy between physical execution and the idea. For example, I think a point and the point I think is mathematical, it has no size. Whether I make such a point on the blackboard or with the sharpest of pencils it is unavoidably a blotch. It lies in the nature of things. Anything that is physically present only approaches approximate perfection. You cannot think a wrong

triangle. And that lies equally in the nature of the spiritual. Therefore, whatever we bring about through motivation practically can never express the idea. That is the link with craft. When we make something with our hands we are responsible for it. If I sow corn it is not my work but divine enactment, which makes it grow. If I teach a child and the child learns have I brought this about? Learning is an activity of the child and not of the teacher.

Steiner said that because of the relationship between the physical and spiritual, when we have done something with our hands, craft wise, there usually remains an unsatisfied element of wish: I could have done better. This is the seed for incarnation into consciousness of the next higher divine principle of the human being, beyond his ego.

We are distinguished from animals because we know our own ego. Animals have much more majestic spiritual beings behind them, the wisdom of all cattle not only domesticated, is far greater than the wisdom of individual man. But the individual cow has not got it and is only part of it. She is directed by a great spiritual power.

We have a glimpse of our spiritual nature, the lowest bit of the totality of man's spirit. The totality of man's spirit exists but it is God. In the end this divinity wants to live completely in man as it once lived in Jesus. This is the meaning of human existence. It is slow, there is time and we must always do something about it to bring into incarnation or manifestation the divinity.

Nobody can deny that if we look at man and the world from the viewpoint of natural science, there is nothing divine in man. On the contrary man appears as one of the animals with peculiar habits. He is only part of a tremendous universe.

We are endowed with another way of looking at all this but it is not fashionable because man is convinced that he should be born but not die. This is at the root of many of our problems. Though we can survive if born prematurely noone wishes to be so born. Equally, no one wishes to die prematurely. But because he does not wish a premature birth it does not mean he does not wish to be born. But it is a largely accepted fact that not only do we not wish for premature death but feeling-wise we do not wish to die at all. This is a fallacy and not human.

When the will works in the ego bringing about motivation there remains the wish to do something better. Steiner speaks of two further steps: the resolution that can arise and the decision that can follow. This lived in the Middle Ages in the craftwork. It is the morality created power of craft; something only conceptually known embodied by the human hand into matter and never absolutely perfect. This is par excellence the fine wish to do better.

This and nothing else is morality. Although it works out feeling-wise into a variety of moral codes, morality is the human being's willingness to bring to greater realization his/her divine nature. This is motivation and we have to strive for it in our time not in physical work with our hands but in the encounter of man to man. When I greet someone in the morning there must arise in my soul the wish that I should be able to do that better—even only just that greeting as, if we are truly honest, we know that we have in fact shied from giving a true greeting. We have become so sensitive and so much on the threshold of new motivation that we feel in every meeting with another person the wish to do better. If we will learn to listen to that wish in our soul we shall have provided a foothold for further development of morality.

Empathy

by

Dr. Thomas Weihs

Translated by A. R. Meuss, FIL, MTA.

'Empathy' is a word which has been used fairly frequently over the last few decades. I think one can consider the meaning of this word when thinking of the tremendous change that R. D. Laing's work has brought about in the psychiatric understanding of mental illness. Up to about ten or fifteen years ago when one studied any textbook on psychiatry, then mental illness, schizophrenia, psychosis, was a condition in which a person dropped out of a context that was humanly understandable; he became 'insane.' That was a universally held view but one which has been removed. One can imagine that there were hundreds of thousands of such people at any moment on the earth who were completely incomprehensible, 'mad.' Now that is different because of the intense empathy of some men. Empathy has brought about the possibility for not only psychiatrists but also so called ordinary people to understand a great number of their fellow men.

I have drawn on what I have absorbed of Rudolf Steiner's teachings in my approach to the problem of empathy, and the first question that arises is whether or not empathy is the beginning of what Rudolf Steiner describes as the natural, psychological condition to which mankind will attain in the next epoch, the condition of total compassion. Rudolf Steiner has said that in the total change of human consciousness, in the human mode of experience, what will increasingly come about within the next few thousand years is that one will not be able to see the suffering of another person without experiencing it exactly as much as if it were one's own suffering.

Whatever one could say about present day problems, there is, nonetheless, a remarkable increase in the presence of total compassion compared to fifty years ago. Fifty years ago it seemed to almost everyone that it couldn't be helped if there were people who were poor. The poor were always there, and this was felt as an accepted thing by any normal, mature person. Poverty was part of the world. It couldn't be helped that millions died of starvation in China and India. As a mature person one accepted that, that was the course of life, poverty had to be.

This way of thinking has become unacceptable today for a vast majority of people, not *for* any specific ideological reasons but because they *feel* differently about it. One must only think that a century ago slavery was a matter of course. The ideals of Plato's *Republic* were based on slavery, but this would be totally alien today. I mention these things so that you can see there has been a natural progression in human evolution in total compassion and in social conscience. I think it is right also to assume that empathy is a phenomenon which has to do with this general development.

Empathy, as it should be understood, is not just a feeling, not just the putting of one's self into the other's situation. It has a therapeutic connotation as well as a cognitive one. It is an understanding that arises out of a feeling effort. I would like to remind you of Rudolf Steiner's description of empathy in the Second Lecture in *The Curative Course*. He speaks there about quite concrete but basic conditions in developmentally handicapped children, and gives a foundation for curative education as a practice for therapeutic understanding. He says the following:

> If the teacher can feel his way right into the situation (of the child), if he is able himself to *feel* (what) the child feels, and *able* at the same time out of his *own* energy to evoke in his soul a deep compassion with the child's experience, then he will develop in his *own* astral body an understanding *for* the situation the child is in, and will gradually succeed in eliminating in himself all subjective reaction of feeling when faced with this phenomenon in the child. By ridding himself of every trace of subjective reaction, the teacher educates his *own* astral body.

One could not really put this in more concrete detail. That is the most concise description of how one brings about empathy. It is the basis of the therapeutic educational approach.

One can ask what Steiner means when he stresses that we must "wipe out sympathy as well as antipathy" in order to gain differentiation in our possibility of understanding and experience so that we can help.

It is a fact that in modern psychology today one speaks of the ambivalence of emotions, that *one* can, in one's love, hurt someone. If one thinks as long as a person loves, it can only be good, it can do no harm, then situations arise in which one's development can be halted.

After Steiner has spoken about our wiping away all traces of sympathy or antipathy, of subjective reactions to the child's situation, in order to work on ourselves, he says that as long as the teacher or the person working with the child has a sympathetic or antipathetic reaction to the child's situation, then "so long

will he remain incapable of making any real progress with the child." Then he says: "Not until the point has been reached where such a (child's) phenomenon becomes an objective picture and can be taken with a certain calm and composure as an objective picture for which nothing but compassion is felt; not until then is the necessary mood of soul present in the astral body of the teacher. Once this has come about, the teacher is merely by the side of the child in a true relation and will do all else that is needful more or less rightly."

One can also be helped in understanding what Steiner means by 'wiping out sympathy and antipathy' if one considers what he says about these two phenomena in his lecture cycle *Psychosophy, Pneumatosophy and Anthroposophy*, where he speaks of sympathy and antipathy as the two primary forces in our soul. He takes tremendous steps to help us get away from the idea that this has to do with the feeling known as sympathy or the feeling known as antipathy, which one usually thinks these two to be. In actuality, he describes the force of sympathy as the will, and the force of antipathy as our intellectual life. He relates the force of antipathy to our central nervous system, and therefore to our death processes. From the moment of our first breath, he tells us, not one nerve cell is born any more but from the moment of birth every day hundreds and thousands of nerve cells die. That is only the case with the nerve cells, however, all the other cells in the body multiply. Therefore we grow, we put on weight, because the cells other than those in the nervous system multiply, our organ systems develop. There is only the one organ system in us which dies, and this is the nervous system.

Through concepts such as these RudoIf Steiner has put into the world the possibility to understand the human being, and if such possibilities would be used it would bring self-knowledge as well as psychology ahead with a tremendous step. In terms of what we know as psychoanalysis, Freud tried, for instance, to describe this polarity, but on the other hand I feel one has to bring to such terms what we can gain from Anthroposophy. Freud tried, for instance, to describe this polarity not in terms of sympathy and antipathy but as 'Id,' the entirety of instinctual life which included the 'Libido,' or sympathy and love, and an opposing force which he called 'Thanatos,' the death drive. Steiner, as I described, indicated that our consciousness is not a phenomenon of our life function but of the 'death' within our life. I know of no other writer or philosopher or psychiatrist who has said that consciousness is based on the death processes in us, quite physically in the nervous system. If the brain cells die a man immediately loses consciousness. This is the case too if one breathes pure oxygen, and the death process is halted, but no one thinks of it in terms of consciousness because we are beset with the idea that consciousness is produced by the body, that, as the kidneys excrete urine, for example, the brain excretes thoughts.

Rudolf Steiner, in the third lecture of *The Curative Course* speaks of morality, and speaks of it in quite a unique way. He says we do not bring morality with us into our present life, and he links it to our will. Thoughts, he says, can never be wrong because they are cosmic. They can be distorted in us because we mirror them wrongly. Nevertheless, by themselves they are always right, and in the Spiritual World will can never be moral. He says when we are born we bring with us will which has no morality, morality must be acquired by us on earth. That which we have had as morality in our former incarnations, we have used up between death and birth when we were concerned with building up our body:

> Ethics and morality have to be acquired anew in each single earthly life. This has a very significant result, namely, that inasmuch as we come from pre-earthly existence without morality, we have to develop intelligence in our will. We enter with our will into our organs, and in our will we must develop intelligence for what is brought to us in the way of ethics and morality. We must develop a 'sense' for it . . . It is quite wonderful, how moral and ethical impulses pour into the child when he is learning to speak.

At first it seems that Steiner means specific moral codes. In connection with this, one could say if I have had my last incarnation for instance two thousand years ago, what was then moral is today not necessarily the case; I can't bring moral codes with me. But Rudolf Steiner doesn't mean that. He does not mean the comments of morality, which are relative to the age in which we live.

Morality is the sensitivity for the understanding of moral codes that are brought to us, and Steiner says that this sensitivity comes about when the small child learns to speak. In his lectures *Study of Man* (Stuttgart, 1919) he describes how the forces of sympathy and antipathy must meet, how the acquisition of speech and language is the most specific integration of these two forces. There, he says that these forces by themselves are neither good nor bad but are forces. He describes how the force of sympathy is both love and hate, aggression, destruction, and it is simply will. The force of antipathy is not will but mirroring, and this means that the former is bound up with life and the latter with death. The one is being, the other, not-being.

If one employs empathy in order to understand mirroring, one can perhaps come to understand empathy itself in a better way. By feeling one's self into a mirror, one can experience it as still, smooth, cold, as totally exposed. It does not accept anything. Everything which gets in its way is reflected. This is an image of the force of antipathy. That force does not go against or towards, but is its own density, its own closed-ness, and the closed-ness brings about the total mirroring. The force of sympathy is outgoing. In love, sympathy, aggression, devouring,

there manifests the taking-hold-of, the aiming, the continuous doing and undoing. Sympathy and antipathy are the two basic forces of our soul existence and they must be integrated, brought together. They must really be transformed, and in this integration and transformation there arises our thinking and our emotions and our actions, each as an integration already of the two forces.

The original idea of morality, in Freudian theory had to do with the three-cornered relationship between father, mother, and child. That is the age-old myth of the Oedipus saga and I think it is helpful to realize it. In his treatment of neurotic patients, Freud found in a vast majority of cases that they seemed to have inner conflict and problems because they didn't trust their own capacity for love. They were uncertain about it, and some developed certain mechanisms of self-punishment such as those found in certain types of neurosis. At the root of it, the patients will describe situations, usually with their parents in quite early infancy, which they couldn't really master. From his cases, Freud concluded that the Oedipus saga is not only just a majestic story of what once happened, but that it is the description of an unavoidable, always necessary situation; namely, that the young helpless child experiences that there are certain possessive qualities in his natural love for his mother, and feels that he thereby comes into conflict with his father, although he loves his father. He is put into this difficult situation in which his conflict gives him the first inklings of guilt.

That normally solves itself somehow and we derive our normal potential of morality because we somehow learn to cope with the fact that our love contains elements that are necessarily negative. An infant's love for his mother is primary. It is not love in the sense of Saint Paul, but it is biological love, instinctual love which has its roots in the force of sympathy long before sympathy is mitigated by the force of antipathy. If it goes wrong, it causes both illness and many problems, but if it goes well we acquire the ability to feel guilt, to feel that some things are good and others bad. We are not born with that ability but we develop that in our mastery of the Oedipal situation, in our transcending and understanding that our love does contain aggressive elements, and that thereby we create and have to endure conflict. If we learn to deal with it, we mature, and we mature morally.

Steiner describes in *The Curative Course* that the source of the power of empathy is that maturational process which consists in our learning to tolerate and to accept the ambivalence of primary forces in us. Love as a primary force, not when it is sublimated and differentiated and tempered by our understanding but as a primary force, is always and unavoidably aggressive and destructive. Otherwise it could not be a force. There is a statue by Henry Moore which can be disturbing when seen. It is a mother with her infant, the infant formed like a picking bird with a wide open beak, who is held away by the mother at a dis-

tance. Moore has made many Madonna and Child images but this particular one points to what I have described as the untempered elements, necessary elements, of love. That can be subconscious, but a real mastery and conscious handling of the force of empathy can only arise out of our consciousness of the ambivalence of basic emotions.

We must come to understand that our love can perhaps hurt another person. There is no insurance that because one has good will, that it can only bring about pleasure. That is a childish idea. To the extent to which we have learned within ourselves to cope, we can then extend empathy, we can meet others and help them to cope as well. In our learning to understand, to tolerate the ambivalence of our emotions, an ambivalence unavoidable and necessary, we can also accept it in others, without blaming them, without meaning to show them where they have gone wrong, but with understanding.

While love is often impatient,
empathy is patient.
While love is often aggressive,
empathy is kind.
While love is often generous,
empathy envies no one.
Love is often proud,
but empathy is never boastful nor conceited.
While love is often selfish and very easy to take offense,
empathy is never selfish and never takes offense.
Empathy keeps no score of wrongs, does not gloat over
other men's sins, but delights in the truth.
There is nothing empathy cannot face.
There is no end to its faith, hope, and its endurance.

Youth Guidance and Empathy

by

Anke Weihs

Translated by A. R. Meuss, FIL, MTA.

The individual in the period of adolescence is like a small boat leaving the security of the harbor and setting out to sea full of the spirit of adventure. The boat has to go through turbulence—as well as moments of calm and peace—before reaching the shore of adult life.

R.D. Laing, when writing about behavior and experience *The Politics of Experience* postulates that we see each other's behavior but cannot see the experience of the other which underlies his behavior. Thus "experience is man's invisibility to man."

As anthroposophists we cannot accept the finality of this statement, but we can use it as our point of departure on a path setting out to reach the true experience of the other's experience in an act of empathy.

Rudolf Steiner often spoke about the evolution of human attributes or faculties. Thus he attributes the birth of the faculty of compassion to Gautama Buddha; he was able to take up the untold suffering that he met in the world when finally leaving his sheltered home and make this suffering his own experience.

The emergence of the internal conscience (voice of conscience) sprang from the experience of Elija on the mountain, when, after having contested with the five hundred prophets of the Baal and called down the Heavenly Fire, he hears the Divine Voice not from the external realm of the elements but from the still, small voice within himself.

Once such faculties have emerged through such leaders of human evolution they enter the stream of evolution. Turning to sympathy and antipathy, as Rudolf Steiner described them, we see how they weave in human social life. There unfolds in social life, in meetings between human beings, a constant oscillation between sympathy and antipathy which is almost beyond our control. (lt is as little under our control as is our breathing process). We 'sleep into the other,' reawake in ourselves, and so forth.

But gradually a new possibility begins to emerge; Empathy a new power, a potential for holding still this eternal oscillation of sympathy and antipathy (even as we can hold our breath), and in this deed of holding still, of 'making a space,'

a gateway is opened towards the other person and towards his experience. This is a strenuous and meditative exercise opening a gate into the private world of the other person; a beginning of an experience of his experience.

But one has to strip oneself of all illusions, all functional relationships—teacher/pupil, doctor/patient, and so forth. We must even strip ourselves of our own wish to help. Empathy is thus almost a non-power; it is the non-power of the consciousness soul.

It is indeed a meditative way we have to go for this; a way leading into the landscape of the other person, into his sanctuary. Communities such as ours [the Camphill Community] must cultivate this path and bring it to effective curative force.

Our empathy would give the adolescent the experience that the ocean over which he sails is everywhere surrounded by land. But we must be able to change our attitudes in order to achieve this; we must lay aside our 'educator' function and, at least for a while, learn to walk on the sea out to the adolescent in his boat to keep him company, to be at his side when the storms rage.

Final comment from Dr. Thomas Weihs:

With Anke's description of empathy I think we can feel how it is connected to Steiner's description of the development of mankind. Today, mankind is already exposed to the light streaming in from the future, from the Sixth Cultural Epoch. In future it will not be possible not to experience the experience of the other.

We have a moral commitment not to be like Laing says we are, although (initially) we are. Our prejudice shapes our experience of the behavior of the other.

Our judicial system today is rooted in the experience of mankind two thousand years ago. It is rooted in revenge. Today this is totally meaningless to us because of the Deed of Christ and the Christ Impulse in history. Instead of revenge, forgiveness has evolved.

A similar and as marked change will occur over the next two thousand years and we are already involved in this process. (Development towards the experience of spirit-self.) We will become responsible for the other person's experience. Thus, our first lesson is not to learn 'how to help,' but it is to learn 'how not to cause.' The initial invisibility of the other's experience so easily makes us hurt and damage those whom we love.

Organology and Physiology of Learning
Aspects of an Educational Theory of the Body

by

Wolfgang Schad

Translated by A. R. Meuss, FIL, MTA.

Physiological aspects of young children's drawings

The scribbly drawings of young children are very helpful if one wishes to study the interaction between physical development and the direction taken in inner activity. In spite of considerable individual differences, we see characteristic themes recurring at particular ages.[1,2]

The first drawings are uncontrolled vortices coming from the motor functions of a small hand moving in circles, the movement of life. (Fig. 1) Rocking hand movements produce tracks that move to and fro. The nature of the forms is partly determined by the structure of the joints and the degree to which hand and arm muscles have matured. The many variations seen in the second and third years of life, soon with highly expressive forms, will not be covered here.

Fig. 1
Vortical glomus drawn by a girl aged 22 months

The middle or end of the third year is of vital importance. Let us consider what happens when a young child stands at a small table, breathing hard, and awkwardly draws a curve on the paper (Fig. 2). Using every ounce of concentration available, the child endeavors to make the line, however, uneven, close up in a circle. Now the breath is let go, indicating deep satisfaction, for something has been achieved. An enclosed space has been set apart from the world of infinite possibilities. The child will try again, and yet again, as if to

confirm the achievement. For some days circles are drawn on one sheet of paper after another. This is also the time when a child begins to say "I" to her- himself with meaning, discovering him- herself to be something that does not exist again in the same way and stands out from the whole world around it. The child has been an "I" for some time, but only now becomes conscious of this.

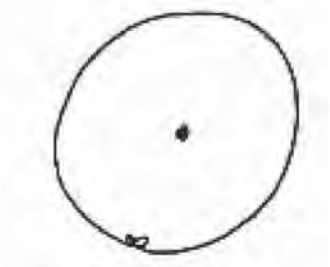

Fig. 2
Circle tied with a knot, drawn by a girl aged 3 years, 3 months

The cerebrum increasingly matures at this time, with the development especially of myelin sheaths in the cortex.[3] The skull bones are progressively uniting. The fontanelles finally close in the first year, and at 2 $^{1}/_{2}$ to 3 years the frontal suture closes,[4] and from then on there is a single frontal bone, a bulwark to the outside. The young child's consciousness, still identifying with the environment, feeling secure in it, withdraws behind the closing bulwark of the frontal bone. The first phase of defiance begins. The closure is a desired result that clearly also shows in the drawings. After the third year, the chest organs mature increasingly. Breathing, which until then has been diaphragmatic, gradually involves the whole chest going up and down as thoracic breathing develops. The thorax, more rounded and barrel-shaped in babyhood, changes, until it is greater in width than depth. The trunk flattens frontally, and this actually gives it a frontal aspect. At the back, changes occur in which the spinal column is fully developed. We need not go into its fairly complex embryology.[5] It is merely important to note that individual vertebrae do not—as one might assume—derive from a single somite but always from parts of two different somites (Fig. 3). The anterior vertebral body derives from the upper part of the lower somite, the posterior vertebral arch from the lower part of the upper somite. The body extends upwards; the arch, enclosing the spinal marrow, comes to be at a slightly lower level. At birth, the two parts that will be one in future have already reached the same level, though calcification is still separate. Body and arch only unite firmly and finally between the third and the end of the fifth year, with a single vertebra produced from two separate structures, one of the many that make up the spinal column.

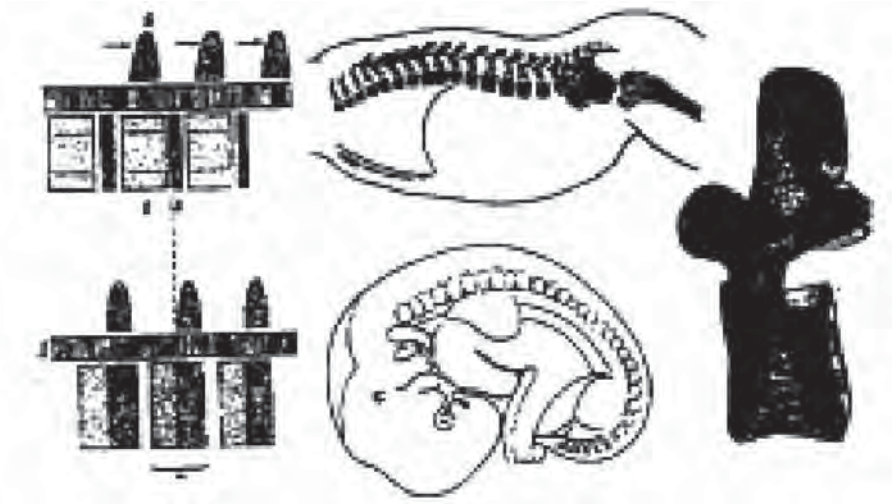

Fig 3

Development of spinal column. Left center: Human embryo in week five with 33 somites along trunk, top left: Every somite (S) has elements from which the body of a vertebra (Wk), the vertebral arch (ft) and the intervertebral disk (Rs) develops; Rm spinal marrow. Body and arch always come from different somites. Top right: Displacement of elements. Right center: In the spine of a boy aged 18 months, vertebral bodies and arches have been at the same level for some time but not yet fused. Below: Upper lumbar vertebra, fully fused. X-ray showing trabecular structure in adult. [6,7]

The child knows nothing of this, of course. It is remarkable, however, that the drawings made at this age often include “ladder people”. (Fig. 4) The trunk shows a sequence of rungs, or looks like a tall tower. The head at the top indicates that this is definitely a human form. By far the greater number of all pre-school drawings show more or less recognizable human figures. The human form is the main theme. They always have a head, even if it comes right on top of the legs. In the fourth and fifth years it becomes increasingly important to draw the trunk as well. The “ladder trunks” seem to indicate that the child unconsciously draws the ossification of the spinal column which has just come to its conclusion in physical development. Initially utterly unconscious, a process brought to completion in the body, this clearly rises up spontaneously in the images that live in the child’s mind and soul. This physiology of learning is not learned from adult culture but from the essential nature of the child’s own body, with the psyche clearly still closely connected with it.

Fig. 4
Two "ladder people" drawn by a boy aged 4 years, 5 months

This connection still seems to persist during the later pre-school age. Somatically we have massive restructuring of the whole form and figure, something Zeller called the "first change of form." Where do we see the indications of this?

Let us again consider physical and organ development. Approximately after the child's fifth birthday, in the sixth and even more rapidly in the seventh year, the limbs catch up on their delayed early childhood development. Active growth may begin in the feet or hands, and soon involve the arms and legs as well. The shape of the trunk also shows obvious changes. The round infant's belly disappears as the waist develops. The fat layer generally decreases with intensified metabolism, the muscle profile and angular forms of joints become visible under the skin. The whole form grows more slender. The lower thoracic line, until now an obtuse angle, grows acute, the neck gets longer and thicker. When these processes begin to involve the head, the physiognomy changes, with the rounded forehead flattening out, no longer forming an overhang above the face. The mouth region grows more actively, creating space for the permanent teeth in the jaws, which now take on more definite shape. In this final phase of early childhood, the young child is creating a new form of existence for itself by restructuring matter and form.

Children seem to reflect this restructuring phase in drawings that are like snapshots. Still monistic, it appears that organotropic elements slip into pictures reflecting the outer form. The scribbled people now often have extremely long legs and arms, feet, and hands with gigantic fingers.

The relationship to the environment also changes. Drawings now show a scene, a story. Sun, trees, houses, and so forth, may still have a great deal of hidden human configuration with face-like physiognomy at this transition stage, but the theme gradually comes away from unconsciously reflecting the self. The environment becomes a statement for its own sake (Fig. 5). This also indicates that the child is beginning to be ready for school.

It has frequently been noted that creative productivity, so richly imaginative until then, tends to lessen between the sixth and the end of the seventh year. Something of the bubbling freshness has gone. Children will then more often become silent onlookers, rather than be constant activists in their world. This was interpreted as lack of stimulus in nursery school and at home by people who lacked insight into physical development, and they would ask for the children to start school early. Yet the situation is usually different. The child's activity aspect continues without a break but it is temporarily addressing the physiological restructuring of the physical form and is less available for extrovert fantasy production.

FIGURE 5
Early drawing showing a scene. Mothers going for a walk with children and push chair. Drawn by a girl aged 5 years, 2 months.

A similar, even greater degree of introversion is seen in puberty when a major growth phase occurs. Again, periods of disharmony are a necessary precondition for greater autonomy later on.

The artistic pause in late infancy is anything but a pause in the maturation of activities directed towards the living body. It is evident that energies for this are withdrawn from the sphere of inner activity. If too much is demanded in the realm of the psyche, this interferes with physiological development. If we ask too early for one-sided progress in cognitive ability or the like, we endanger physiological stability. The period of transition does not end until the rounded body of the young child has changed to the much more slender form of the schoolchild. It then gives way to a qualitatively new desire to learn that is distinctly more focused.

Physiological basis of different forms of thinking

The massive growth phase for the whole skeleton thus also appears to be a specific physiological precondition for upper school learning achievements that

are increasingly based on perception and understanding. Until now, thinking capacity has been far too often considered to be solely bound to brain physiology, which certainly contributes. But apart from the brain the skeleton is also an important basis. Its supportive function has fully developed between 20 and 25 years of age, when the epiphyses finally unite with the shafts of long bones. Full body size is achieved; we are "grown up."

In this paper we are constantly going against the accepted view concerning body and soul, which is that the res extensa and the res cogitans are essentially incommensurable. To the modern mind, quantifiable and qualitative aspects do not go together. Yet in reality they are two aspects. The conscious mind needs the split to stand apart from world reality. Development of primary consciousness is indeed always connected with alienation from the world at large. It is, however, fruitful in science when this hiatus is bridged at moments of insight where things are consistent. In our experience insight happens in our own conscious mind, giving it more than it would be capable of achieving on its own, without encountering the world. In fruitful insight, the primary alienation from the world is canceled out, at least for a moment. Fruitful thinking is one of the most important remedies enabling humans to heal the great divide between subject and object. In the pre-knowledge state, human beings are monistic, at one with things. Knowledge comes with the subject-object divide. It finds its central goal in overcoming the division with a monism that has become aware of itself through dualism.

Linguistic syntax does, at least in Western cultures, call for division into subject and predicate, usually with an object as well. The monistic experience is then immediately put in a context where the subject-object hiatus applies. Exactly the same happens, though more so, when systems, schemes, models, or even a formula become the end product of the process. If we consider not so much the content but the process, the discovery made at a moment of insight is soon deprived of its potential richness of references, reducing reference to known thought masses. These are enriched, but the discovery itself is limited to something fixed; it has been reduced to a formula. It is evident that this involves a necessary process of diminishing vitality, subduing dynamics that may well come as a shock in the first moment of original thought, so that something can be safely said to be unchangeable and made a "law." This death process going towards neutral values for dynamic mental contents has two advantages for the conscious mind. A kind of selective process has reduced the overabundant dynamics of the discovery to manageable proportions, and it is in fact only because of this that the content can be remembered.

On the basis of this experience, which without reflection is often felt to be painful, the death process will often only be gone through reluctantly or not at

all. Nietzsche described this psychological and emotional aspect of dealing with his own thought discoveries as follows: A matter which resolves itself no longer concerns us."[8] Thus it happens that many people have an abundance of intuitions, but generally are not aware of them, because they do not enter into the process of "fixing" them in words, concepts, and memory, so that they are soon forgotten.

The brain is considered the physical organ of thought, especially the cerebral cortex. This is borne out not only by specific losses sustained when the cortex is diseased or injured, but by the above characteristics of the relevant thinking processes if the physiological nature of the thought organ is considered in this respect. Cell division in the brain ceases completely at approximately the end of the first year of life. From then on there is no further division, but only the daily death of nerve cells throughout life. Nerve cells have a rapid metabolism and depend on a good blood supply. Glial cells in nerve tissue also have a supply function. Yet ultimately nerve cells die quickly once their blood supply has been cut. A limb can be tied off for an hour without permanent damage, the brain only for a maximum of three minutes. After that, corpse development is irreversible. Physiologically, the cerebrum is thus always on the border of becoming a corpse, and the same happens in homeopathic doses, as it were, in the daily cell deaths.

The situation is different in the autonomic nervous system (visceral nerves), which functions at a wholly unconscious level. Here the capacity for cell division persists throughout life. These nerves lack the myelin sheaths that are important to us in the present context. Myelin sheaths develop in early childhood, initially in the nerves that innervate the organs we are able to use at will (sense organs, skeletal muscle, etc.). Neighbouring cells cause cytoplasm to spiral around the neurites and then become enriched with fat-like substances (neurolipoids).[9] These are known to be extremely passive metabolically, unlike other body fats persisting even in cases of malnutrition. Here, then, metabolism, the basic property of life, has largely come to a standstill, which is the demonstrable precondition for mentally conscious, will-determined ability to use one's own body.

The physiological nerve substance is the functional correlate of the form of thinking where living dynamics of mind and spirit are fixed in terminology and concept or in formula-like systematic fashion so that they will be essentially unchanging and can be recalled at will.

It is a characteristic of brain-bound consciousness that it is all the clearer the more it is based on ideas. With regard to content, ideas are the recapitulation of what we have perceived, not the percepts themselves. They create a second, inner world in addition to the real world we perceive, and we know very well that this second world does not hold percepts. This gives it both worth and un-

worth. An idea we have of something always causes alienation, but also frees us from the power of the reality perceived; we are thus only able to make free use of this world if we are aware of the limited nature of its relation to reality. All thinking based on models in the sciences depends on this.

The physiological correspondences are an interesting aspect. The alienation from the world immanent in such thinking is evident even in the biology of its organ, the brain. No other organ in the human body is topographically and functionally shut off from the surrounding world to the same extreme as the brain. The blood circulation with the substances it carries enters into all organs, but has to pass the highly selective blood-brain barrier before it passes into the brain, and this allows the brain to have only a selective share in the metabolism of the rest of the organism.[10] If non-physiological substances pass the barrier (alcohol, drugs) the autonomy of consciousness will break down as an immediate consequence.

The brain is shut off not only physiologically but also organologically. With its closest appendages (labyrinth of the ear, pituitary, etc.) it lies in a closed bone capsule surrounded by three meninges (pia, arachnoid and dura mater). The middle one, the arachnoid mater, holds the cerebrospinal fluid which causes the brains weight to be largely counterbalanced by buoyancy, particularly also because of its myelin fat content. The thick scalp covering the cranium, and the hair, also give somatic expression to the complete isolation of this central organ from the surrounding world.

The movement life of trunk and limbs relates much more directly to the surroundings, being actively involved in them. The head only has a minimal part in the motor functions of the postcranial organism. Even in sports, the head is kept as still as possible; otherwise one loses the necessary distance from events. Ultimately the actual topographical position of the head keeps it well away from contact with the ground, establishing maximum distance existentially. The organs of the distant senses, which are centered in the head make up for this to some extent. We shall come back to them later. They convey percepts, not concepts.

The structure of ideas as “reductive” recapitulation also exists at somatic level in the relation of the cerebral cortex to the body. The whole musculature serving locomotion is connected with the brain through sensory nerves. Specific nerves go to specific areas of the cortex. The areas are arranged in a way that the whole locomotor human being appears on a smaller scale on the posterior margin of the central sulcus (Fig. 6). Neurologists call this the “homunculus.” But there is more. In character with the nature of the feeling sphere—separate from the rest of the body—the head’s feeling sphere appears as a kind of potentized recapitulation of the self in a separate part of the cortex.

Fig. 6

Below: Central sulcus (black) between the temporal (left) and occipital poles. Its posterior aspect is the location of primary somatosensory areas of the cortex. The term primary is used for (congenital) functions that need not be learned. Above: Diagrammatic presentation of fields relating to different pails of the body in a section of the hemisphere particularly sensitive to touch need larger areas than those less sensitive.[11,12]

To sum up, the functions of the conscious mind that occur via the brain, specifically thinking that involves ideas and concepts, consistency of memory and systematization, show the qualitative gestures, which on introspection are seen to be reflected in the phenomena apparent in their physical instrument.

This raises another question. If devitalization is the essential relationship between thinking capacity and its physiology, organs other than those of the central nervous system may also be part of the physiology of thinking, i.e., all organs where physiologically catabolism is dominant. Consideration would have to be given to the degradation products, which may even be water-insoluble crystals, biominerals as we might call them.

The human organism contains metabolic products capable of crystallization and these crystallize to a considerable extent even within it. Bone substance is a case in point. Apart from calcium carbonate it mainly contains calcium hydroxyl phosphate as an inorganic compound. Structural x-ray analysis has shown that the lattice is the same as for inorganically developed crystals of the same compound. Once precipitated it has therefore dropped out of life. Its relationship to the surrounding metabolism is, however, very different from that of myelin sheaths in the brain's white matter. Their half life is relatively short, at least in the trunk and extremities. Individual trabeculae are consecutively resorbed into the blood, to crystallize out again in another site. The skeleton of the trunk is thus continually under reconstruction, with trabeculae not subject to pressure or tension always destroyed rather than created. As a result, the skeleton is always

in a state of best possible availability for a given situation (Fig. 7). Four weeks on a sickbed, when the supportive skeletal organ has been used relatively little, and trabecular structures, organized on static principles, will have been thrown into considerable chaos and become matted. Reuse will restore order within a few weeks, so that the minimum amount of material gives maximum static load capacity. The form and fine structure of the skeleton are thus continually created by its functions.

Fig. 7

Left: Section through hip joint. Trabecular structure of spongy bone tissue is arranged according to pressure and tension.
Right: Architecture of spongy tissue in lower extremity, pelvis to foot.[13]

Significantly, this applies above all to the appendicular skeleton and less to the head. The latter is not much subject to pressure throughout life but ossifies well in spite of this. Indeed the cranial vault ossifies while the developing child is still not subject to gravity, floating in the amniotic fluid before birth, and continues to do so rapidly during the first 18 months of life, so that the head will have reached 80% of its circumference by then. The axial, and especially the appendicular skeleton, is still largely cartilaginous at that time, catching up step by step on ossification with active use in the sphere of gravity. The last epiphyses only unite in the early twenties. Indeed, this skeleton is never finished. It continues to restructure, depending on use. The bones of the head, however, change very little.

It may seem strange to have such extensive somatic details presented in an educational context. Readers may have noted, however, that we have been considering something that bears the hallmarks of live, creative thinking. Let us return to this.

We have already described some characteristic aspects. This kind of thinking cannot be achieved at once, but needs an extended period of unceasing, often indeed tormenting, strenuous effort in working with the questions that arise. The fruitful moment of finding the new solution often comes as a surprise, taking one aback, because it comes quite suddenly from a totally different direction or is found at a completely unexpected level. It does not have to be like this, for the experience may also be of a dense fog lifting, when one has already had some idea that this might happen. In any case, the moment always involves the experience of things "clearing," with not only the problem area itself illuminated but also the surroundings. The fruitfulness of the new idea is seen in a panoramic view.

This cannot be the end of the process in which insight is gained. Two more steps must follow, otherwise the first two—effort and intuition—do not serve much of a purpose. The next step is to achieve the recall facility, which with this kind of thinking is distinctly more difficult. The individual concerned will often no longer know even a short time afterwards what had been so crystal clear just a moment earlier. As we said, people have more creative ideas than they think, it is only that they tend to forget them immediately. It is often necessary to retrace the whole route that led to the thought, doing so of one's own will in the soul sphere, before the crucial thought that had been discovered is found again.

A characteristic of contents that are difficult to remember is that they were conceived in the wordless realm. Words have to be found to put a name to the new discovery, or we may even say that it cannot be put in words. It will therefore also be necessary to bring those contents into thinking in words. Approximately the right words must be found to express what initially was beyond words and seems beyond speech. This may be done in an inner thought dialogue, by talking to someone else, or by writing it down so that it is available for future reference.

This is not all, however. Such thoughts in particular tend to have a kind of life of their own as time goes on. I am the one who is thinking them. But the part of me that maintains a questioning, searching attitude will make it possible for the statements made available piecemeal in the previous step to be broken up and melted down again, restructured and extended, so that they gain in potential and relate more and more to reality. The form into which the thought was first poured is also recast again and again. It grows as the individual grows in mind and spirit. More than an axiomatically certified thought-cosmos arises, more than a system, more than a philosophy complete in itself—a life of thought that again and again seeks to approach the reality of a world that is in continual metamorphosis, and finds it, thus entering into the sphere of practical life.

It may then also be assumed that important parts of the qualities perceived—that long, slow evolution of the problems, followed by clear intuition, momentary stability of content, followed by earlier thought forms breaking up and becoming fluid—have their organic substrate not only in the cerebrum but also in the skeleton. It may be especially in the part of it connected with locomotor function, the extremities. These not only maintain maximum flexibility throughout life but also show the gesture in the anabolism and catabolism of their calcium salts, that reflects continuous processes of living thought and understanding for practical life. The thesis does, however, call for some elucidation.

The connection between rational thought and cortical differentiation has not been in dispute since its discovery by phrenologist Franz Joseph Gall in 1922.[14] Today, the left cerebral cortex is believed to be connected with it, the right cortex on the other hand with the capacity to feel and experience. This does, however, call for more careful differentiation. The right cerebral cortex is the organ for feelings becoming conscious, so that we may know we have them. This in itself means a capacity to gain distance from one's feelings; it is not unreflected living in one's feelings. Similarly, the right cerebral cortex is merely the instrument for conscious awareness, not the mediator of feelings as such.

A more difficult assumption is that a connection exists between dynamic, intuitive thinking and the extremities. Apart from the above reference to the physiological gesture in the appendicular skeleton, it may help to consider sensory perception relative to the extremities.

Sensory perception may be observed at a number of levels. Let us take two of these, the physical and the psychological. Physically speaking, perception through at least the distant sense organs (eye, ear, smell, etc.) involves the effect of stimuli originating outside the body having an effect on sensory tissues (retina, basilar membrane, olfactory epithelium). The physical process and the chemical process which follows it within the body are centripetal, from outside to inside. Psychologically we have the opposite and complementary gesture. The world of our own inner awareness addresses itself more actively to the world content the more intense the activity of perception. The physical process is receptive, and all the more successful the closer the organism allows it to stay to its inherent nature. The intentional process is centrifugal, and all the more effective the greater our personal activity in directing will, attention, and interest. This also intervenes in the world around us, but more in the realm of conscious awareness, just as human beings use their physical organization for personal activity when they use their limbs to a purpose.

A close connection exists between limb organization and sensory organism. What they have in common is that like no other organ they connect the human being as a whole with something he is not, the surrounding world. The act of will, mediated by muscle in locomotion and taking effect, has its counterpart in the physically reduced functional sphere of the sense organs through which we also reach out into the world around us. In this sense, the senses are limbs which are reduced at the level of the physical body but augmented at soul level.

The potential objection that the above thesis excludes children with handicaps affecting locomotion from a more mobile form of thinking now becomes a question, which we feel has real meaning. Might one not observe if children who are spastic, for example, intentionally bring their functioning senses more strongly into play, as a kind of limb extension, so that this actually makes them even more the psychological basis for flexible thinking?

The educational aspect is of interest here. If the cognitive faculties of pupils are to be deliberately influenced, teachers face the task of normalizing the way human beings use their thinking capacities. Exclusive use of essentially brain-bound thinking means that the life of thought proceeds largely separate from the sphere of experience and real actions taken. Anything formally perceived will not by itself result in actions being taken. Insight and day-by-day activity are then so far apart that self reproach for not doing what one considers to be right will prevail in adult life.

The I is only able to identify with its thoughts and indeed actions if it has had a part in developing concepts in direct encounter with the world. The logic developed through practice, in actively meeting the world is of prime importance in child-oriented methods. Pestalozzi developed the beginnings of this.[15]

The arms and hands are constituted in such a way that the proportion of muscle and hence the ability to act out one's will increases much more, vitalizing the sensory functions that go through fingers and hands in the characteristic, feeling-imbued way. We all know what it means to be able to touch a sculpture not only with the eyes but also the hands. Perception is more direct and therefore stronger. A handshake makes a human encounter more committed, giving it warmth, than greetings from a distance that go via eye and ear.

What happens inductively via the organization of legs and feet? Contact with the surrounding world is much more intense even at a purely physical level. Unless we are resting we are in continuous contact with the tactile qualities of the soil through our feet.

Hands have the potential for making contact, but we are also able to keep our distance. With the feet, our relationship to the real world is greatly

concentrated, usually without the distant head sphere of awareness taking real note of it. It is the lower extremities, which are in continuous active encounter with gravity. Through them, we actually merge functionally with the demands of the surrounding world. Seeing a landscape from a car and walking through it on one's own legs is known to give a very different intensity to our experience of its reality. Not only the limbs in general, but the lower extremities in particular are organic preconditions for moments of learning and mental effort when we are able to come closest to reality.

Helmholtz wrote on the basis of his own experience that good ideas "will often enough enter slyly into the sequence of thoughts, so that we do not immediately recognize their potential. . . . In my own experience they would never come when the brain was tired, or sitting at my desk. . . . They would often . . . be there when I woke in the morning, something Gauss has also noted. But they would be particularly apt to come . . . when I was taking a leisurely climb through wooded hills on a sunny day." Gauss once described the wonderful moment when the solution came by saying that he actually knew it beforehand, adding: If one only knew how to get there![16] Careful observation had thus shown him that the conclusion, which comes at the end of the logical construct, is already immanent at the fruitful moment. The judgment which bears it out, with the thinker making the idea positively his own, also tends to follow. Yet it still needs conceptual clarification and fixing of the idea before we arrive at insights we are able to recall and use.

Practice to intensify sensory perceptions has the limb quality, which was characterized earlier as access to develop living understanding. The "conclusion," here primary, as concept-free connection with reality leads to judgments, and only these then lead to naturally evolved concepts that are close to reality and filled with life.

The Aristotelian logic of "concept ⩾ judgment ⩾ conclusion" thus needs to be complemented with its opposite, "conclusion ⩾ judgment ⩾ concept," which otherwise remains unconscious and unreflected, and has to be clarified concerning the condition of prescience.[17]

If a child is merely given a concept of what is right, and is then asked to act on this, intellectual distance is evoked and the action performed without the child identifying with it. Observation and the above analysis show that alienation from one's own body is existentially encouraged by this. Deep layers of the inner life such as will and feeling do in the long term either normalize or disintegrate vital organ functions, as has been shown in depth psychology. In the mid-70s, "school is unhealthy" was a general topic considered at least for a short time.[18] According to a representative poll of young people in North Rhine

Westphalia,[19] it is doubtful if, and to what extent, discussion of the topic proved helpful. Four-fifths of the 13 to 16 year olds questioned had problems at school. Many presented with psychosomatic symptoms such as digestive disorders, allergies, headaches, nervous restlessness, back pain, vertigo and difficulties in concentrating. forty-five per cent said they took headache remedies. One out of ten was taking cardiovascular medication, sedatives, or hypnotics. School certainly cannot be made wholly (or perhaps even primarily) responsible for this, but in view of the above we might nevertheless consider provision of an education that is more relevant to the body and seek to determine potential measures to be taken. We suspect that mental operations are in many respects interacting with the physical body and their effects are serious because they set the constitution for life at a time when the body is still pliable, in a process of growth and differentiation.

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Thoughts on the Idea of Evolution

compiled by

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from the writings of Wolfgang Schad, Rudolf Steiner, Jos Verhulst, Hermann von Poppelbaum, and Martyn Rawson

Translations by Arthur Auer

Preparatory materials for discussing the question: Is the human being an animal? (with major implications for questions on human freedom and morality).

The Idea of Evolution in Pedagogy:
Human Ancestors and the Development of Humanity

The discoveries [of the six million year old hominid *orrorin tugensis* and seven million year old *sahelanthropos tschadensis*] tell us that the shared and original ancestor of our close relatives the human-like apes and of human beings is, in fact, a mixed or combined form *(Mischform*). And this is indeed logical because the common primeval form (*Urform*) of this ancestor must have contained the potentiality for both directions of development. Both the lineage of apes and the lineage of humans arose out of this common ancestor's potentiality. The ancestor apparently possessed not only the potential for both, but also the capacity to impart form to both (*Formgebung*).

These oldest of recent findings of early humanity fit the portrayal Rudolf Steiner has presented of the ancestors that apes and human have in common. He put forth the following analogy:

> . . . [the separation of the animal forms was actually necessary to the human being. Each animal form which separated in bygone times from the general stream signifies that man had then progressed a step further. Imagine that all the qualities distributed throughout the animal kingdom were in the human being. He has purified himself from them. Through this man was able to develop further [Translator)]. If we take a muddy liquid and allow the gross matter in it to settle to the bottom, the finer part remains at the top. In the same way the grosser parts which man would have been unable to use for his present condition of development *have been* deposited like a sediment in the animal forms. Through man having cast out of his line of development these animal forms—his elder brothers, as it were—he has reached his present height. GA 104, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, Lecture IV, p. 81–82)

Thus, in this development the ape lineage developed out of this mixed form in one direction in which the human characteristics were lost and a coarsening occurred. And on the other side the development toward the human being entailed a purging of ape features and a purification leading to being human. Neither side develops from the other; instead both stem from the same common mixed form in which the trunk-limb parts of the body (*Rumpf-gliedmassenbereich*) become more humanized [upright] and the brain area still remains more animal-like for a long time.

Thus we can say: We have traveled through a shared development with animals that are closely related to us. And this development is achieved through an unmixing. And indeed one can still observe on both the human and ape sides that this process of unmixing is still not complete. The ape child manifests so much that is human. And every human being must ever and again strive to renew his or her true humanity.

Furthermore, are not human children in certain areas of life also superior to adults? To imagine a world of only adults is intolerable. The state of childhood brings an irreplaceable element of humanness into the world of grownups. What is it that we as parents and teachers owe the child? Aging in adulthood can entail the danger of lapsing into onesidedness, fixed attitudes, and inflexibility. However, in so far as we can recognize such tendencies in ourselves, we can overcome them inspired by children who embody unceasing transformation. Children are forever moving toward new, unpredictable shores. They show us how important the understanding of evolution is for modern people in general and for Waldorf pedagogy in particular. By nature, spirit is action and where spirit blows, something is always changing into the future. In beholding our children growing up, there lies a call to adults to be optimists. That indeed is the great value of understanding evolution.

Die Idee der Evolution in der Pedagogik: Menschenvorfahren und Menschheitsentwicklung by Wolfgang Schad, Professor and Director of the Institute of Evolution Biology and Morphology, University of Witten-Herdecke in *Erziehungskunst*, vol.9, September 2004, pp. 938–942.

Steiner on Child-like Wonder, Reverence, Openness as Higher Cognitive Faculties and Key to Retaining Our Essential Humanness

from *Practical Advice to Teachers,* Lecture 8, p 122-3.

You must have the ability to transform yourself [as teachers] in such a way that the children literally wake up in your lesson and that you yourself become a child with the children, but not in a childish way. . . . It is not a matter of becoming childish with the children in an external way; we must transform

what is more mature into something childlike. To be capable of doing this in the right way we have to look rather more deeply into the nature of man. We have to take seriously the fact that just with regard to his most important spiritual characteristic man becomes productive by retaining the childlike element all his life. We are a poet, an artist if we can always relive in ourselves the activity of the child with our maturer humanity. To be for ever a steady fellow, unable any longer to use in a childlike, an inner childlike way our thinking, feeling, and willing . . . is not a suitable mood of life for a teacher. The proper mood of life for him is always to be able to return to childhood with everything he experiences and with everything he learns. . . . He will return because with every new fact he will experience as much delight and intense joy as the child does when he perceives anew fact of life. In a word, it is the soul and spirit that should return to childhood and not the external physical manifestation. Then, too, a great deal will depend on the atmosphere that is created between teacher and pupils. It is right, for instance, if you speak about life and about nature in such a way that you take as much pleasure in it as the children themselves and are as much amazed as the children themselves.

Steiner on Evolution: Densification of the Human Spirit into Earthly Form

from *The Apocalypse of St. John* – Lecture Six, p. 108.

[Human beings] pass through a series of incarnations, as a result of which they develop slowly and rise from one incarnation to the next. Men trod the surface of our earth as true spiritual infants. Since the separation of the sun and moon from our earth they have risen to the present stage. All these souls will return in different bodies up to the end of the earth's evolution. Now if man were influenced by the sun alone he would have to pass in a single incarnation through all that he now goes through in so many. The right tempo comes into the many incarnations through the balancing of the forces between the sun and moon from without.

Modern man was gradually shaped during the period when sun and moon withdrew; the first germs of the present-day man were then created. That was at a time when man moved upon this earth not at all as he does now. You must not imagine that when the moon had just gone forth man moved upon this earth in a fleshly form as he does now. There appear first all the forms which had previously been there, as a repetition; and when the earth was liberated from the sun and moon it looked approximately like the old moon, even softer. And if a being with eyes organized like those of the present day had looked at the earth he would not yet have been able to see man. On the other hand, certain other

beings were there who were not sufficiently mature to await a later time. These had to take bodily form while the stage of evolution was still incomplete; so that some time after the moon's departure from the earth certain forms of the lower animals could already be seen physically condensed. Man had not yet descended, nor yet the higher mammals. Man was still a spirit being. He floated as a spirit round the earth and took into himself the finest substances from the environment of the earth. Then gradually he densified so far that he could descend to where the earth had already become solid and islands had formed.

Thus we see that the first men appeared comparatively late in the earth's evolution and at that time they had a very different constitution from the present man. I cannot describe to you the forms of those men which first crystallized, so to speak, out of the spirit. Although you have already heard much that is difficult to believe, you would be too greatly shocked were I to describe to you the grotesque forms of the bodies in which your souls were then incarnated. You would not be able to bear such a description.… The solid parts were only built into this human form gradually. There were originally no bones in the human body, even when it had already descended. The bones developed out of soft cartilaginous structures which traversed the human body like cords. These in their turn originated from quite soft substances, and these soft substances from fluid substances, these from airy—the airy from etheric and the etheric from astral which had densified from spiritual substantiality. If you trace it back you will find that everything material has originated from the spiritual. Everything is in archetype in the spiritual world. It was only in the Atlantean epoch that the bones, formerly merely indicated, actually developed in man.

If we look back and see how mankind has hitherto developed on the Earth, we shall find that this development of the future is quite in harmony with it [Lecture 4, p. 80–82]. Let us look back to the origin of our Earth after Saturn, Sun and Moon and a long interval had passed. The Earth then emerged anew out of the cosmic darkness. At that time, in the first part of the Earth development, there were no other creatures upon the earth besides man. He is the firstborn. He was entirely spiritual, for embodiment consists in a densification. Let us imagine a body of water suspended in space which, through a certain process, partially crystallizes into ice, first a small part and then the same process continually repeated. And now let us imagine that the small pieces of ice which crystallized fall from the body of water, so that they are now separated from the whole mass. Now, because each small piece of ice can only grow larger so long as it is in the whole body of water, when it has separated from this it remains at the stage it has reached up to that point. Let us imagine a portion of the body of water separated in the form of small pieces of ice; let us imagine that the freezing of

the water continues and at the next stage more water assumes the form of small lumps of ice; these again fall out, and so on, till finally a very large part is crystallized out of the mass of water and takes the shape of ice. This last has taken the most out of the mother-substance of the water; it has been able to wait the longest before separating.

It is the same in evolution. The lowest animals were unable to wait, they left their spiritual mother-substance too early and hence have thus remained behind at an earlier stage of evolution. Thus the gradually ascending grades of lower beings represent backward stages in evolution. Man waited until the last; he was the last to leave his spiritual, divine mother-substance and descend as a dense substance in fleshly form. The animals descended earlier and therefore remained at that stage. We shall see the reason for this later. At present we are interested in the fact that they descended and have remained at earlier stages of evolution. What, therefore, is an animal form? It is one which, had it remained united with the spirit from which it proceeded, would have developed up to our present humanity. But the animal forms have remained at a standstill; they have left the spiritual germ; they have separated themselves and are now degenerating. They represent a branch of the great tree of humanity. In ancient times man had the various animal natures within him, as it were, but then separated them off one after another as side branches. All the animals in their different forms represent nothing other than human passions which condensed too early. What man still possesses spiritually in his astral body, the several animal forms represent physically. He kept this in his astral body until the latest period of earth existence, and hence he could progress the furthest.

Man still has something within him which must separate itself from sensual evolution as a descending branch, as the other animal forms have done. What man has within him as tendencies to good and evil, to cleverness and stupidity, to beauty and ugliness, represents the possibility of an upward progress or a remaining behind. Just as the animal form has developed out of progressing mankind, so will the race of evil with the horrible faces develop out of it as it progresses towards spirituality and reaches the later goal of mankind. Thus in the future there will not only be the animal forms which are the incarnated images of human passions, but there will also be a race in which will live what man now hides within him as a portion of evil, which today he can still conceal but which later will be manifest. Let us make clear the chief thing that will appear by an illustration that may perhaps seem strange to you.

We must understand that this separation of the animal forms was actually necessary to man. Each animal form which separated in bygone times from the general stream signifies that man had then progressed a step further. Imagine that

all the qualities distributed throughout the animal kingdom were in man. He has purified himself from them. Through this he was able to develop further. If we take a muddy liquid and allow the gross matter in it to settle to the bottom, the finer part remains at the top. In the same way the grosser parts which man would have been unable to use for his present condition of development have been deposited like a sediment in the animal forms. Through man having cast out of his line of development these animal forms—his elder brothers, as it were—he has reached his present height. Thus man rises by throwing out the lower forms in order to purify himself and he will rise still higher by separating out another kingdom of nature, the kingdom of the evil race. Thus mankind rises upward. Man owes every quality he now possesses to the circumstance that he has rejected a particular animal form. One who with spiritual vision looks upon the various animals knows exactly what we owe to each one of them. We look upon the lion form and say: If the lion did not exist in the outer world, man would not have had this or that quality; for through his having rejected the lion he has acquired this or that quality. This is the case too with all the other forms in the animal kingdom.

Now the whole of our five ages of human development, the various cultural ages from the ancient Indian to our own, really exist in order to develop intelligence and reason and all that belongs to those two capacities and forces. Nothing of this existed in the Atlantean epoch [Tertiary Era]. Memory was present and also other qualities, but to develop the intelligence and what pertains to it, while turning our attention to the outer world, is the task of the fifth epoch. Directing our clairvoyant vision to the surrounding world we inquire: To what do we owe the fact that we have become intelligent? What animal form have we put forth from ourselves in order to become intelligent? Curious and grotesque as it may appear, it is nevertheless true to say that if there were not around us the animals which belong to the horse nature, man would never have been able to acquire intelligence.

In former times men were still aware of this. All the intimate relations existing between certain races of men and the horse originate from a feeling which may be compared to the mysterious feeling of love between the two sexes, from a feeling of what man owes to this animal. Hence when the new culture arose in the ancient Indian age, it was a horse that played a mysterious role in religious ceremonial, in the worship of the gods. And all customs connected with the horse may be traced back to this fact. If you observe the customs of ancient peoples who were still close to the old clairvoyance such as, for instance, the old Germanic peoples, and notice how they fixed horse skulls to the front of their houses, this leads you back to the awareness: man has grown beyond the

unintelligent condition by separating out this form. There is a profound consciousness that the acquisition of cleverness is connected with it. You need only remember Odysseus and the wooden horse of Troy. Such legends contain deep wisdom, much deeper than our science contains. The horse species is not employed in legend without reason. Man has grown out of a form which once contained within it what is now embodied in the horse; and in the form of the centaur, art still represented man as connected with this animal in order to remind him of the stage of development out of which he had grown, from which he had struggled free in order to become the present human being.

What thus took place in bygone times in order to lead to present mankind will be repeated at a higher stage in the future. It is not the case, however, that this would in the future have to run its course in the same way in the physical world. Those who become clairvoyant at the boundary between the astral and the devachanic planes can see how man continually purifies and develops what he owes to the separation from the horse nature. He will accomplish the spiritualizing of intelligence. After the great war of all against all, he will elevate to wisdom, to spirituality, what is today merely reason, merely cleverness. This will be experienced by those who then will have reached the goal. The fruits of what was able to develop in humanity in consequence of the separation of the horse nature will be manifested.

Steiner from *The Theosophy of the Rosicrucian* **(1907: GA 99)**

In the remote past, during his first incarnation the human being was entirely under the sway of every emotion and desire; true he had an ego, but he behaved like an animal … [a] wild man … [p. 25].

During the time when the Sun had already withdrawn and the Earth had not yet cast out the Moon, man was in a condition in which his astral body was the bearer of the most savage lusts, for every bad force was implanted in him and there was no counterbalance. After the separation of the Sun there was a globe in which, if one wished to express it today, the human beings were still entirely group souls, but of the most sensual order with the worst instincts. During this passage through a veritable hell, and under the influence of the departed pure Sun forces (not only of the physical sun, but also of the Sun-beings, who had withdrawn to the Sun) the recapitulating Moon gradually matured so far that it could throw out the terrible instincts and powers, and retain on the Earth whatever was capable of evolving. With the departure of the present moon all those sensual forces went away; therefore, in the present moon you have the remains, ‘in its spiritual significance, of all the evil influences which were at that time present in the human realm; and therefore too the moon is looked upon as having a detrimental influence.Thus it was everything capable of evolution that

remained on the Earth after the separation of the Sun and the Moon [pp. 118–123].

Let us consider first the animal-men themselves. They were gradually matured far enough for the Ego to be incorporated. . . . It is now for the the first time that the earlier swimming, floating position changes and man begins gradually to arrive at the upright position. His spine, his spinal nerve-cord, became vertical, in contrast to the completely horizontal position which it had during the Moon period, and with this rise into an upright position went parallel the widening out of the mass of the spinal marrow into the brain; and yet another development ran parallel with it. For the floating, swimming motion which man had both in the Moon period and during the repetition of the Moon period when the Firemist forces were still present in the environment, he needed a kind of swimming bladder, and this was actually a part of man's composition, as is the case with the fishes of the present day. But now the Fire-mist (we have called it *Ruach*) was precipitated. This took place quite gradually and slowly. The air, to be sure, was still filled with thick vapor, but the worst was precipitated and with this began the time when from a gillbreather man became a lung-breather. The swimming bladder was transformed into lungs. Through this man became capable of receiving into himself the higher spiritual beings, namely, the first rudiments of that which stands above the Ego-Spirit-Self or Manas. This metamorphosis of the swimming bladder into the lungs is expressed in the Bible in the wonderful monumental words: "And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." Here is expressed what had taken place in the human being during millions of years. And all the beings which we have learnt to know, the plant-animals as well as the animal-men of the Moon and their descendants during the Moon period of the Earth, all of them as yet had not red blood … the influence which came in then with the change in the breathing process, was supported by the introduction of iron into our evolution [through the influence of Mars]. This was of the utmost importance in our terrestrial evolution. Under these influences the human organism was perfected to the point of beginning to purify and refine the bodies which it had earlier received on Saturn, Sun and Moon. It began to work first, of course, on the body which had been last received, the astral body, and this purification of the astral body constitutes our present civilization.

If you could observe that human being . . . you would find him very dissimilar to the present human form . . . it would appear grotesque to the present day materialistic thinker. He had more or less the development of an amphibian, a reptile, which was just beginning to breathe through lungs, and from the former floating, swimming motion was learning little by little to raise and support himself on the earth. When we say that man in the Lemurian Epoch

had a mode of progression that alternated between a hop, scarcely to be called a step, and then a flight into the air, we have the nearest approach to some memory of it in the old Saurians. Nothing remains to be discovered by the geologist as solidifications or fossils, for the body was quite soft, it contained as yet no kind of bony structure. . . .

The beings on the Moon who were animal-men had divided into two groups, one of which had kept pace with evolution and taken on the human form. But, there were some who had not advanced with evolution. These are the present higher animals, they had stayed behind at an earlier level and since they could not share in the advance, they fell back more and more. All our present mammals are relics of the Moon animal-men who stayed behind. You must therefore never imagine that the human being was ever such an animal as those existing on earth today. The bodies of those animals were not at that time capable of receiving the I, the Ego; they had remained with the group nature of the Moon. The last which had almost achieved the additional principle of the earth, but which nevertheless proved later on too weak to be the vehicle of an individual soul, are the apes, the present ape species. They too, however, were never actual ancestors of mankind, but beings which had degenerated.

Thus in the old Lemurian Age [Mesozoic Era], the Earth was a kind of fiery mass, in which the modern mineral was for the most part dissolved and fluid, as is iron in an iron-foundry, and out of this developed the first mineral island masses. Upon these there wandered, half hopping, half hovering, the forefathers of man. . . . There still continued a magical connection between human will and the forces of fire. If the human being had a mild character, then through the will, he acted on the natural element of fire in a calming manner, and in this way more land could be deposited. The passionate man, on the other hand, worked with his will magically in such a way that the fire-masses became fierce and turbulent and tore up the thin earth crust. Now once more the whole savage, passionate power that was peculiar to man on the Moon and during the repetition of the Moon-period on the Earth burst forth in the newly arisen individual human souls. The passions had such an effect on the fiery masses that they became ungovernable; a great part of the land on which the Lemurians dwelt was destroyed, and only a small number of the inhabitants of Lemuria were preserved and could continue the human race. All of you were living in those times; your souls are the very ones which saved themselves from the raging fiery mass of Lemuria. The portion of humanity which had been saved, migrated ‘into the land which we know as Atlantis [Tertiary Era], and the main part of which stretched between the present Europe and America; from there the human race multiplied and spread.

From *Developmental Dynamics in Humans and other Primates* **by Jos Verhulst**

Although Bolk [Professor of Anatomy at the University of Amsterdam] and Steiner were contemporaries, they were active in completely different professional fields and apparently remained unaware of each other's work. [p. xvii] Yet the views they developed on the relationship between human beings and animals coincide remarkably. These views share the premise that the human being represents the original form, so to speak, from which animals not only developed but also diverged. The idea of the human being is central to animal evolution and manifests with increasing clarity as evolution progresses. In mammalian evolution the human being plays the role of something like an Aristotelian "final cause" or guiding factor . . . [a] hypothesis, which is present in seminal form in the works of Goethe.

From *Growing Young* **by Ashley Montague, Professor of Anthropology, Princeton University**

Louis Bolk, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Amsterdam . . . pointed out that compared with other primates, the rate of development of humans, from fetus through infancy and childhood into adulthood, is slow, and that adult humans exhibit many physical traits that are also features of the human fetus [p. 7]. This is not so true of the adults of other animals. He listed flat-facedness, minimum body hair, large brain size, structure of hands and feet, the form of the pelvis, and a number of additional physical characteristics that change in other animals but that in human beings persist into adulthood. In short, said Bolk, echoing Kollmann, "Man, in his bodily development, is a primate fetus that has become sexually mature." Bolk called this principle fetalization. Fetalization was effected by retardation of the rate of development.

The importance of this slow development, or retardation, was seen by J. B. S. Haldane, as it was by Bolk, as a major evolutionary trend in human beings. . . He underscored the fact that the essential feature of the latest stage of human evolution has been not the acquisition of new features but rather the preservation of embryonic and infantile traits that had been developed when the organisms were in the womb sheltered from violence. The retention of these features has enabled human beings, Haldane suggested, to shed much of their animalism; Haldane further proposed that if human evolution is to continue along the same lines, "it will probably involve a still greater prolongation of childhood and retardation of maturity."

The adults of the great apes-orangutan, chimpanzee, and gorilla-are all gerontomorphic forms [Gr. Geron—old man, becoming like an old individual, meaning extreme specialization of the adult stages"] … as are most prehistoric

humans up to the Upper Pleistocene, some thirty thousand years ago [p. 10]. Humans are born at an earlier stage of physical development than apes, and as they develop remain more like the immature infant than does the ape, the latter pursuing a more specialized developmental path. The human infant starts off by being born with a heavier body than the ape, and a head size that in proportion to body size is relatively the same as in the ape; but in proportion to their height the apes end up with a heavier body and proportionately smaller head. In other words, the apes diverge from what would seem to be the promise of their infant traits and develop instead toward gerontomorphy, whereas humans retain that early promise and continue to develop by stretching out their juvenility for many years. This is brought out . . . graphically clear [in a comparison of the] the skull. At the fetal stage …, the chimpanzee and human skulls are much more alike than they are at the adult stage…. The adult human skull departs far less from its fetal form than does the chimpanzee skull at the same stage of development. Indeed, when one superimposes a drawing of the human adult skull over one of a newborn human's, it is seen that the adult human skull for the most part simply represents an enlarged newborn's . . . [p. 12]. The juvenile chimpanzee resembles both human child and adult human. From such a juvenile chimpanzee it would require very few changes by neoteny [or paedomorphism] process whereby the fetal and/or juvenile traits . . . retained in later stages of development to produce a human form.

In paedomorphosis there is a displacement of ancestral features to later stages of development. Certain ancestral traits are, as it were, pushed off the end of individual development [p. 15]. As Julian Huxley put it, "Previous adult characters . . . never appear because their formation is too long delayed: they are lost to the species by being driven off the time-scale of its development." And, again, in another work, "The old adult characters may be swept off the map and be replaced by characters of a quite novel type." It is not that one trait is displaced from one locus to another, but that it is either wholly or partially discarded or substantively modified.

Young Chimpanzee *Adult Chimpanzee*

Photos in Montague [p. 14] and Poppelbaum [p. 8]

The capacity for learning is characteristic of the juvenile ape, to a comparatively limited extent, and to a much greater extent of the human infant and child. We see this most strikingly in the retention and development of the ability to play, the sense of humor, the ability to learn, the continuing growth and development of curiosity and inventiveness, and the remarkable uses of the imagination, the ability to make believe, traits that juvenile apes exhibit to a quite marked degree, but that fail to develop as they mature.… Educability is the outstanding species characteristic of humans. The juvenile ape is more educable than the adult ape [p. 62–64].

The greatest capacity for adaptability[is] plasticity—the supremely neotenous trait of humans. It is this very plasticity of mental traits that makes humans unique among the living creatures of nature [p. 77–78]. It is this plasticity, educability, that freed humans from the constraint of a limited range of biologically predetermined responses. The human became capable of acting in a more or less regulative manner upon the physical environment instead of being largely regulated by it. The process of natural selection in all climes and at all times has favored genetic constitutions that permit greater and greater educability and plasticity of mental traits. . . . It is by neoteny of plasticity, of maleability, adaptabilty, that the made-over ape [primate?] became Homo sapiens and it is upon the continued development of these same neotenous traits that his future development depends.

From *Man and Animal: Their Essential Difference* **by Herman von Poppelbaum**

The ape, in spite of his original resemblance to man, grows later on into the very physical image of astral body not penetrated by Ego, while man on the other hand visibly impresses the Ego into his bodily form [p. 80–81]. In the astral body the formation of the animal has its origin; outwardly the form as a whole, inwardly the formation of the organs. . . . Where this process of formation is carried to its conclusion, the animal nature is produced. In man, it is not carried to its conclusion ... it is drawn into the realm of a still further organisation, which we call the organisation of the Ego. Down to the smallest particle of his substance, man in his form and configuration is a product of the organisation of the Ego. This gives us the key to the morphological difference between man and animal; and at the same time it affords the simplest explanation of the divergent evolution of the two kingdoms: to become animal is to have been completely shaped by the astral body, to become man, means that the Ego has imprinted itself throughout the form. [The] remarkable postponement of bodily maturity must be recognized as the real foundation for the formative activity of the "I." The postponing of physical maturity leaves

room for penetration by the Ego—of which the completed organism is to be the image.

"The animal has wisdom in its organs, the human being has not; the human being must first acquire it through inner effort," [p. 87, Steiner, see similar thoughts by Goethe].

From *Developmental Dynamics in Humans and other Primates* **by Jos Verhulst**

Stephen J.Gould [Harvard Professor of Evolutionary Biology] comments: "… human adults resemble juvenile chimps and gorilla much more closely than adult great apes" [p. 2–3]. Gould further emphasizes . . . Scientists soon realized that young anthropoid apes were human-like in appearance [1987].

An independent tendency toward humanization is discernible in animal evolution; we see the human form merging ever more clearly from intractable organic raw material. . . . [p. 4] The human gestalt becomes ever more explicit as evolution progresses. In animals, the intial attempt at becoming human is overwhelmed by specialization, while humans remain true to the basic pattern.

This movement toward the human form is present in animal evolution from the outset [p.361]. As evolution progresses, the human prototype manifests more fully in the embryonic stages of organisms. However, the adult forms of these organisms diverge from their humanlike beginnings as they adapt to specific environmental conditions.

This process can be seen most clearly in the primates where the human form is almost achieved in the embryonic stage but is later lost as the apes mature. Only in the case of the human being does the human potential finally persist into adulthood. ln this sense, the emergence of humanity can be seen as the fulfillment of evolution's longstanding promise.

From *The Spirit in Human Evolution* **by Martyn Rawson**

Spiritual Selection

There is an alternative way of viewing human development and evolution that recognizes more than blind natural selection and selfish genes. This also goes beyond even the subtleties of the gene-environment feedback loop or the possibilities of gene-culture co-evolution. It includes the possibility that the individual can override such determining factors and influence his or her own development in unique ways. For humanity as a whole this alternative view suggests a spiritual-individualizing selection parallel to and interacting with the forces of natural selection. This spiritual selection is at the same time a progressive trend towards the emancipation of the individual from all forms of

determinism. As an evolutionary dynamic it has always been and remains a trend towards the expression and revelation of potential. This potential does not have its origin in a predetermined model but in a lived past, in a history. Ultimately it is also a trend that creates the possibility for the individual human being to free him or herself from the all cultural imperatives. It is a path of freedom and ethical individualism. This approach sees development itself as something more than mere change, adaptation and growth. It sees development as the progressive emergence of an inner determining principle encountering and striving to individualize what it has inherited and what it meets in the world in order to come to ever more coherent form, to ever more complete expression. This principle of being exists in the form of potential. It can only come to realized form by virtue of natural means. Being can only become through life and life can only manifest in physical, biological form.

This inner principle is spirit. Spirit comes to individualized form through the birth and development of human beings.

Human or Animal?

The question whether humans should be classified as animals or as a separate kingdom of nature is in many ways academic. Nevertheless, given the significance attributed to our human condition, it is necessary to provide an answer. The anthroposophical answer would be, Yes, we share physical, life, and sentient bodies with the animals, but the human being possesses an individual spirit that animals do not have. Animals have a spiritual dimension to their beings, of course, but this spirit is collective, rather than individual.

However, the knowledge we have today about the abilities of the higher mammals, such as dolphins, whales, and primates, suggests high levels of individualism within such collective spirits. So where do we draw the line between human and animal? Most of the traits that were once considered uniquely human were linked with the concept of culture but have now proved to be present to some extent in primates and especially chimps and gorillas. These traits include tool use and even tool making (with local cultural traditions), complex social and emotional lives (e.g., empathy, altruism, rules of conduct, diplomacy, and social politics), complex communication skills including the ability to pass on acquired skilled through demonstration and emulation, the ability to anticipate future events, even the ability to deceive. Recent studies of chimps (and other primates such as colobus monkeys and macaques) even show them to be capable of using plants with specific medicinal properties both prophylactically and in response to illness or injury!

We have to ask if humans possess anything more in kind than our animal cousins than simply more in degree. One key distinction is that whilst other

mammals are capable of consciousness, only humans are capable of memory. This statement obviously has to be qualified. Mammals, and no doubt other animals, can certainly recall situations; after all rats could hardly be trained to run through mazes and trigger all manner of feeding devises. But learning from painful or pleasurable experiences is not the same as memory in the full sense. To remember, one has to recreate a mental image of a certain experience. As far as we know only humans can do this. The reason for this, according to Steiner, is memory is an act of the "I" or Ego."

Consciousness, and we could also say sentience, is an attribute of the sentient body and soul (astral body in Steiner's terms), whereas memory is an activity of the " I." Forming mental pictures at will is the prerequisite for a whole range of higher faculties, including abstraction, an awareness of time and sequence, the ability to understand complex phenomena and having a sense of self. We have a consciousness of our own identity and that of others precisely because we can remember.

So what, in a nutshell, did Steiner believe his spiritual science could offer to the study of human origins?

Steiner's own version of monism sees physical and spiritual evolution as two confluent streams rather than as two parallel universes with only a one-way exchange from above to below, as is the case with most dualistic world views of the spiritual on the physical [pp. 90–93 Steiner and Paleo-Anthropology]. Steiner described a "two-fold descent of man," the evolution of the physical organism and the birth of the soul-spirit. The task of spiritual science is "to delve into the past with regard to the soul and spirit." He makes it clear that the relationship between spiritual science and natural science is complementary.

Now, anthroposophy does not lead to any conclusions antagonistic or contradictory to the facts advanced by natural science; only with the materialistic interpretation of these facts it can have nothing to do. With regard to human evolution, Steiner acknowledges the relationship of human beings with the higher mammals, with the anthropoid apes, but refutes the view that humanity had descended from the apes. Steiner's view is that both mankind and the apes are descended from a common ancestor: "What should be accepted is a primeval creature, a common physical ancestor, from the stock of which the ape has degenerated, while man has ascended." The common ancestor already possessed the "soul of man," that is, mankind had not only a physical ancestry but a "soul-ancestor," too. This "soul-ancestor" still belonged to "higher worlds" and thus "lacked the mental activity and moral sense now evident. Such souls could conceive no way of fashioning instruments from the things in the outer world; they could create no political states." The human soul-spirit in primeval times clearly did not express itself in cultural, technical, or individual ways. Its activity

"still consisted to a great extent in transforming the archetype of those ancestral bodies themselves. It labored at improving the incomplete brain, enabling it at a later period to become the seat of cognitive activities." Clearly this formative period saw considerable biological variety. As Steiner put it, "Figuratively speaking, we may say that the soul 'selected' a certain number of such ancestors as seemed best fitted for receiving the external corporeal expression distinguishing modern man."

Clearly we are dealing with more than natural selection, we have to reckon with spiritual selection as well! The capacity for morphological transformation of the ancestral species, or "reconstruction" as Steiner put it, was an expression of a spiritual principle. "Thus man is physically descended from the 'archetype' while spiritually he is descended from the 'ancestral soul.' " Not all of the branches of the genealogical tree quickened by the life-sap of the "soul-ancestor" were "capable of subjecting themselves to the soul's progress." One of the branches not selected to bear the human fruit "deteriorated, and is now represented by the anthropoid apes." Indeed, in Steiner's view the whole of animal evolution has been influenced by spirit coming progressively to a more complete form of expression. As he put it: "When our earth came into existence, man was a purely spiritual being; he began his career by building for himself the simplest of bodies. The whole ladder of living creatures represents the outgrown stages through which he has developed his bodily structure to its present degree of perfection." This is a radically anthropomorphic picture of evolution and one for which Professor Stephen Jay Gould would no doubt save his most eloquent ridicule. But perhaps I do him an injustice—he might show scholarly, if patronizing, historical interest in so quaint a theory! The Harvard evolutionist would be justified in disposing of Steiner in a cloud of ink if Steiner's vision were of an egocentric anthropomorphism which saw in mankind the pinnacle and goal of creation. But that was not Steiner's position. Humanity's unique position in nature is solely by virtue of human beings' possessing an individualized spirit.

The whole of nature is imbued with spirit, but what even the animals lack, despite their sentience and states of consciousness, is individualized spirit. In animals, spirit comes to expression at the species or group level. One could say, therefore, that species rather than individuals evolve. Humans, as a species, have also evolved but only individual humans evolve as individuals, what we would normally call individual personal or moral development, in other words, development of new faculties through their own active endeavor. Within limits animals can learn from experience, we may also train them as juveniles to perform certain behaviors, but we cannot say that animals develop themselves with conscious intention. The story of human evolution is an account of human

ancestors increasingly acquiring this ability, the ability to direct their own development.

Central to Steiner's account of evolution is the assumption of an inherent meaning in creation because he saw the world imbued with spirit. And that spirit comes to expression in life and in living beings at all levels of existence. It comes to individualized expression in human beings. Spirit too has evolved. The challenge of anthroposophy is to recognize the spirit at work in the living world and to do so with the very human faculties that have evolved in us. The challenge is to establish a science free of the limitations materialism imposes on human thought and to do so with the very means that uphold materialism itself—the human mind and its powers of perception, insight and thinking.

The unique position humans have in creation lies in the very fact that they possess spirit in individualized form within them and this gives them incredible power over the rest of creation. This power comes through our ability to think and manipulate the world. It has taken a long time to emerge but it has now well and truly arrived! Possession of such spiritual powers of thought is from where human freedom and responsibility come. To deny the existence of the spirit, or the individual human spirit, is to deny ultimate responsibility. From where does the materialist derive his or her sense of responsibility for nature? Merely from self-interest or rationality? That hardly suffices when it comes to tough choices.

The materialist can only choose egotistically. There is no true altruism for the materialist. There is no higher truth at all, only natural selection. In the somewhat dated terminology of 1905 Steiner concluded the lecture I have quoted from above, with the following thoughts: "Thus does the materialist mark the whirling atoms in stone, in plant, in animal and in man too, in every work of art, and claims for himself a knowledge of a monistic cosmogony that has overcome the ancient superstitions. Yet [anthroposophists] have a monistic cosmogony too, and we can say, in the same words that Haeckel uses, that we see God in the stone, in the plant, in the beast, and in man; but what we see are no whirling atoms, but the living God, the spiritual God, whom we seek outside in nature, because we can also seek Him within ourselves."

The God within ourselves is the highest principle towards which we can aspire. The core of our being is an aspect of this spiritual principle and it is this core that works through evolution. It is this spiritual core that gives life its meaning, and its trend is to manifest itself ever more completely. We can only act out of the reality of this principle if we act out of freedom, that is, free from all determining factors, whether external or internal. This state of freedom is not easily attained. Yet for the sake of the earth, for world evolution—not for the meaningless egotistical motivation of self preservation and the mere continuation of our genes—we must strive for this freedom. The human spirit is

the very antithesis of egotism, and egotism is the curse of materialism. Nor is this kind of spirit much of an intellectual comfort, more an open ended and expanding challenge of responsibility. The search for this truth is also a path that begins in wonder and leads into ever-deeper levels of reverence.

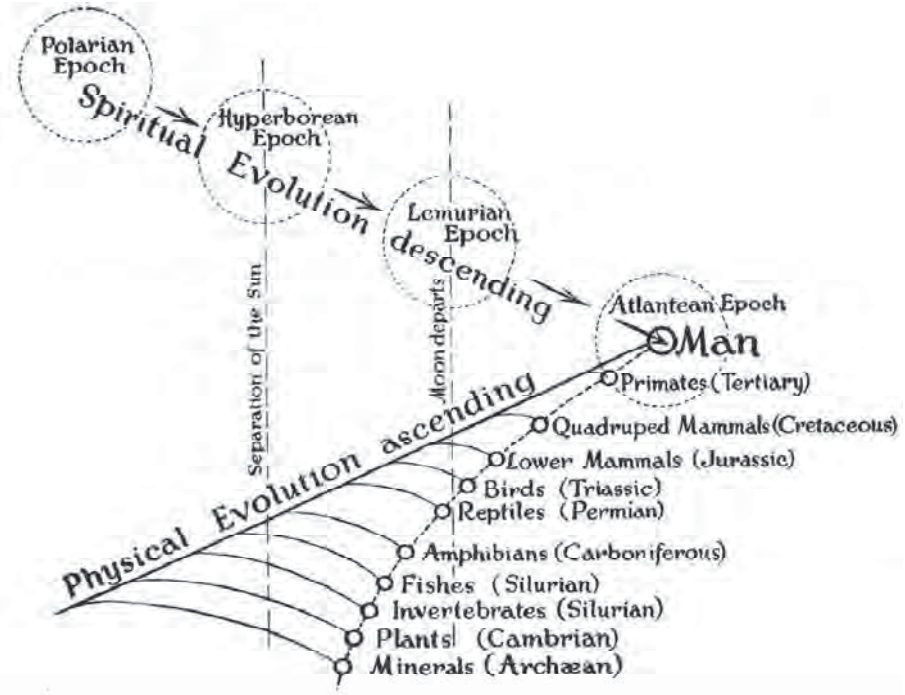


Chart from Poppelbaum's *Man and Animal*
Polarian –Azoic geological era, Hyperborean – Palaeozic, Lemurian – Mesozoic, Atlantean – Tertiary, Post-Atlantean – Diluvium (glacial drift) and Alluvium

In amphibians the primary sense is vision; in reptiles olfaction (smell) is more important. In most mammals auditory faculties are added to olfaction and vision. In primates olfaction is less dominant but there is a dramatic increase in stereoscopic and color vision [p.140] . Primates and other social mammals, and probably the large-brained cetaceans (whales and dolphins), have the faculty to create complex spatial mental-maps of their habitats as well as being able to keep track of the even more complex social behavior of their fellows. Hand in hand with the increase in representational ability goes the increase in possible behavioral responses, since more information gives more options. Animals with greater representational powers have greater freedom of behavior—indeed these two faculties must develop in tandem through reciprocal feedback. This gives us a good example of directionality in evolution, a trend towards greater behavioral flexibility and at the same time a progressive distancing of the animal from a direct relationship to its environment, since more layers of cognitive processing separate the animal from immediate interaction with the external world. This is a clear trend towards emancipation.

From *Developmental Dynamics* [pp. 339–341, **Jos Verhulst**

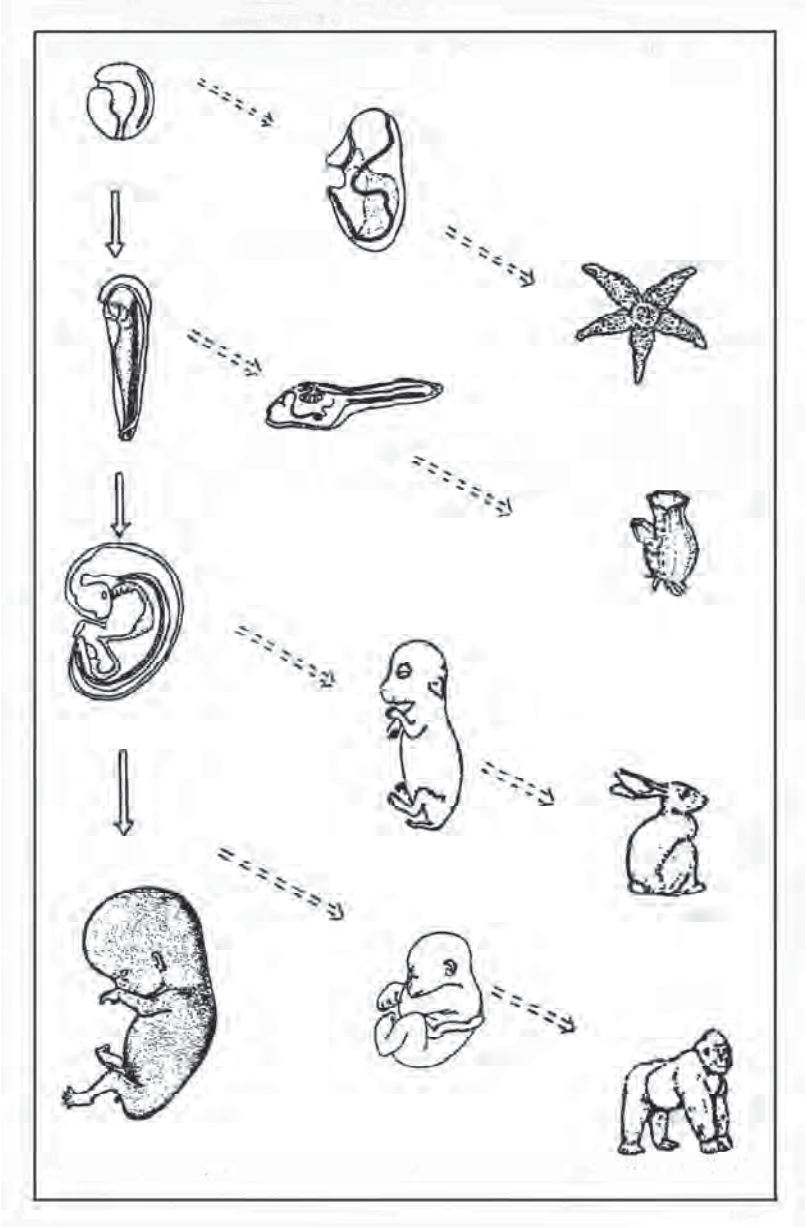


Diagram of the main line of evolution (beginning with the larva of an aquatic animal and ending with a human fetus) and its side branches.

[Note: Contemplating the embryonic forms in the left column of the chart above enables us to project our imaginations back to the main line of direct "unspecialized" ancestors the human spirit formed to gradually manifest and reveal itself.]

The column [down] on the left represents the evolutionary "mainstream," which displays minimal specialization but longer retention of traits from earlier phases. This sequence, rather than being seen as an actual line of evolution (since of course embryos or larvae are not descended from each other), should be

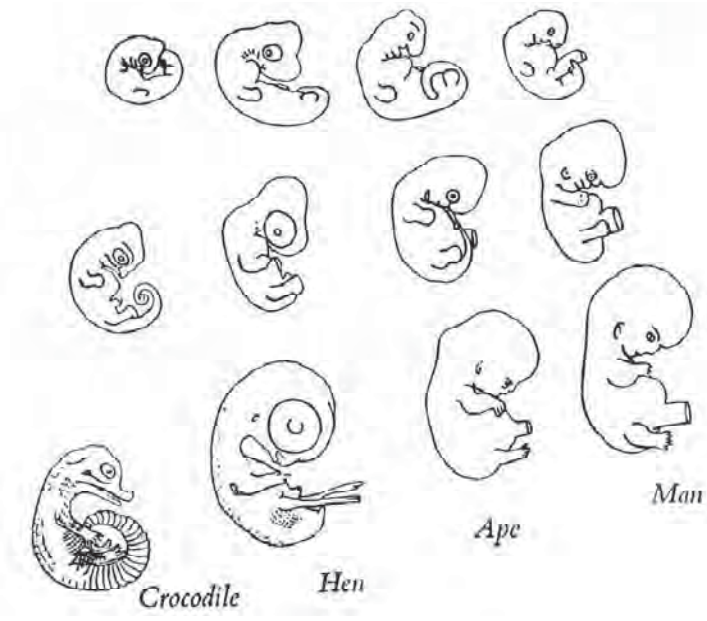
understood in the sense … that … the traits that appear first are more general and common, while more specific characteristics appear only later.…

Figure 176 depicts lines of animal specialization as branching off [across] to the right. (In each instance, both fetal or juvenile and adult forms are shown.) These lines of evolution constitute deviations from the mainstream. The earlier the separation, the more extensive the consequences.

[Row 1 across:] The mainstream evolves from a very simple form that is best described as that of an unspecialized marine invertebrate larva.…The specialized line that evolves from this form leads to the echinoderms and transforms the neural crests into the larva's organs of locomotion. The larva later undergoes a dramatic metamorphosis to become an adult echinoderm—a starfish, for example:

[Row 2 across:] … the next form in the mainstream can be characterized as an unspecialized tunicate larva that retains and further develops traits from the previous stage ... [Its] notochord exists not only in sea squirt larvae but also in the early embryonic stages of all vertebrates, where it serves as the precursor of the spine.

[Row 4 across:] …The higher primates, the last species to abandon the evolutionary mainstream, are the least specialized of all animals. Their fetal and juvenile stages include characteristics that did not emerge until late in the evolutionary mainstream … characteristics, which indicate that apes are descended from humanlike forms, are lost in adult specimens as a result of specialization processes.



Embryonal stages of the crocodile, hen, ape, and man compared, illustrating the law of retardation.

Bibliography
relating to such topics as Neotony, Paedomorphism, Fetalisation, Retardation, Heterochrony, etc.

See:
Poppelbaum – *A New Zoology*
Kranich – *Beyond Darwin*
Gould – *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*
McNamara – *Shapes of Time: The Evolution of Growth and Development*
Bromhall –*The Eternal Child*

Glossary
Heterochrony: An evolutionary change in the timing of development affecting the rate of development or the appearance of a feature in a descendant form; differentiated development of an organism, as opposed to a uniform development.

Retardation: A slowing down of development so that a feature or trait appears later in a descendant than it did in the ancestor.

Recapitulation: Passing through ancestral adult stages in embryonic and juvenile development of descendants. The "German Darwin" Ernst Haeckel postulated that ontogeny (the development of the individual) recapitualates phylogeny (the development of the speies)—see Gould's book.

Neoteny: The retention of fetal or juvenile traits into adulthood by retardation of developmental processes. Same as Paedomorphosis.

Paedomorphism: The retention of fetal or juvenile traits into adulthood by retardation of developmental processes.

Fetalisation: Bolk's term for neotony or paedomorphism. But with an emphasis on the retention of fetal traits.

McNamara's three major developmental trends:
Peramorphosis is a condition where growth or development proceeds beyond that observed in the ancestral condition;

Paedomorphosis is a condition where development does not reach the state observed in the ancestral condition

Hypermorphosis (a form of peramorphosis) is a condition where not only does growth and development surpass the ancestral condition, but growth and development proceeds longer than in the ancestral condition.

Shapes of Time: The Evolution of Growth and Development
by Kenneth J. McNamara, Senior Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology at the Western Australian Museum in Perth
Heterochrony refers to changes in the rate and timing of growth and development events or patterns. Besides genetic variation and natural selection, paleontologist McNamara argues that heterochrony plays a key role in the evolution, complexity, and diversity of the biosphere throughout Earth's history. He shows how changes in size, shape, and behavior during animal ontogeny have resulted in the speciation of, and general trends in, life forms.

Critical questions with which Waldorf teachers must come to terms:

Is the Human Being an Animal?

Is the Brain a Computer?

Is the Heart just a Pump?

THREE KINDS OF MILK

A TALE FROM THE SWISS ALPS

by

Conrad Englert-Faye

Translated by Nina Kuettel

A long, long time ago in the Hasli region of Switzerland, high upon the Breithorn Alp, a herdsman and dairyman was grazing his cows for the summer, just like he did every year. His name was Res. Every evening, when the sun started turning golden, he would run around jumping and shouting and crying out for joy so that the sound echoed loudly off the cliffs all around. But his singing was raw and ungainly and the tone was shrill and piercing. Because, you see, at that time the beautiful yodeling that we know today had not yet resonated through the Swiss Alps.

One evening, after the sun had sunk below the mountain tops and Res was finished with his jubilant shrieking, he went into the hut, climbed up to the hay loft and stretched himself out on his straw mat. He was very tired from the long day's work and soon he fell into a deep and peaceful slumber; but not for long. In the middle of the night he was suddenly awakened by a noise. It seemed to him that he could hear the fire sizzling downstairs. He rubbed his eyes and quickly slid off the mattress—and looked! But he just as quickly, and almost lame with fear, looked away again. My Lord, my Lord! What did he see!

God as his witness, there stood three strange men and they were just getting a fire going and had reached for the big, cast-iron kettle used for making cheese, and were hanging it up over the now crackling fire and starting to stir the embers to get the fire going more, even though the door was still barred and locked.

Res just wanted to call out: "What d'ya boys think yer doin' there?" The first shock of seeing them in the hut had now given way to anger. But then he saw what kind of gentlemen they were and the words died on his lips. One was a huge, solid man with a body like a tree trunk and a beard as scruffy as pine needles and fire-red and he had on a shirt like a dairyman wears. He was standing by the hearth and adjusting the big kettle. The second one brought water and firewood to the hearth, shoved a pile of wood on the fire and stirred it up from time to time so that the flames and sparks flew. He was a tall, haggard

man with black hair and a big mustache and he was wearing a green hunting jacket and had a leather bag hanging from his shoulder. The third one was a delicate, pale boy with a snow-white face, fine hair and eyes as blue as the sky. He was helping the big one prepare everything; carrying the pails of fresh milk from the side-room and emptying them into the kettle until it was full. Then the red one turned the hanging kettle around and around over the fire until the creaking noise made Res think the roof was going to collapse. But then, a cold shiver went up and down Res's spine (as if he was not already in a state of shock) and his hair stood up on end. Because when it was time to thicken the milk, the big man winked to the haggard man and he reached into his leather bag and sprinkled (the thunder rolled!) blood-red casein (cheese-starter) into the kettle and the big, red-bearded one stirred with all his might until the hut was shaking.

In the meantime, the pale boy had gone noiselessly outside and was standing before the hut. Just then, Res heard sounds and tones, singing, jubilation, joyful cries such as he had never heard in all his days nor would he have believed they were possible. "Yoholiohu yolihe yoholiloya" sounded forth from the hut into the darkness. The notes were powerfully thundered out to the rock formations and cliff walls, sometimes floating high up, sometimes deep down, sometimes soft, sometimes loud, so that they echoed back from the faraway glaciers as if a huge chorus was singing in unison. It was like being surrounded with vibrant song and sounds, and coming from the middle, the full tones of all the cow bells and the clear music of tambourines. Res had such a feeling of well-being, but at the same time such a tugging at his heart, that tears came to his eyes. It was just like that, just like I'm telling you.

Then the light-skinned one came back inside. He took hold of a long, curved horn, all wrapped round with stems and roots, that he had stood in a corner. He took it and went outside once again in front of the hut and let the sound go out once more into the starry night the same way as before only this time it went through the horn. The sound, the echo, the music, the song, the clang, I can't begin to tell you how extraordinary and how beautiful it was. One time it would thunder and shake and shiver just as when a gale blows through the gorge and bends the eaves. Then it sounded like a breeze rushing over the tops of the high pine forest. Suddenly it seemed as though one could hear the bubbling brook, the rushing stream, the quiet spring, or the tumbling waterfall pounding from a great distance. Another time it sounded as though the church bells were ringing or a whole herd of stately cows, wearing their bells, were peacefully grazing side by side. And he heard that the dairy herd was coming closer and closer to the hut to listen. Suddenly he felt as though his heart would burst. And tears of bliss and sweet sorrow ran down his cheeks.

While all this was going on, the giant had finished his work. He ladled and poured the liquid into three ready pans. But, oh miracle, in the one pan the milk was blood-red, in the other it was grass-green, and in the last pan, the milk was snow-white!

In that moment, the giant called up to Res: "Get down here, boy, and choose which you want, for your sake as well as our own!" Res was shaken to the bone and he felt like the blood was freezing in his veins. But then the pale one came back into the hut and looked up at Res with clear, blue eyes. So, Res took hold of himself and climbed down to stand before the three eerie strangers.

"From one of these pans you must drink, from whichever one you want. But think about it and choose well," said the red-bearded one in a voice like thunder.

"Look here, if you drink the red then you will be strong all the days of your life and courageous, too. No one will be able to stand against you. You will be master of all on the Earth and can take anything you want by force. No man will be able to defend himself against you. You will be both lord and judge. And, above that, I will give you one hundred wonderful red cows—tomorrow they will already be grazing on your own mountain. And I will give you brown horses and in the valley, a big, beautiful farm with fields and meadows, forests and orchards. Now choose, and take what is yours!"

Res felt a prickling and stinging in all his limbs at these words. Then the green-jacketed man with the mustache stepped forward and spoke in a harsh, almost rusty sounding voice: "Drink from the green pan! Aren't you already strong enough and can lay all your wrestling opponents on their backs? And what do you want with a hundred cows? One gets sick, and soon you'll be off to the market with all of them. I'll offer you something that will last. I will give you the ability to buy everything that strikes your fancy. And you shall be the richest in the land and honored like no other. You shall become the best sharpshooter of all the valleys and be a feared and famous warrior in foreign lands. Princes will crawl for your mercy. The whole world will be yours! Look here and listen how it will be!" And with that the green one emptied his bag: countless shining gold and silver coins poured forth until Res felt his eyes grow fuzzy, his ears begin to ring and all his hairs were bristling.

While all this was going on, the blond boy had been standing in the darkness and leaning on his horn as if lost in a daydream. Now, he lifted his eyes and spoke in a tone as pure and full as a silver-clear bell. His cheeks blushed like the alpine roses on the cliffs and his eyes shone bright: "If you drink out of the white pan, then I will give you my voice, my songs, and my alpenhorn. And tomorrow morning, when the sun comes up, you will be able to sing and yodel and play the alpenhorn just as you heard me doing it. And whomsoever hears you will be of

such joyful heart at the sound of you that they will not forget it their whole life long. You will be precious to God and all people!"

"It's the white'un fer me," shouted Res. And he held the pan lightly up to his lips and drank the good, fresh milk.

"You chose well," spoke the pale boy, "if you had chosen otherwise, then you would have become lost until your death. Hundreds and hundreds of years would have gone by before I could have offered my gifts to another human being. God was with you and encouraged you in your heart."

And all at once, the three disappeared. The fire in the hearth went out and without realizing it, Res was lying again on his straw mat and sleeping soundly as if nothing had happened. When the sun rose and the birds started twittering and whistling, Res awoke and thought it had all been a dream. But there, in the corner, was the alpenhorn that the pale boy had given him. Res was out of the hut in a flash, stood in the middle of the alpine meadow where the herd was grazing and began to sing and yodel and blow. And what do you know, there came all the cows and ordered themselves in a row and the wildest among them became tame and allowed Res to milk her. And however he tried it, soft or loud, he could sing and yodel and blow the horn just as the blue-eyed one had done it the night before. And from the mountains to the valleys his music echoed to the people, hypnotic and wonderful as the rushing of the rivers and streams or the whispering of the wind through the forests or the thundering of the waterfall from the mountain heights, so that the people who heard it never forgot it their whole lives through.

The cows were reminded of an inborn knowledge how to order themselves into rows at the sound of the yodeling and horn-blowing on that very morning and it has been passed on to each generation to this very day. And the alpine herdsmen have never forgotten how to play the alpenhorn and yodel from the tops of the Swiss Alps.

Translators note: The tradition of playing the twenty-foot long, curved wooden alpenhorns and yodeling from the high mountain peaks is still active in Switzerland today. It is not only done for entertainment or, as in earlier days, to bring in the cows for milking. Many times the music sounds forth from a lonely peak as a blessing for the valley region below and a prayer to God that He continue to protect this beautiful alpine region known as Switzerland as He has for so many centuries. And, it is true that once one has heard this eerie, uncanny, but very beautiful music echoing down from a mountain top, one does not forget it.

Waldorf Education in South Africa

A report on the work of the Hague Circle – May 2005

by

James Pewtherer

> *There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbrooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa.*
>
> – Alan Paton in *Cry, the Beloved Country*

That this country of South Africa would be beautiful, I had no doubt. That it would be so stunning was beyond anything I imagined. It is a society of many colors, of eleven official languages and of almost 45 million people, 35 million of whom are black. Every conversation we had inevitably made reference to the 1994 election as the turning point for what South Africa is to become. Numerous times, we heard, "Everyone who lives here is a South African." Everywhere, we met hopefulness. From the white people who now find themselves as the disadvantaged ones in seeing that their grown children cannot find work; to the mixed race people (the so-called coloreds) who wonder if they are now invisible to the black government leaders; to the blacks who strive to become part of the middle class; there was always an optimism that South Africa will be different than any other country in the world.

There are signs everywhere that this may be the case. It is a country in which a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" invited people to come forward to admit and apologize for their politically motivated crimes so that clemency could be granted. It is a country in which then newly elected President Nelson Mandela insisted that the national anthem would include the music and words of the Afrikaner anthem of the former oppressive regime. It is a country in which 600,000 simple new houses have been built and sold at affordable prices to the residents of the shanty towns known as the "townships" so that comfort could also be theirs. It is a country in which the national rugby team, called the "Springboks," a symbol to many of apartheid, won the world rugby cup in 1995 and was awarded that cup as the team of all South Africans by Nelson Mandela dressed in a Springboks' jersey over his suit.

There are problems, to be sure. Crimes of property are of epidemic proportions in some areas. Many homes of the more than four million whites are surrounded by walls or spiked fences topped with razor wire. Unemployment is

as high as 40%, nine million adults have had little or no schooling, some seven million people (as of 1996) are in "informal housing" (read: "shantytowns"). Laws which aim to wrest economic control out of the hands of rich whites have led to the flight of many in the professions who no longer can find work. HIV/AIDS is ravaging the poor black communities. As an example, 25% of the black teachers and 30% of black mothers in maternity wards are HIV positive. There is a long history of European aid projects which crumble after the sponsors leave because the local people have little ability to sustain the results due to poverty, lack of initiative, and years of being culturally crushed by the white minority.

Yet it is also a country of potential for the Waldorf community locally and worldwide. There are seventeen Waldorf schools and many childcare centers around the country based on Anthroposophical ideas of child development. Five of the schools are more established, some having existed and survived the apartheid years in spite of admitting some children of color to their classes. The others are newer, many having ventured into or near the townships where poverty and crime is still rampant.

This report can only be a snapshot of Waldorf education in a country which is more than twice the size of Texas, but I hope that it will be one which will provide some of the colors and hues of this lovely land.

The Hague Circle gathered 20 of its 25 members for its first meetings outside of Europe since it was founded in 1970. As we do twice each year, we met to discuss Waldorf education, the needs of children, and the life in some of the 894 schools worldwide. We also met with the Council of the Federation of Waldorf Schools Fellowship (South Africa). We met with the Assistant Director of the Ministry of Education for the government and two of his staff to hear about the history and present condition of schooling in the country. We led conferences for the SA school communities and for SA Waldorf teachers. We discussed the HIV/AIDS epidemic with the daughter-in-law of the late African National Congress leader Walter Susulu. She is a Waldorf parent and an AIDS specialist in Southern Africa for the UN. We split up our group to visit and work in the 17 schools and also to observe in numerous Waldorf childcare centers in the townships. All this took place over a ten-day period in the first part of May 2005.

Waldorf Education in a Land of Change

South Africa confronts the Western visitor with a mixture of first-world amenities and third-world challenges. The media play up the violence, but the fruits of colonialism show themselves most often in crimes of property, not crimes of person. This is not a European culture, so the solutions for such crime

come more through unique laws which seek to correct the imbalance of 42 years of the racist policy called apartheid ("separateness" in Afrikaans) than anything found in the West. Educational policy is also a mix of approaches. On the one hand, first world approaches (high-stakes testing and a national curriculum) have been laid on a third world infrastructure (classes of 130 children, shockingly low salaries, 11 official languages, some teachers who cannot pass a fourth grade literacy and numeracy test) which is stressing the educational system. On the other hand, the new government showed its resolve in 1994 when it sent out 40 teams into the world to research the best education for the country. Waldorf education was the choice of the commission receiving the team reports, but the government decided that it did not have the budget to finance Waldorf schools for the entire country. Instead, it chose, as second best, what it sees as a "child-centered, outcomes based" method for its 27,000 schools.

The Waldorf conference we held in Cape Town of teachers, childcare providers, parents and board members opened with an African welcome. This consisted of a performance by some 25 mostly black teachers in the richly-colored clothing of the tribes of this land. Singing, dancing, and rhythmically showing all gathered the inspiring music and harmony which lives in this culture, these Waldorf teachers showed some of what they bring to their work with children. Later, some of them spoke about their commitment to this education and what it is doing for the children in their care. They can see that it works.

Yet this is in many ways a non-Western culture, right down into the way people think. For instance, the grammar of the Xhosa language does not separate the pronoun "I" from the verb. The very form of "I" changes when the deed is done. Perhaps one can appreciate the implications when the will is intimately and openly part of the "do-er" and when the effects of the deed clearly affect the one doing it. Once I've done something, I am not the same "I" that I was before. This, it seems, is much more evident to the Xhosa people than it usually is to us.

So, too, teacher trainers must learn to work with a consciousness which is not easily engaged by the too-often dead intellectual concepts of the first world. Even to delve into the intricate constructs of *The Study of Man* is not easily achieved. This asks us in the Waldorf movement to bring Rudolf Steiner's ideas in a living-enough way that they will speak to the African soul. The reality of Waldorf education already speaks to these black teachers; these women we met know that the education is "right" for their pupils and right for the young children for whom they care in the townships. Yet it does not necessarily conform to the national curriculum promulgated by the government, in spite of the appreciation of Waldorf education by some levels of government. Waldorf schools are as important in South Africa as anywhere, but how can they justify their differences

from mainstream educational approaches in a society which is trying to eliminate the vestiges of separate but equal?

In this light, the three challenges identified by the leaders of the Waldorf school movement in South Africa can perhaps be appreciated by our first world readers of this report. These challenges are:

- How to operate as free schools without the appearance of being elitist, "segregation academies?"
- How to mitigate first-world testing demands on students when there is only third-world financial support for education?
- How to find the most effective Waldorf teacher-training approach for teachers of different cultural backgrounds and learning styles.

South African Waldorf Schools and Programs

(Here follow a few glimpses of what we met in the schools.)

The Kindergarten to seventh grade Waldorf school in **Lesedi** is in a remote region about three hours (much of it on dirt roads) northeast of Johannesburg on the high plateau in the north of the country. There, the residents of this traditional village are all black.

The people are enthralled with their Waldorf school (all South African elementary schools end at class seven in SA).

The visitors from the Hague Circle were greeted with a traditional Xhosa dance in costume and song of welcome and by the village dignitaries. The children in the school are warm and affectionate with each other and with their teachers. Picture if you can, a class of kindergarten children led into a class by fourth grade children with a gentle protectiveness that touches the heart. The little ones sit around the walls of the eurythmy room in absolute silence with rapt attention as the fourth graders do eurythmy. At the end of the class, the fourth graders spontaneously take one of the younger children under their care and lead them back to their teacher in the yard.

The **Inkanyesi Waldorf School** is in the Alexandra Township, an all-black area of a very different nature adjacent to Johannesburg. Here, the school began in a rough barrack-like building which has gradually been supplemented by brick buildings in the fenced compound. A guard is posted at the rolling iron-picketed gate. The classes run in size from about 15 to 25, and the children are met with confidence by their teachers. The teachers hold a non-denominational chapel service (the Free Religious Service for children given by Rudolf Steiner) every Thursday morning which is gratefully attended by the children from all classes Kindergarten to Class seven. A Man and Animal block here can include

an uncanny yet vibrant presentation of an animal, each done by a child in a unique way.

The teachers are very poorly paid as the government subsidies are small and few parents can pay much to supplement this. Government money also brings inspections and sometimes the turf battles with low-level civil servants over the Waldorf approach in light of the national curriculum. Contributions from Europe make up some of the shortfall. Absenteeism is a problem mostly due to the parents' own life struggles, but the children are sorry to miss a day.

Roseway Waldorf School, K-13, is near Durban in the east on the Indian Ocean in the province of Kwazulu-Natal. It is in the Valley of a Thousand Hills where morning mists often fill the valley floor, leaving only the hilltops to be seen. Here, Zulu is the main language spoken by the native black people. It is predominantly a school with white and some families of color, all of whom seem devoted to their school. Roseway has benefited from the gift of a lovely hilltop farm overlooking one of the "thousand hills" of this region and some charming buildings have been erected on the land. The climate is mild with warm days and cool nights in the late fall and winter, often with morning mists. Lively teaching is found in the classrooms, some of which sit in a circle surrounding a grassy courtyard.

The children and high school students have a warm and friendly attitude, the high school parents are concerned about their children's fitness for the job market (very similar to what one might find in a North American high school), yet the school is growing. Though employment prospects are rather dim, the degree of optimism and patience for what is possible shines through.

Hague Circle Discussions

(As we do in each meeting, reports and discussions about the world Waldorf movement brought very interesting exchanges and exploration; a sampling follows.)

"Waldorf schools squeezed from two sides" served as a topic to help us to take stock of the present conditions of the education. Rudolf Steiner wanted the first school to serve as a model for new schools, not as simply a curiosity. That the world list now includes 894 schools is a testament to the broad appeal of this education beyond central Europe. Yet we recognize that there are weakening effects coming at the schools from two sides today.

The first effect is due to the growing gap between the wealthy and the poor and the resulting squeeze on the middle class which provides so many of our pupils. The cost of schooling in a Waldorf school risks becoming so high that increasing numbers of our families will not be able to afford it. The second

effect, related to the first, shows itself in the choice of course offerings and their manner of presentation which aim to have students perform well in mainstream academia. Too often, this is at the expense of those courses which aim for building human capacities over the long term. The choice of courses and especially the methods used to teach them comes about, often unconsciously, when we try to make our schools more attractive (read: more like high-fee prep schools which will bring in higher tuition fees). That Waldorf schools should be subject to these pressures is understandable. Our concern is that there is too little debate in faculty meetings when such decisions are made.

We ask ourselves in the Hague Circle how we can aid in the development of a "rights life" for spiritually free education through out the world. Should the Circle add such a task to its founding principle of furthering the spiritual tasks of Waldorf education? Clearly, these challenges to our schools is intimately bound up with the failure to further the threefold ideas which are such a part of our work today. More work on this needs to be done both in individual schools and in the Waldorf movement worldwide.

Euro-centric education is one criticism which is sometimes leveled at our schools. Especially the history and literature in the Waldorf school can come in for this kind of complaint. Yet we begin to better understand our work if we see that our task is one of working with and countering what might better be termed a "Western-centric" or "Modern-centric" world view, rather than Euro-centric. This topic of Euro-centrism has been raised in many conversations in many schools outside Europe over the last years. It also was raised in South Africa where there
are so many cultural traditions. As we addressed this question in the Waldorf conference mentioned above, I will share some of the thoughts which were voiced and some of my own reflections.

The engine that is driving many of the citizens and most of the governments around the globe today is what might be termed the dominance of economic considerations. Whether we think of artistic, spiritual, scientific or simply human endeavors, the sphere of economic activity is in danger of eclipsing all of them. Behind this economic kind of reckoning is the materialist thinking which is the hallmark of the modern world and our times. It is this thinking which is truly pushing itself to be *the* central factor in addressing the human condition today. Always in need of balance by spheres of the rights life and the cultural life, materialistic/economic thinking left to its own will become self-centered, even selfish. It would be more accurate, it seems, to see that our culture and our world is dominated by this most-Western of world views, that is, a "Western-centric" world view rather than a European one. This modern view and the consciousness

which gave it birth is the fruit of the historical development of the way of thinking fostered since the 16th Century in Europe. It has now further developed in the West and spread to many countries around the world.

The Waldorf school aims to address this one-sided thinking through examining its roots (really it is our roots as modern people), putting it in the context of other cultures and ways of thinking through geography, literature and history, among other subjects. At bottom, it is this thread of the development of modern consciousness which we follow in the Waldorf school. We do this in order to recognize both its historical necessity for the attainment of human freedom even as we teach other ways of thinking and engage in other activities (artistic, service projects, outdoor education) in order to balance it.

If we recognize the need for human beings to go through the "eye of the needle" by coming to the self-recognition that one-sided thinking is inherently unhealthy, then we can understand the curriculum indications of Rudolf Steiner. The curriculum which he developed (and which we must continue to elaborate), must trace the path of human development and consciousness which has led us to where we are today. Yet it must also cultivate the other qualities important to the social life and the cultural life so that our students will be healthy, balanced adults. The curriculum with which we work is not Euro-centric, but rather designed to give the students the understanding to work in and change society. We must begin with where the students are so that they can become more than a mere product of contemporary society.

Some final thoughts

I hope that the mix of joy, satisfaction and humbleness that we all felt as visitors to this wonderful land has come across. This trip provided myriad examples of the universality of Waldorf education and the anthroposophy which informs it. I hope that you, too, can perceive that each of us who has chosen to work with children in this way, wherever we are in the world, is truly making a difference.

A South African Elegy

An orange moon
glowing over Thaba Nchu
and in the wind a promise of rain.
The smell of smoke and of cow dung
lingering around the huts,
where the fires burn,
and the cry of a night bird
hovering in the air,
a question without an answer.

It's a colorful country, they say,
it's a colorful country
if you don't mind the pied crow.

The depths of a silent universe
and the Milky Way, those webs of light
in the cricket-shrill African night –

NO! No more rhymes to beguile you!
Don't touch the strings of the harp!
Keep away from the flute
in a country that's out of tune!

A hoarse croak on the High Veld.
Beware of the crow, the pied crow!

They say there are spies everywhere;
the dove on the housetop may be one,
the sparrow in the gutter ready to give you away.

0 the shadow of the pied crow –
dimming the light of the sun,
poisoning the milk
in the full breasts of young mothers,
scaring the child in the kobo
and making young men
clench their fists in frustration,
keeping husbands away from their wives,
stirring up bitter questions.

Beware of the crow, the pied crow!

The clouds break
and the waters fall like a curtain.
0 the wild sweet smells
the rains beat up from the ground!
My heart is as parched as the earth.
Wash it, rain, wash it,
wash the salt in my eyes away,
drench me down to the roots of life.

"To see we have only to look;
I beseech you to look."

Life is a bushbuck,
leaping out of the forest
and darting back to it,
making your heart beat and break.

Somewhere in a hut
an old man Iying on his sleeping mat,
and Death on the doorstep
calling "go-go,"
his brown face even darker
with the shadows of death.
There he is lying,
wondering about Heaven,
if there is a door
"Whites Only."

– *Margarethe Mehren, South Africa, November* 1973

Explanations:

Kobo in Sesotho is the blanket in which a mother carries her baby tied on her back.

The Pied Crew: A South African crow that is black but for a ring of white feathers around its neck, the most vulnerable part of its body; here I use this crow as a symbol of apartheid, imposed by a white minority on the black majority.

"Go-go": The sound one makes before entering an African hut. It replaces the knocking at the door. Here it has a double meaning as it can also mean the English word "go," death calling that it is time to go.

Encouragement for Sculptural Modeling

by

Peter A. Wolf

Translated by Arthur Auer, M.Ed.

*A lecture held at the Craft Teachers' Conference of German Waldorf Schools in Mulheim/Rühr on March 28th, 1999 (*Artistic Feeling for Form: Developmental Suggestions for Early Modeling*)*

Many class teachers find sculptural modeling (*plastisches Gestalten*) to be difficult to do regularly or at all with their students. Frequently responsibility for this activity is given over to art specialist teachers. This can mean that students only begin to model in the ninth grade in high school. Modeling is felt to be messy and dirty, and Rudolf Steiner's statements on the pedagogical justification and vital importance of this artistic activity are often overlooked or ignored.

These few short provocative comments should already indicate that what we have here is basically a problem of will and courage. And yet we have at our disposal a quite sufficient wealth of warm, enthusiastic insights and basic knowledge to fire up our wills and inspire us to model again with our children.

Curriculum Overviews can Be too Abbreviated

The research document *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools* by Karl Stockmeyer provides a few scanty generalizations as preliminary information on the subject. They appear, however, as rather abstract and are therefore not especially encouraging. The second half of this book offers a few summary statements on modeling:

- The child should start modeling at the age of 9 or 10,
- The child should be taught to feel and follow the malleable forms with the hollow of his/her hands,
- Forms should be made purely for form's sake,

- The child should only discover afterwards similarities with outer material objects, and

- A real knowledge of the forms of the human organs can awaken a desire in the child for modeling which, however, should not become mere copying.

Such indications call for us to consider and study them in the actual contexts in which they appear in the various pedagogical lectures. Only then will they lose their abstractness and reveal, contrary to Stockmeyer's opinion, that there are actually many indications. They have only been "forgotten."

Basics out of Form-Feeling

In the "Second Curriculum Lecture" (in *Discussions with Teachers* p. 198, GA 295, September 6, 1919) Rudolf Steiner outlines the subject matter for lessons in the grades. Just as geometric forms are to be developed in grades 1–4 out of form drawing and the fundamentals of painting introduced, so elementary aspects of sculptural activity are also to be practiced. The *zugemessene,* expressed importance, of this subject and its learning goals are made clear:

> We continue this (fundamental artistic work in grades 1–4) by moving on to three-dimensional, malleable forms, using plasticine if it is available and whatever else you can get if it is not—even if it's mud from the street, it doesn't matter. The point is to develop the ability to see forms (*Formanschauen*) and sense forms (*Formgefuhl*, form-feeling).

In the same context with the development of form drawing out of basic elements, modeling can:

> awaken in the children the feeling for form before the urge to imitate outer objects awakens. . . . Do not let children imitate anything until they have cultivated their feeling for independent forms which can be imitated later. Stick to this principle even when you move on to a more independent and creative treatment of drawing, painting and modeling (*Bildnerischen* not translated and omitted in the 1997 English translation).
> ("Second Curriculum Lecture," *Discussions with Teachers*, p. 199)

In "The Third Curriculum Lecture" is a brief and unequivocal statement advocating early modeling:

> Sculptural modeling should begin before the ninth year: first spheres, then other forms, and so on. Also with modeling one should work entirely out of the forms.
> (*Discussions with Teachers*, p. 178)

That the modeling Steiner had in mind does not consist of simply making "balls"or "spheres"will be shown in the end in this lecture (*zum Schluss gezeigt*).

Steiner returns to this idea of penetrating a changing, metamorphosing form with one's feeling life (*des lebendigen Einfuhlens in die werdende Form*) rather than a copying or imitation of finished, fixed forms in more detail in "Lecture One" of the course *Practical Advice to Teachers*. Just as with form drawing, the main point of the modeling activity is to experience and understand it as a process of transformation by "inwardly growing together with and into the form itself. The similarity with an outer object may be seen only afterwards. The capacity to experience and work with the "inner laws of sculptural formation," as Steiner characterized them, cannot be awakened through external imitation. This capacity is optimally developed between ages 7–14. After this time, the ability to acquire this capacity wanes and dies. When it is not developed at the right time, according to Steiner, "human beings have a more difficult time mastering life's struggles." To help us experience and understand the sculptural process, he provides a methodological insight: just as in drawing, the unconscious movements of the hand can be raised into consciousness by following the forms with our eye movements, similarly a three dimensional, sculptural form can be felt by following and touching it all around. In this way, a person can become involved in a process that engages the fullest interest and proceeds from will activity over feeling into the beginnings of conscious awareness. This is an example of the educational method that gradually leads from will activity to the development of the intellect.

The Theme of Freedom

In the "Christmas Course of 1922" we find the following statement:

> However inconvenient it may be for the teacher, he or she should always encourage the young pupils to form shapes of all kinds out of any material they can lay hands on. True, one should avoid letting the children get unduly, dirty, and messy, for this can be a real nuisance. But what children gain in these creative activities is worth far more than remaining clean and tidy. In short, especially during the early years, it is of great value for them to gain an experience of the artistic element.
>
> Anything that has to come from the child first has to be introduced in a way appropriate to its nature. And if artistic activities are introduced to the child in his first school years, in the way

> indicated, the learning of other subjects will become easier. Foreign languages, for example, will be learned with far greater ease if pupils have done artistic work beforehand.
> (*Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, GA 303, Lecture XII , January 3, 1922, p. 211)

The expression "to come from" the child has to do with his/her "predisposition": the child is inwardly a "sculptor." That is to say, he/she builds his/her interior organs with the help of of the formative life forces body that still predominate in the growth process up to ages 9–10. This inwardly plastic predisposition wants "to come out" first in the feeling and emotional life of the child which, in turn, works on and activates the will and from there gradually leads to the development of the intellect. From this methodological and developmental point of departure, the art of education can be developed. For this reason the examples of painting and modeling are presented in this lecture: (For other insights on the learning of writing and arithmetic, see the lecture on December 31, 1921).

Steiner explicitly indicates what he deems to be the most fundamental guiding thought of the entire art of pedagogy, which offers the possibility to the spiritual-soul part of the human being to develop out of the physical-bodily part:

> From which educational maxim does such an attitude spring? It is the outcome of a total dedication towards freedom. It springs from the ideal to place the human being into the world in such a way that he can unfold his individual freedom or, at least, that physical hindrances should prevent him from doing so. (*Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, GA 303, Lecture XII, January 3, 1922, p.203.)

The opposite of such an education would be the mere training of ready-made concepts and ideas without any respect for the physical-etheric development of the child.

The Theme of Balance

A further indication for early modeling was given in the Ilkley Course of 1923 (GA 307). In Lecture 12, held on August 16, 1923, Steiner attributes a new role to the artistic element, which from the beginning was to be the basis of all teaching: as soon as the principle of cause and effect starts to enter the lessons, this more intellectual approach needs to be balanced out through an understanding of art. Modeling belongs in this realm:

> Modeling too is cultivated as much as possible, albeit only from the ninth or tenth year and in a primitive way. It has a wonderfully vitalizing effect on the child's physical sight and on the inner quality of soul in his sight, if, at the right age, he begins to model malleable

> forms and figures. So many people go through life without even noticing what is most significant in the objects and events of their environment. As a matter of fact, we have to learn how to do it (*Sehenlernen*) before we can see and observe in the way that gives us our true position in the world. (*A Modern Art of Education*, Lecture XI, p.192)

In the same lecture Steiner says about the practical aim of "learning how to see" that sculptural dexterity is also necessary in order to grasp plant formations. The experience of transformations in sculptural activity creates the ability to direct congealed concepts (which only comprehend mineral and physical reality) into image forms.

"By Itself…"

In Lecture 13 of the Ilkley Course, Steiner speaks about connections between sculptural modeling and craft lessons; the artistic and practical overlap.

> To lead play gradually into to the creation of artistic forms and then to the practical work . . . is to act in complete harmony with the demands of man's nature. And it is increasingly interesting to find that the children's malleable, artistic activity turns quite naturally "by itself" (i.e., through the children's own creative initiative with the right kind of teacher support and guidance) to the making of playthings and toys.
>
> (*A Modern Art of Education*, GA 307, Lecture 12, p.197)

These words "by itself" should not be taken too lightly as it is assumed that the entire lesson is carried out artistically. In the lecture reference is made to an exhibition of students' work and the theme of "by itself" appears again. In the lessons on human and animal forms are to arise not out of an imitation or copying but out of free creative activity after the children have "learned to read in the mind of Nature." Behind this stands the method to not only occupy the head with knowledge, but also to clothe ideas in such image forms that they become living ideas and move from feeling into willing. Thus, it becomes possible for students to be able to make what they know. There then arises: "*Konnendes Wissen*" (capable knowing) and "*wissendes Konnen*" (the knowing capability). (*A Modern Art of Education*, GA 307, August 17, 1923.)

When one can feel ideas, then these ideas are not just dry concepts but living ideas, which grip the entire human being in thinking, feeling, and willing. Steiner formulates this paradoxically: "The idea is a malleable form. The child actually learns to do, to make, what he learns to think." That sounds almost like the modern artist Joseph Beuys, but who inspired him?

But "by itself" does not mean alone without support, but rather the emergent expression should be the consequence of a developmentally appropriate lesson and of living ideas in the teacher herself. In the lectures from Torqay, England and Arnheim, Holland, Steiner brings an example of such a living idea. He speaks about the introduction of writing, once again making a case for early modeling. Besides "painting-drawing" (*malendes Zeichnen*) and "drawing-painting" (*zeichnenden Malens*) "we bring the child as much as possible into the artistic element and the modeling of small malleable works, without the teacher wanting anything other than what the child naturally wants to make out of the form from an inner creativity (*Human Values in Education*, GA 310, Lecture 3).

Here again the theme of "by itself" is touched and Steiner gives an example of it for the first study of the human being. When students have learned something of the dynamic of human bone structure artistically and not intellectually and have modeled bones afterwards, forms of even the simplest things become something more. Such aliveness can only come about when a child has a feeling for form. It does not come out of book knowledge in which everything is all lined up but unrelated and without visible interconnections. Steiner sets the bar very high for teachers when he assumes that they are entirely at home in the living reality of Goethe's metamorphosis of the bones. "When the children holds a vertebrum bone of the spine, they know its similarities to a bone of the skull; they develop a feeling for what the transformation of bones is. Then they live into human forms and the urge to express this artistically" (*Human Values in Education*, GA 310, July 19, 1924). And imagine! Steiner proposed this for 10–11 year olds!

The Etheric Body as Sculptor

Working with the living in order to become alive oneself means to be in the process of understanding the etheric body better and better. In Lecture 4 of the Arnheim Course (July 20, 1924), Steiner calls it the greatest work of art because its essence makes it both a work of art and an artist at the same time. "Insofar as we bring the forming forces of art to children and model with them in a free way, we are bringing what is deeply related to the etheric body. "

Supplementary to this theme, we find in the Torquay Course that the etheric body is a modeler, a sculptor. It transforms the inherited model body of the child into an individualized, personalized one; the malleable, sculptural forces involved in this process become free and active in the soul. "This is why the child has an impulse to model forms or to paint them. For the first seven years of life the life body has been carrying out modeling and painting within the physical body. Now that it has nothing further to do regarding the physical body, or at least not as much as before, it wants to carry its activity outside." (*The Kingdom of Childhood*, GA311,

Lecture 6, August 18, 1924) Again it is presumed that the teacher will only be able to provide guidance to the child when he himself has an artistic picture of the human organism. Mind you! It needs to be a truly artistic one, not simply an anatomical one as demonstrated in the recent exhibitions of dissected human corpses hardened in plastic—the exhibitions around the world called "Body Worlds." Steiner's recommendations for the training of teachers do not involve the copying of stuffed organs, but rather with the development of living principles of life. Modeling, should become a science seminar in which one can grasp the body of formative life forces (see *Human Values in Education*, GA 310, Lecture 8, July 24, 1924).

He suggests that teachers individually continue to work out further what they do not have time to explore sculpturally in teacher training. In this connection, I recommend *The Harmony of the Human Body; Musical Principles in Human Physiology*, (Floris Books, 1994) by Dr. Armin J. Husemann, MD. This book offers concrete suggestions for working with Steiner's modeling exercises for the outer human Gestalt, for form inversion, and for the etheric body of the lung.

Pathways to Modeling

How can one do justice to Steiner's numerous and urgent appeals for early modeling? One can start by allowing these important ideas to penetrate one's consciousness:

1. The etheric body as sculptor and the sculptural exercises that relate to its activity,
2. Goethe's metamorphosis idea relating to both plants and bones, and
3. Steiner's idea of the threefoldness of the human organism.

With respect to threefoldness we find stimulating indications for animal studies in the Torquay Course (*The Kingdom of Childhood*, GA311, Lecture 3, August 14, 1924): The human being is in a harmonious form, which brings into balance what lives itself out in the animals as all sorts of one-sided, specializations of form, in a kind of elastic metamorphosis, expanded or contracted, blown up or stunted organ systems and shapes (*Gestalten*)—all wonderful motifs for creative shaping (*Gestalten*) and re-shaping (*Umgesltalten*). Steiner describes similar motifs of transformation in the animal world in Lecture 4 of the Arnheim Course (*Human Values in Education*, GA 310, July 20, 1924).

A wealth of practical advice is provided in the book *Plastisches Gestalten für all Alterstufen* (*Sculptural Modeling for All Age Levels*, Mellinger Verlag, Stuttgart 1969 by Anke-Usche Clausen and Martin Riedel: No English translation is yet available, but the hundreds of illustrations provide many sculptural ideas and

make this book universally valuable. Almost all of Steiner's indications for modeling are cited and taken up methodically in this book. One still has to work at developing a fuller picture of the subject for oneself and finding all sorts of interconnections by referring back to Steiner's pedagogical lectures. But the Clausen and Riedel book offers a treasure trove of quotations, suggestions and, above all, superb sketches indicating how to practically engage in the activity of modeling: modeling exercises for experiencing the creative space of our hands and elementary forms, examples for human and animal shapes and much more! They show how one might creatively and freely work with such a basic curriculum instruction from Steiner as: "Sculptural modeling should begin before the ninth year, first spheres, then other forms and so on. Also with modeling one should work entirely out of the forms." (*Discussions with Teachers*, Lecture XV, p.178). They provide inspiration for developing many possible sculptural ideas: round/elongated,/light/heavy/symmetrical/asymmetrical/ oval/bulging in and out, drop forms and countless others that can arise out of the surfaces of the hands and fingers. Some "old hats" might find it remarkable that such a "well known book"that has been around for so long is being rediscovered at this time. But "new hats" and class teachers are entering the work all the time and may come to know how extremely valuable the standard work of Anke-Usche Clausen and Martin Riedel is even if it appears in a somewhat old-fashioned outfit.

Summary

- From grade 1 on clay-modeling should be practiced in an elementary way as thoroughly, simply and in an imaginative method as the well known formdrawing and painting.

- The aims, which can be reached through modelling, are manifold: with short term and long term effects

- The appropiate methods were worked out by Anke-Usche Clausen in Hannover before 1969 and are to be found in the book:

  Anke-Usche Clausen und Martin Riedel,
  Plastisches Gestalten für alle Altersstufen
  Mellinger Verlag, Stuttgart 1969.

A comparable resource for the education for the blind is Karl Spitzer and Margarete Lange's book *Tasten und Gestalten: Kunst und Kunsterziehung bei Blinden*, Waldkirch, 1982). These methods have been used effectively from grade 1 onward. Steiner's indications are also included for the so-called healthy and normal students and are suitable all the more.

Memories of a Former Waldorf Student

by
Margarethe Mehren
translated by Karin Di Giacomo

"But where there is danger, the saving force grows as well."

This quote from Hölderlin has taken on an ever-deeper meaning throughout my life, and so it shall preface this attempt at writing an account of my experience as a student of the Waldorf School, Stuttgart.

The Beginnings

I was born on May 21, 1933 in Stuttgart. My father, Ernst Mehren, originally came from Bendorf near Koblenz on the Rhine. He would have liked to become a professional musician, but he had to choose the career of a merchant, and it was hoped that he would later manage the business of his father. However, these plans were never realized, as a result of World War I—in which my father served as a young volunteer soldier—and the ensuing worldwide economic depression. He settled in Stuttgart, where he had met my mother during a business trip. Later attempts to return to the Rhineland and to start a business there were always thwarted by my mother, who couldn't bring herself to leave Stuttgart. Every few years we planned a move to the Rhineland; we children already were saying goodbye to our classmates, the moving truck had almost been ordered, but at the last minute the move was always cancelled. This gave me a sense of living 'on the edge,' so-to-say, during my early years.

My mother, Melanie Mehren, born Klemm, was born in Ludwigsburg, but she grew up in Stuttgart. She was talented in painting and drawing and was interested in art and literature. As a housewife she surely felt unfulfilled. Life in a small rental flat in a house of nine families was in itself a burden. I heard the grown-ups say time and again "If I had been given the chance to study when I was young? If I only had taken a different decision? I wish I had?"

Would this happen to me, too? How could I avoid it? Once I asked my parents if God existed. I had heard the other children talk about it on our way to school. The answer was that one could not know for sure. Maybe there was something like a higher being, maybe not. This answer didn't satisfy me and I

never asked again. I thought, if the grown-ups didn't know, then I had to find out for myself. I began to read all the books that I could get hold of. My brother, who was five years older than I and whom I admired, was in many ways my guiding star. When he went to high school, I decided to follow in his footsteps. When I once discovered that he wrote poetry, I felt encouraged also to write poems and little stories at an early age. I started to regard my school essays more and more as an exercise for my future profession. I dreamt of becoming a writer one day.

The fact that Hitler came to power in the year I was born critically influenced the first twelve years of my life. I was completely submerged in national socialist propaganda and had hardly a chance to come to know anything else. My parents originally were members of the Protestant church, but they must have left the church shortly after I was born; therefore, my brother and I grew up without any religion. Hitler's propaganda, but also personal disappointments and misunderstandings apparently prompted my parents to leave the church. Their experiences in World War I and the events during the following years probably left my parents vulnerable to the promises of the Hitler Regime. My father became *Blockleiter* (city block-leader) in the German National Socialist Party (NSDAP). My childhood was overshadowed by tensions in the marriage of my parents and soon also by the war and the bomb raids on Stuttgart. My brother—barely fifteen years old—was drafted as an air force helper, and I, too, had to leave home for the first time in my life at the age of ten, when all the Stuttgart schools were evacuated in the winter of 1943. Our school was relocated to Freudenstadt in the Black Forest. This town had been declared an international Red Cross center (there were numerous field hospital units in Freudenstadt), and it was therefore considered a safe place for evacuated schools.

A family with three small children took me in; their father was a soldier at the Russian front. The young mother, a warmhearted woman of deep faith, simply took me in just like another child besides her three own. Every evening she prayed with the children. That was totally new for me. I didn't know what to do with it. She let me be and accepted me as I was. I began to love her, but wasn't able to express it. Finally her steady kindness thawed my heart. Sadly my time in her family came to a sudden end. When she received news that her husband had been reported missing in action, she suffered a breakdown. She returned with her children to her parents' farm and I was assigned to a new place.

When we girls were not at school or having our meals together (we only slept in our guest homes but got our food at the school camps), we were

scheduled for service seven days a week, so we were much more under the influence of the Hitler Youth propaganda than at home.

After eight months, this time of evacuation was over for me: During the summer vacations I was in Stuttgart, when the news reached us that the classes of the Mörike High School would be moved from Freudenstadt to another place where we would not live in families but all together in a camp. My mother resolutely refused to let me go there and managed to have me stay at home in Stuttgart, although there were no schools. Eventually I found a teacher who gave private lessons in German, English, and Mathematics to several children—not far from where we lived. Her name was Maria Fuchs. She was a Waldorf teacher, which I did not know at that time. We liked her classes.

She knew how to get us interested and how to give each of the different age groups in this motley little assembly their due. We sensed that she enjoyed teaching us. Without being aware of it, this was my first encounter with Waldorf education.

The Twelfth Year

I was 12 years old at that time. It doesn't matter how old I am now. How long does one's twelfth year last? At the time I thought that it started soon after my eleventh birthday and lasted until a few weeks before my thirteenth birthday. One cannot really pin it down like that. Some years seem very short; others last much longer than the calendar indicates. So it must have started some time in summer of 1944 and lasted till the end of 1945. At one point between those two dates, I was exactly as old as the "Thousand-Year Empire," when it collapsed. But I kept on living.

This is an unusual way to deal with time? At that time, nothing usual existed any more. I still was one of those, who called this end "the collapse", while for many others it meant liberation. I had grown up under the Swastika Flags, I believed in the *Führer* (leader) and in the final victory. I didn't know that there was anything else worth believing in. Later people said to me: But you were still a child at that time and you couldn't know?"

They forget that I was double as old as the war. That is all that counts.

Do not tell me: You still were a child.
I was double as old as the war,
Knew early-on how to seek shelter,
from bombs and terror,
I wore a uniform (two sizes too big),
Learnt to march with precision
through the streets
"when everything goes to pieces,"

I grew up among ruins,
Thought that Germany was the world,
And believed in final victory.

I survived bomb raids,
Collected shards of bombs
Like June bugs and flowers,
I knew hunger and death.
I was born
In the time
Of the great seduction
And believed the lies:
When all was already lost,
I believed ceaselessly in victory
"when everything goes to pieces,"

Until in my and its twelfth year
The "Thousand-Year Empire"
Had come to an end
And with it the war.

Then I woke up
Like from a heavy dream,
Surrounded by silence.
I can hardly grasp it.

Do not say: you were still a child.
I was double as old as the war,
And I have experienced the lie.
Don't count according to your years!
Do not say: You were still a child.

I helped build the underground bomb shelter for the people in our street and was proud of that. Some older men who were not fit to serve at the front, among them my father, pushed a tunnel into the mountain with the jack hammer. Others shoveled rocks and dirt into the awaiting buckets. The women formed a line—I was right among them—and we passed the heavy buckets from hand to hand down the line out to the open where a mound started to grow in someone's garden. We dragged the support beams into the tunneled room; they were then joined into support structures and paneling for the tunnels. Later we painted fluorescent stripes and numbers onto the walls—about 6 feet high—and benches were installed below the numbers, where everyone had their own place. Our four places, for the parents, the brother and myself, were in one of the deepest and safest areas (given the exits wouldn't be blocked) "Above us are 66 feet (22 meters) of grown earth. No bomb can penetrate that, said my father who surely knew. Grown earth—that sounded good.

The underground bomb shelter was a network of tunnels under the mountain, with main and side shafts, closed off from the outside by several air pressure safe iron doors. When the tunnel system was built, it became like a home to us. We spent many hours down there, especially the nights, but more and more frequently we also went there during the day.

A time came when we often went there already in the early evening and spent most of the night there; we slept on the benches no matter if there had been an alarm or not. That happened after the double attacks: two bomb raids during one night. After the first attack, when the sirens gave the all-clear signal, everyone went home and started to put out the fires they found burning. Then suddenly all hell broke loose: The second attack surprised many people on their way home or while putting out fires. Nobody had expected that the alarm could mean a second attack on the same town; they thought the airplanes were an air squadron en route to another target city. Then suddenly the bombs rained down again. Many people lost their life in that night. The next morning I had to pass by the big house in which close acquaintances of ours lived. In the middle of the street gaped a huge hole, a large bomb crater. In the front yard several corpses had been laid out in a row, scarcely covered by black paper used to darken windows during raids. My glance caught sight of a foot with a white sock, which peeked out from under the paper. Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lederer, were also among the dead—during the night after the first attack I still had said hello to them. I could still hear their voices saying to us after the all-clear signals:" We are going home. It's over for this night." My parents and I had hesitated and we were still close to the shelter when the alarms went off a second time. So we quickly found shelter. Otherwise it could have hit us too.

I couldn't let go of the scene in the front yard. In the Nazi Party (NSDAP), Mr. Lederer had been the superior of my father, whom he called "comrade." That sounded good. He had always been friendly to me. When I was little I once told him, "you are my friend." From then on he called me his little friend, quite seriously, not in that condescending tone that some grown-ups use towards little children. His wife was a painter. She had hair that was nearly black and wore it parted down the middle so it framed her face like a curtain and she had quiet, luminous eyes. I used to admire her paintings that covered the walls of her flat. How often had she lent me children's books with beautiful illustrations. Now she and her husband lay dead in the front yard. The house still stood, nearly undamaged. The bomb had diagonally entered the cellar window and had killed all those who had fled down there in the night of the double attack. Upstairs in the house nothing was broken.

Finally, I tore myself away from that sight and ran to the yard of my former elementary school. There they had set up a kind of military field kitchen. They gave out a stew cooked in big pots, because we couldn't cook anymore at home due to the gas supply lines being broken—as it often happened after bomb raids. Each day I fetched food for the three of us, for father, mother, and myself. My brother was no longer with us. Together with his entire school class he had been drafted to serve as an air defense helper when he was just 15 years old. They were deployed to the Alsace after their training, in order to give cover to an air fighter squadron stationed there!

In the house next door there was a boy who had been drafted to the same service. His name was Gerhard, he had blond hair and a friendly disposition. I had met him many a time on the street. He wasn't in the air force for long. After a few months his parents were notified that their son had died during an attack on his command post. He was only 15 years old and their only son. From that day on I knew my brother too was in danger.

For days I had to pass the bomb crater, as long as I had to fetch the food for us.

After two days the corpses no longer lay in the front yard, but each time I had to think of them. The house still stood there and looked as if it had to beg pardon for still being whole while all its inhabitants were dead.

Nineteen Forty-Five

The year 1945 had begun with reports of the Russian offensive that now extended between the rivers Weichsel (Vistula) and Oder. This major offensive had already begun on June 22, 1944, but in my mind that had still been so distant that it had not alarmed me greatly. Now the front had moved much closer. Millions of people began to flee Pomerania, Silesia, and Eastern Prussia. Nearly seven million people went on those treks. Since the radio reports were very one-sided and deceptive, we at the time didn't come to know much about what was really happening. Anyone who dared to express doubt in the 'final victory' in public, endangered the lives of their families along with their own. Only much later was I able to fill in the blanks about what had happened in those last months of the war. For example I do not remember having heard anything about the liberation of Auschwitz on January 25, 1945. Only after the war had ended did I hear about the concentration camp in Auschwitz. That's how thoroughly we were kept ignorant of the truth by false propaganda. It is possible that our neighbors knew more, but they didn't talk to us about it because they knew that my father was a block-leader in the Nazi Party. Even though he never would have denounced anyone—that just wasn't his way—the people could not have

known that and just were careful. That's the only way how I can explain why we came to know so little of what was really happening—we only got the official (propaganda) news.

The terrifying news reports on February 13–14, 1945 of the allied bomb attack on the city of Dresden, which was overflowing with refugees at that time, was a great shock. In that night approximately 25,000–35,000 people lost their lives. Out of 28,410 houses in the inner city, 24,866 were destroyed. Such news was beyond my comprehension and my power of imagination. All that remained for me was helpless horror.

My brother and his friend had enlisted in February, against the opposition of my parents. I believed at that time the two of them wanted to save the fatherland no matter what. They all led us to believe that. Only many years later I came to know that they already knew much more than we did at that time, and that the entire class had volunteered to join in the army in order to avoid being forced to serve in the Weapon-SS. They sensed that the end was drawing near, and they didn't want to fall into the hands of the SS. That way the two seventeen year olds were taken POW, without having ever engaged in combat—but we didn't know that at that time.

Even though events unfolded at breakneck speed and the war was already clearly lost, I still believed in a miracle that could bring us the final victory. I hadn't learned anything else. But I felt a growing threat from within and without, an intuition that my first and only belief system could crumble. What then? Those were tormenting questions and contradictions, which I couldn't share with anyone. It would have seemed like a betrayal to me.

The Final Attack

In February 1945 our quarter of town—Stuttgart-East—was hit especially hard. That evening my father had gone two houses down the road to a meeting of the small animal husbandry association. They stood in the yard in front of the rabbit cages and all at once saw the awful "Christmas trees" in the sky—that's what people called the triangles of air flares. They at once responded to the danger, even though no sirens sounded. My father quickly ran back to our house, where my mother and I already met him on our way to the cellar, because our cat had warned us by acting up. Before air raids, long before the sirens shrilled, she would be obviously disturbed, run to the door scratch it and meow loudly as if in panic until she was let out into the yard from where she disappeared at once. We had learned to react to this signal of impending danger.

We barely had made it to the cellar when the first bombs dropped and the air defense canons thundered, but too late. There was no time left to go to the

underground bomb shelter we had built—it was too far. Nobody knows why the sirens didn't go off that night. There were rumors, but nothing was known for sure.

The others, who came down to the cellar after us, already had in their hair the dust from the bursting walls. Judging from the roaring noise, air mines were falling all around. Several times it sounded as if our house had been hit directly, but that wasn't the case. As soon as silence set in, I started to walk to the air shelter because the cellar wasn't safe in spite of the iron beams with which we had fortified the ceiling after the first attacks. By now we all knew that these iron rails would bend like wire when the house was directly hit. "We have to get out of here. More bombs are coming," I called out to my parents and was already gone. With a juice bottle in hand, which I had quickly snatched from the cellar supplies, (it would serve in place of water to wet a rag through which I could breathe if I would have to pass through smoke) I ran out onto the dark street, which was already covered with rubble and debris.

I jumped over it without stumbling or hurting myself. Only afterwards this seemed like a miracle, when I saw the next morning what kind of obstacles I had crossed during the night.

The closest entrance to the bunker was not assigned to our street. Our entrance was a bit further away. But terrified by the imminent danger, everyone crowded to the closest entrance. Any moment more bombs could fall. There was no time to lose. At one of the entrances panic started to break out. I was pushed ahead by the rushing crowd and noticed how it was harder to breathe and how the pressure from so many bodies steadily increased. Suddenly a voice called out: "Do not push ahead! We will all get in. Just stay calm." The voice was clear and soothing. The pressure decreased noticeably and I was relieved. It had been my own voice! Nobody noticed that it was only a twelve-year old who wanted to help them and herself in that way. It was one of those strange situations, in which I felt as if I were set free from my usual shyness of other people and transcended my limits in the face of danger.

Soon we were all in the shelter, and dispersed into the various tunnels where we sought out our own places. More and more people streamed in from the other entrances. They called out names, looked for family members, and exchanged the first news. I heard that the house, in which my father had been earlier, was destroyed by a direct hit. We feared that all those who had sought safety in the public bomb shelter at the corner had died. I heard my parents call out and answered: "I am here. All is in order! What does it look like outside?" "You won't be able to sleep in your bed tonight" my mother said. "That doesn't matter—I'll sleep here in the underground shelter. Did anyone get hurt?" "No,

but the apartment surely will look bad. We'll see tomorrow. The apartment door is in splinters, destroyed by the air pressure of the bombs. That's what we already know." I thought, "Where may our cat be? How was she?" She didn't know, after all, what war was. How could one explain something like that to an animal? Up to now she had returned after each attack. She must have had a good hiding place somewhere. Finally the all-clear signal came. In our place, so deep under the mountain, we could not hear the sirens, but others, who were closer to the exits, heard them and reported it. I stayed with others in the shelter wrapped myself in an old felt coat and lay down to sleep on the bench. My parents went to look after the apartment. After a while my mother came back alone and said: "We cleared the sofa of the worst dirt and debris, and Papa wants to sleep there tonight, to prevent looters from stealing anything. The door to the apartment is broken and anyone can enter."

The next morning he reported that during the night indeed some man had come in, and as soon as my father called out to him, the other noticed that the apartment was guarded and took flight.

I also inspected the apartment during the day. It was clear that it would take several weeks to make in inhabitable again. In my parents' bedroom such a big hole gaped in the wall that it was no trouble at all to slip over to the bedroom of our neighbors on the same floor. There they started to hammer and patch up the wall. From both sides the hole was covered with strong cardboard as an interim solution. We couldn't do more at first. The entire neighborhood resounded with the usual hammering and pounding, a typical sound after bomb attacks.

Most of the windows had no glass. There was no use in replacing the panes, even if we had had enough glass, though we didn't have any, in fact. During the next bomb raids the air pressure waves after the explosions would just destroy them again.

Everywhere I found glass splinters. The aquarium had burst. The glass of the few windows that hadn't yet been destroyed in the earlier raids now too was scattered on the floor. Even in the beds the mattresses and in the pillows, we found fine glass splinters—often by touch without even seeing a hole through which they had gotten in. Dead fish lay on the piano, which showed extensive water damage. All the water from the aquarium had poured over the furniture and the floor.

The doors had shattered into splinters and there was debris and rubble everywhere. Our food stamps were gone. Now we qualified to register as bomb victims and could apply for new food stamps, which we indeed received. That was luck found in the midst of bad luck—German proverb. The new allotment contained more stamps than those we had lost—and we had already used up most of those. When we found the old stamps under the rubble during the clean-

up work, we told nobody about it and at least had some more to eat, while our apartment was still for some time unfit to live in.

A Bowl of Milk

One of the first things I did was remove the rubble under the coat rack in the entry hallway, where our cat used to sleep. I put an old woolen cloth there, after carefully having removed all glass splinters, and next to it I put her milk bowl. I poured some milk from my ration into her bowl, added a few morsels of bread and waited. My mother watched my preparations for the return of our cat with reservations. What if the cat wouldn't return? All around heavy air bombs had fallen. I waited.

In the afternoon I heard a scratching on the patched-up door. I opened and our cat walked in, her tail held high, as if nothing had happened. She ran to her spot, sniffed everything and started to lick up the milk, as usual, in three-quarter-time with pauses: one, two, three,—stop, one, two, three,—stop, the little red tongue hadn't lost its rhythm in the inferno of the attack. I squatted down next to the cat and watched it intently; how she licked the bowl clean until even the last drop of milk was gone. Then she sniffed at the woolen cloth, turned around herself a few times and finally deigned to settle down on it and began to purr. She glanced at me askew and then she had fallen asleep. I had observed the whole process keenly as if a lot depended on it. Then the tension eased and gave way to deep relief because, at least this tiny corner the world was made whole again, in the midst of chaos, and I had contributed to it in my way.

The Collapse

In March and April precipitous news arrived of Allied troops advancing from all sides. On March 7, they crossed the Rhine at Remagen in the west. On April 16, the Russian major offensive was initiated from the Oder and Neisse rivers in the east. On April 25, Soviet and American troops met at Torgau by the Elbe River. While the front advanced towards our town, our region was gripped by a panic—with belated waves of flight attempts. The last minute refugees spurred us on to take flight from Stuttgart towards Lake Constance. We packed everything that we wanted to save and stacked it on a hand-pulled cart, dragging it to the next tramway station. We were still waiting for one of the few remaining tramways to take us to the train station, hoping to catch a train southward from there, when my mother suddenly changed her mind, "We are going back. It makes no sense. The front is everywhere." So we took our baggage back home. The shortest exodus of my life was over.

We retreated into an air raid shelter to wait there for the Allies to occupy Stuttgart. On April 20, 1945 the French troops moved into the first Stuttgart neighborhood, Plieningen. The following day the French and Moroccans entered Stuttgart and advanced as far as the Neckar River. The right bank of the Neckar was occupied by the Americans. Thirteen of the fifteen bridges over the Neckar had been destroyed. That delayed the entry of the Americans. At first the conquerors vied for the town, and only on July 8, 1945 the Americans were given the legal occupancy rights. During all this, we spent most of our time in the air raid shelter. Stuttgart lay in ruins. In the first day after the occupancy, the law of the victorious ruled. We heard of rapes, especially in Degerloch, where the Moroccans had their quarters.

Nearly every day there where home searches for weapons, but they also took carpets, cameras, clocks, radios, and other valuables. When we finally dared to leave the air raid shelter and return to our apartment we were glad that we had nothing they could want. The damage of the last bombing raids was still visible. French soldiers came repeatedly into our home with rifles raised to search for weapons and ammunition. They also looked for German soldiers in hiding, some of whom had managed to exchange their uniforms for civilian clothes in the general chaos and dissolution of the German army; helpful people had given them clothes so they might escape capture and rejoin their families. It was dangerous to be caught helping a soldier escape.

It was fortunate that my father could speak French; that alleviated the situation. Also the fact that we had a French housemate was helpful. He had been pressed into working in a German factory and lived in an attic apartment. Now he received the soldiers and told them no German soldiers were hiding in our house and only good people were living here.

Around this time, massive looting occurred in the factories, mostly by people living close-by, who wanted to squirrel away as much of value as possible before it would fall into the hands of the French. Bales of fabric were stolen from a textile plant in the neighborhood and months after that dresses started appearing that were made from that same cloth. Many concepts became fuzzy during that time of need and general social chaos shortly after the entry of the French troops: no one talked of “stealing.” It was called only “organizing”—scrounging for what was needed to survive.

Dé já Vu?

One afternoon shortly after the French occupation of Stuttgart, I was standing at the bay window in our living room looking out upon the street. Tanks, heavy artillery, military vehicles, and occupation soldiers moved down the street in front of our house. Many German soldiers in ragged uniforms, exhausted and

dirty, walked with them as prisoners on their way to some POW camp. Hadn't I seen something like this before? Then I remembered a news broadcast I had heard in September 1939: "England and France have declared war on Germany." At that time I had been 6 years old. Hitler had already attacked Poland. I heard myself again saying to my mother: "Mama—you'll see there will be a second world war!" Then my mother trying to dispel that notion, no, there would be no such thing. And I said, "Oh yes, and the tanks and canons will then drive by our house down the Schwarenbergstrasse." I really had seen it like that then. Was that only happening in my imagination? I do not know.

Six years later it has become a reality. I am standing at the window and feared for the bedraggled, tired figures passing by the house. Where are they going? Into some POW camp, no doubt. Everything is uncertain. So the war is really over. That also means no more air raids. One would have to slowly get used to that, not to be jolted out of sleep by sirens blaring in the night. But there is another danger now. During the house searches, they are now also looking for Nazi literature, pictures of Hitler, swastika flags, and other Nazi symbols. I was supposed to hide my father's party badge, by burying it in the ground. There were rumors that people who had gone to surrender their weapons had been shot. Maybe it was just a rumor, but it also said children found to have weapons or other incriminating items would not be harmed. So I was supposed to get rid of the party badge, flag, Hitler pictures and similar things. I did bury the party badge, but I didn't tell my parents that I had hidden the other things in our apartment: in my grandmother's upholstered night chair, whose function was well concealed. There I hid in a hollow space under the night pot a small swastika flag, Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*, Alfred Rosenberg's *Myth of the 20th Century*, a picture book about Hitler and some issues of the magazine *Völkischer Beobachter*. Most of this literature I had not yet read and probably wouldn't have understood anyway, but I wanted to save it; I didn't know for what purpose. It was part of my "wanting to remain loyal even if all others fall away." My hiding place was never discovered during the house searches. My parents had no idea that these things were still in our apartment.

A curfew was proclaimed! Was it in effect between 9:00 PM and 6:00 AM? I only remember the fear, when my mother and I returned late from a visit with an acquaintance, and we had missed the last tramway. After the curfew had started, we had no choice but walk back home for more than an hour, always expecting to be discovered by patrols.

During the day, I collected stinging nettles on the rubble heaps and in overgrown front yards of destroyed houses. We cooked the greens like we cooked spinach. We had not seen bread for a long time. But there was a recipe

for a potato soup: If several raw potatoes were grated into boiling hot water and cooked for a while, they became soft and starchy like a porridge and resulted in a type of mush, sufficient for three to four people, who could eat it morning, noon, and night. If cooked with salt and onions it was palatable and filling enough. We only worried what we could scrounge up to eat for the next day, and that thought left no room for anything else. In a kind of numbness, as if it all were unreal, I heard the news that followed each other now at great speed and crashed down upon me:

The last days of the fight for Berlin was announced. On May 1 the news came: ”The Führer has fallen during the fight for Berlin, surrounded by his loyal supporters.” Soon afterwards, even this last lie was exposed; he had committed suicide on April 30. The day after that Goebbels and his wife poisoned their children and killed themselves. On May 2, Berlin capitulated. On May 8 the unconditional surrender of the German army was signed and on June 5 the Allied forces took over the governance of Germany.

At some point during that time I happened to meet my former BDM leader (*Bund Deutscher Mädchen*—the Nazi organization for young girls) in the street. Finally, someone I could talk to, I thought! I ran towards her expectantly and assaulted her with my questions: “Luitgard, I am so happy to see you! How are you? What are we going to do now? Do you think it’s true what they are saying? Some people are saying that Hitler is not dead. Whom should we believe? What should we do now?” I still expected something like guidance from my former “leader,” who was barely six years older than I. I was still wearing my brown uniform jacket from which I had just removed the badges. Luitgard was visibly embarrassed and seemed to ignore my questions on purpose. She said in a tone of voice different than any other I heard her use before: “I secured an apprenticeship position with a hat maker.” I stared at her in shock. How can anyone be interested in ladies’ fashions when everything around us has come crashing down? It was only much later that I understood she was as bewildered and clueless as I was. We parted with an embarrassed farewell. I have never seen her again.

I remembered my former school director from elementary school. Maybe he had some advice. Hadn’t he raised the flag together with us, sat in his brown uniform behind the desk in the director’s office, very impressive under the big Hitler picture and flanked by swastika flags? And when I had left the school after the fourth grade to transfer to another school, hadn’t he shaken my hand in parting and said: ”I am proud of you. I hope to read about you in the newspapers and hear of you in the radio!” I asked around where he lived and found him in a suburb of Stuttgart in his garden, digging in the soil and tired, leaning on his

spade. He stood in front of me, clad only in threadbare old pants that bunched at his ankles. Emaciated and without the glamour of his old uniform he was a sorry sight. My questions stuck in my throat. This tired old man with the discomforted look could not give me any answers either. So I soon took my leave and made off for home. And my parents? They didn't say anything. I never came to know how they experienced the collapse.

Soon other worries distracted me from such questions for some time. The potato supply was running out and there was no bread. Distant friends, who had a farm close to Winnenden, promised us a sack of potatoes if we would pick them up ourselves. So one morning, my father and I set out, pulling behind us a borrowed cart. It was on my twelfth birthday. We had to walk more than 26 kilometers [about 18 miles] crossing fields and forests, over country roads and through small towns and villages. When there was a downhill stretch, we would sit in the wagon, my father at the helm, the handle between the legs so he could steer it. I sat behind him. The downhill rides were the only rest for our feet. We didn't stop to rest anywhere.

After five to six hours we arrived at the farm, just in time for a hearty farmers' lunch the likes of which we hadn't seen for a long time. When the farmer's wife heard that it was my birthday, she said I could have one wish. I saw the huge loaf of fragrant bread on the table, took a deep breath and then dared to make a bold wish: "I want a whole slice of this bread with butter and jam!" Much to my surprise, the farmer's wife laughed: "If that is all!" and I received this unique birthday gift and ate it with great pleasure. We were allowed to stay on the farm for the night. The next morning we took off with about 100 pounds of potatoes—this time not by foot but riding on a flatbed train car. The train conductor had allowed us to ride the train, and we gave him some of the potatoes. I don't think I could have walked the 26 kilometers again, certainly not dragging a cart with a heavy sack of potatoes.

The French occupation ended on July 8, 1945 and the Americans moved in. The time of the American Military Occupancy had begun. All citizens of Stuttgart had to be checked for tuberculosis. They announced that school would resume in September for all children. Slowly there emerged a way out from the chaos.

By that time we had visitors. My Aunt Alice, a cousin of my mother's, together with her husband, Uncle Karl, five children and their grandmother had fled Karlsbad to escape the Russians and had come to Cannstatt. They had mostly walked while dragging a cart with their belongings, on which sat also the grandmother and the youngest son, only five years old. We gave temporary shelter to three of the children in our small apartment, until a house was found

for the entire family. We put a bed and a few mattresses on the floor of the small room, which I used to share with my brother, and that gave us enough sleeping spaces. Relatives in Cannstatt took in the older ones.

It was more difficult to get food, but we somehow managed it. If necessary, my father and I would go on "hamster" forays to his former bakery clients, who sometimes gave him loaves of bread without requesting food stamps. We couldn't afford to be choosy. The bread was defined more by quantity than by quality, because the bakers had to bake ever more loaves from the same allotment of flour in order to be able to hand out some loaves without food stamps. They did this by adding bran or potato flour to extend the dough and by using lots of water. The resulting bread was very damp and first had to be dried out by the stove to make it edible.

For a quite a while, my father and I also had helped an older couple, which owned a large orchard. My father knew how to work with a scythe; he cut their lawn in front of the house and also the big meadow; with a rake I spread the grass so it would dry and we would have hay for our rabbits during the winter. We also helped these people harvest the fruit trees and received many a basket full with fruit to take home. The apples and pears, plums and red currants were just what we needed. We even could give some of them to our refugee relatives.

When we sat together in the evening, little by little they told us about all the horrors of their flight, of cruelties and rapes that the Russians committed on many girls and women. They had been spared such ordeals, but had often been in danger. The fear still haunted them.

The meeting with my relatives was to have a special meaning for me. I grew fond of them. Aunt Alice was a smart and warm-hearted woman. She radiated charm and kindness that impressed me. I felt how she kept the family together through this time of need and poverty. They had been very well off before the war, but they had lost their house in Berlin and all their possessions and they accepted this situation without complaints. "We are poor but happy that we are all together," I heard them say. I had never met my uncle and soon grew very attached to him as well. He was fascinating and was both a good storyteller and a great listener. When he conversed, one felt fully accepted. He obviously had been a follower of Hitler, prompted by idealism and conviction, and he had last held some administrative position in the so-called "Reichs-Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia." I heard the adults say in conversations that he had been a frequent visitor to the seat of the Nazi government during his time in Berlin. Now he was talking of turning himself in to the Americans. My father implored him to think of his wife and his children and rather go underground until the situation had stabilized. This was not the moment, he said, to play the hero. It

was an intense argument, which I had followed with trepidation. I was impressed by my uncle's courage, but at the same time I was afraid for him and his family, especially the children. Finally my father's arguments won out. My uncle did not turn himself in to the Americans.

But I had again been pulled right into a turbulence of most contradictory feelings. This uncle embodied for me the prototype of the idealist in the Nazi Party, full of conviction. At that point in time I had not yet seen through the worst aspects of the Hitler regime. His presence evoked the hope in me that I might not have to let go of my ideals, my singular belief in the "Führer," or the "Reich" *(empire)*. He sounded convincing. Some time later he helped us get hold of some Nazi literature printed in the underground; I read it secretly and clung ever more to the illusion fostered by this kind of reading that this was not the end after all, that a lot of what we heard was simply enemy propaganda, that Hitler had been deceived, and similar excuses for horrible events that were reported.

False Gods Die Slowly!

In the brochures he brought for us there was also talk of leading party members who had escaped to Chile or Argentine, and still operated from there. Whom was I supposed to believe?

Some time later he found an attic apartment for his family in a village close to Heilbronn, where we visited them a few times. His hiding in the underground nearly failed, when the villagers were set on making him their mayor only a year after he moved there. Uncle Karl refused. Later the family moved back to northern Germany. Since my own path was destined to lead in a different direction I would never see them again. But in later years I have often wondered how these kind and educated people could fall for Hitler and the Nazi ideology. They never had struck me as fanatics. I couldn't imagine that Uncle Karl had ever directly been involved in any Nazi crimes. When I heard many years later that he had never fully distanced himself from National Socialism, the question arose again, to what degree can idealism blind you to reality and even make you a servant of crime?

The verdict chambers, specific courts, were instituted to implement 'de-nazification.' All party members, especially those who had held an office in the party hierarchy, had to submit to this process, this included my father. Those who were classified to have just been 'nominal members' of Hitler's party got away relatively unscathed. Many reported to have been just 'nominal members.' I was amazed how many there were of those, whom I had believed to be convinced members of the National Socialist Party (NSDAP).

My father had to work as part of a building crew of former Nazis; he helped to rebuild the Stuttgart dairy processing facilities as an unskilled laborer. Altogether 20,000 Stuttgart citizens had to remove rubble for more than four weeks. At the area of Birkenkopf, a new mountain rose, consisting of the rubble of the destroyed city. The people called it *Monte Scherbelino* (Mountain of shards).

During the verdict chamber trials there were denunciations, and many a personal feud was played out there. Many seized the opportunity to take revenge on former party members, who had bullied or tormented them.

One day our apartment was confiscated by the authorities as a result of a denunciation by a neighbor. An official notice was posted on the door saying that anyone who needed an apartment (e.g., former inmates of concentration camps or foreigners who had been forced to work in German factories) could demand to be lodged here and the current renters would have to move out. There was no word of where we were supposed to go. For weeks the notice hung on the door. For weeks we had no idea where to go, if anyone would claim the apartment. But nobody liked the damaged rooms. Until one day a Polish Jew gave notice that he was looking for an apartment. It was Jakob Magier. He got the only fairly intact room, which I had formerly shared with my brother and now had lived in by myself. So I moved to the living room and Jacob Magier got my room. I have already described the meeting with him elsewhere, in the short story "The Foreigner." I never forgot how he asked my mother that first evening to fry him a long sausage which he had brought with him, how he then put bread on the table and invited us all to share the meal. We had not seen bread for months, let alone a sausage! Later that evening he played a game of chess with my father. From then on, he shared nearly every evening his special rations with us, which the Americans gave out only to former forced laborers and concentration camp inmates. He did not take revenge on us that we were former Nazis. A human being like Jacob Magier must never be forgotten. I owe him the experience of humaneness in a time of greatest confusion; a humaneness that always sees and respects the human being for what one is, transcending all barriers of race, culture, and religion. Maybe it was my encounter with him that started my renunciation of Nazi ideology, even though I was not conscious of that at the time. I still had a long way to go.

The radio stations broadcast the Nuremberg trials. Horrified, I heard that all those who had been presented to me at home, at school, and in the girl's club (BDM) as authorities and models, were now being tried in court as war criminals. They also showed documentary films.

In fall of 1954, the Stuttgart schools began to open again. Many schools first had to move back after the evacuation, because they had fled from town to town forced by movements of the military front. My school returned also from the place of evacuation. Now the process of the so-called de-nazification reached the schools as well. One morning I saw the former math teacher stoke the wood burning stoves in the classrooms. He was no longer allowed to teach. The schoolbooks that were still available, had to go through a cleansing process as well. All text passages and pictures or symbols reminiscent of the Third Reich had been covered with thick black ink and were no longer recognizable. The history books for the first grade had to be completely confiscated and destroyed. They were steeped in Nazi ideology and no longer useable.

Sometimes I still felt an inner split and refused to let go so quickly of ideals that were deeply instilled in me. Whom should I believe? I couldn't ask my parents. I felt they also had no idea where to turn. There was a wall of silence separating us. They also were burdened by worries for my brother; we had not heard from him again. I had to think of him all the time and often talked with him in my mind. But that didn't help me move forward either.

Then something happened that opened my eyes once and for all to the full extent of the horrible truth, which so far still had been concealed from me. In the process of de-nazification, we had to watch movies in school that showed the liberation of Auschwitz and of other concentration camps. I just could not comprehend what I saw there. I was seized by a horror that defied all words. The images of the wretched figures behind barbed wire, the eyes of the children, the mountains of corpses, the unthinkable suffering of so many people who were murdered in the gas chambers! After the first movie I ran out into the open. I ran and ran, and yet could not escape the reality of the pictures I had seen. I only know that I ran right through the middle of the evening traffic. Right and left brakes screeched, in front of me a tramway nearly brushed against me, I didn't care about any of it.

It was only then that my former world collapsed totally. "I will never again believe anything adults say," I swore to myself. The next thought was: "I can no longer live in a country where so many people were cruelly murdered. Why should I go on living?" I felt like choking. I felt, I also had been guilty, because I had believed in the slogans of this regime. I didn't want to live anymore. There was so much death in me and around me. "Yes, if one could just slink out of this world without leaving a trace, then I would do itÉ but how?" Finally, consideration for my parents prevailed, the deeply rooted habit of wanting to protect them, this time from me and from my thoughts of suicide.

Maybe we can keep on living while something dies in us without anyone else noticing it?

At that time I wouldn't have been able to tell a soul what went on within me. What I had seen went beyond anything imaginable. It seemed to me as if all of Germany was covered by a dark, poisonous cloud, which could not be dispelled by anyone or anything. The murdered human beings were still so close and seemed to look at me. One image had etched itself into my memory more than any other. There was a mountain of children's shoes, hundreds, thousands! The pictures haunted me everywhere. In those hours—and for years after that—a horror formed within me of the people who were able to commit such crimes, and I had a horror of myself, because I too was a human being and had believed in such a "leader" and had followed him.

"Do not say 'you were still a child!' "

When I finally returned home late and my mother asked me where I had been, I only said that I had taken a walk after school, "just so." But everything had changed. I had returned a different person from the girl who had gone to school at noon. But no one needed to know that. I had to deal with that by myself. But I didn't know how that was supposed to happen.

Sometime after that day, I stood by the window one evening and looked at the ruins of the burned-out neighboring house. The empty, scorched caves of the windows were etched against the evening sky, the light of the setting sun glowed reddish golden. Then I discovered a white blossoming tree through one of the window openings, as if framed like a picture; the tree probably was part of a garden on the hill behind the ruin. I looked at it, as if it were a miracle. Something alive had survived in the midst of destruction. And while I stood and looked the thought blossomed in me, I never had seen this tree before. I had not known that it existed. As long as the house had still been there, its walls had completely blocked all sight of the tree. Could it be that sometimes something has to be destroyed so that we can see what it had concealed?

The Great Dream

Again and again something sparked in the inner darkness, something like a promise, a vague and fleeting shimmer, but enough to keep me groping forward. Around me there seemed to be nothing but despair. There was a time when I was plagued night by night, week by week, with the same nightmare. The stories of my refugee relatives from Karlsbad, about the rapes committed by the Russians, the images from the concentration camps, the fear instilled by the first nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, whose catastrophic effects shocked the world. All this coalesced and was woven into my nightmares, as

well as the onset of my own puberty and a recurring fear of being trapped with no way out.

The dream always started with me running through underground corridors, hearing my pursuers' steps behind me, Russians who tried to get me and would rape and murder me. With a desperate effort I ran on, but my feet became heavier and heavier and started to drag as if made of lead, and the pursuers nearly got to me. Just when they were about to seize me, I started up in shock and had escaped them one more time. I always needed some time until I could tell myself that it was only a dream. But the next night the dream happened again and so it went on for weeks. I just about reached the limit of what I could bear.

My mother had told about the life of Friedrich Hölderlin, when I was a child. She revered him and in her tales she had also mentioned that he had lived many years in a mentally deranged state in a tower owned by a carpenter in Tübingen. I had thought about that again and again. How could something like that happen to a person? Maybe I myself was now getting close to such a state of mind? I did not want to frighten my parents with such thoughts, therefore, I didn't tell them what I was dealing with inside.

Then, one night, everything started happened in my dream as usual. I was being chased through the subterranean corridors, but then the dream took a different turn. When the pursuers were already close on my heels, all the sudden I was able to break through to the outside. There I met people desperately seeking shelter from bombs. To the right there was a wide plain where fires raged, like after a nuclear explosion. I saw mushroom clouds rising. The people urged me to show them a way to the air raid shelter. I saw the entrance to our former shelter. It looked ramshackle and neglected. I knew it could not offer any protection anymore, and told the people, "No shelter can protect us from nuclear bombs." Then I noticed that a different group of people had started to climb up a mountain, away from the plains where the flames raged. They walked like people who had an aim and knew the way. I joined them. Singing they climbed the mountain. The higher we climbed, the clearer and more peaceful the atmosphere became. At a turn on the way, I looked one more time down to the burning plains; it looked like the end of the world. Then I left the chaos behind me. At the top of the mountain, I discovered something like a musical organ under the free sky. People flocked around it and sang. One person was sitting and playing the organ. He was dressed in a white garment that seemed to be woven of light. His dark hair reached nearly down to his shoulders. His face was half hidden, since I stood sideways, half in back of him; but I saw his hands glide over the keys, producing this wonderful music. Meanwhile, I had the

distinct impression that he knew of my presence even though he looked ahead and not at me. Finally I asked someone who stood close: “Who is it that plays?” The answer came, “ The master.” “And what does he play?” “He plays your life and all our lives.” At that point I woke up and felt released from a crushing burden. All fear had fallen away. “The master knows of me. Whomever he may be, one day I will find him.” I dared again to be happy.

During that dream, I had no thought of God. That word had no meaning for me at that time. I lacked any kind of religious vocabulary. I had not grown up with religious tradition. Only in retrospective, much later, I realized how the depth of our being knows about that highest (first) reality, long before it enters our consciousness and long before we can find words for it. It is as if we carry in us a memory of our source. Maybe it was good that I could not avail myself of any of the conventional notions of God at that time. That way, such notions could not block what was emerging from my own depth and started to grow from there. The nightmare never returned. I felt a new strength rise in me, even though outwardly my situation had not changed.The healing dream makes me think of Hölderlin’s words which have become dear to me, “But where there is danger, the saving force grows as well.”

A Temporary Garden

It had started with a conversation across the garden fence. I had ambled along the side of my old elementary school, which was closed since the general school evacuations. It served as a camp for refugees and displaced people. At the fence of the former school garden I met the old school janitor. I nearly didn’t recognize him. He was emaciated and looked tired. We had sometimes been afraid of him in former times. He had seemed so strict. Now I could no longer understand how we could have been afraid of him. I felt sorry for him. While he was busy mending a hole in the fence, we got into a conversation. The school garden looked sad. It was completely overgrown with weeds and marred by a pile of rubble. “Pity about the garden,” I said. “I know it’s looking awful. But I can’t take care of it alone. I have enough to do. Well, if there were someone to help, but the garden is so run-down—who would want to help with that,” said the janitor. We were silent for a while. All the sudden I had a thought. It was so bold that at first I didn’t know how to tell the janitor about it. But the matter was so urgent and finally I dared to say, ”My father knows how to work a garden. He had a big garden by the Rhine, where he had lived when he was younger—he told me a lot about it. What would you say about giving us a piece of the school garden—just for a time of course, as long as it isn’t being used for the school? We could grow lettuce and tomatoes, beans and maybe even potatoes!” I already

saw the beans wind around the beanstalks. We were so hungry and needed food and here was a neglected garden that was now of no use to anyone; we might be able to put it to good use, and even the janitor would benefit from it. He looked up in surprise and let the idea sink in. “Maybe more people in the neighborhood would be interested in that. One could ask them?” I spun the idea further, “If the school garden would be shared among several families, who are willing to cultivate it.”

“Then ask your father what he thinks about that and let me know,” the janitor said and all of a sudden he no longer looked so tired. I thought he was a very nice old man who was agreeable to talk with. I bade him farewell and ran home, inspired by the idea of just having secured a garden for us, a “temporary garden.” My parents listened to the story and agreed with my plan!

That is how our gardening time began. We were allotted a big piece of ground that had never been cultivated before. The soil was tough and full of roots. Digging it was strenuous work. I helped my father with the digging and enjoyed testing my strength. I learned how to use a spade and a hoe and enjoyed working on a piece of land in the middle of a city. All our free time was spent with digging, weeding, and composting until we finally could start to sow and plant.

We didn’t stay alone for long. Neighbors saw the overgrown school garden slowly change, gave notice to the janitor and each got a piece of land for cultivation as well. So we soon were a gardening community of people, who had been strangers to each other; but now we talked about lettuce varieties and types of cabbage, about safe garden pest removal and the weather, a never-ending source of conversation. We came together while watering the plants and helped each other out. All these people surely had their own war experiences. Some had lost family members, others also their house and belongings. They might have belonged to opposing political camps. One didn’t talk about that. The garden had a healing effect on all of us. The people didn’t appear to be so discouraged any more. My parents too were more relaxed, more balanced, and they even could bear their worries about my brother with more confidence.

The constant work with the soil and the plants, the attunement to the rhythm of the days and the seasons, the experience of growth and ripening after so much destruction—this all strengthened the human sensibilities in us and awaked hope. We sowed and planted: head lettuce, peas, and beans; we cultivated potatoes and kohlrabi, parsley and chives, onions, leeks, red beets, and Savoy cabbage. Our three chickens from the back yard of our apartment building and the rabbits that my father bred there, supplied the manure necessary for the garden. Besides, we had started a compost pile.

For the first time in my life, I experienced growing one's own food, instead of buying it at the grocery store: being part of the entire growth process from sowing and transplanting to harvesting; being involved in all these phases through our own work. These were "our" tomatoes and "our" potatoes. They tasted totally different from any bought ones. While eating them it was, as if I ate the fruit of our labors resulting from digging and watering, the wind and the rain, the sun rays which had ripened them, the root force of the earth and long, patient growth until they were ripe. Only now could I really understand, why my father had always talked with so much warmth of his home garden by the Rhine.

My father soon built a small garden house with a bench, grew pole beans up along three sides of this shed and soon they wound around the training wires up and up and formed a roof that gave us shade. The ugly rubble pile that had marred the garden, now nearly disappeared under pumpkin leaves and huge ripening pumpkins belonging to everyone.

In the middle of the school garden, we had cleared a small rock garden after removing a lot of weeds and shrubs. Lizards peeked from the cracks between the stones, scurried across the rocks or took a peaceful sunbath on top of them. Soon yellow and red stonedrops spread their flower cushions in between various types of grasses and a few poppies sprung up with bumblebees and honeybees humming about them. This colorful garden hub, completely void of any utilitarian purpose, brought sheer joy to all of us, who had by now cultivated each little piece of soil.

Sonja

Right at the start of our gardening time, my parents had given me a little piece of land on our plot to do with, as I liked, so-to-say, as recognition for me coming up with the garden idea. Although it was little more than three square feet, it was mine. "There is much space for upward growth," I considered, and stuck sunflower seeds into the soil.

In the following weeks I observed how the seedlings emerged from the dark soil covering the seeds, striving up towards the light, leaves unfurling, buds forming and already showing promises of future blossoms. I nurtured this small piece of land to the best of my knowledge; I fertilized it with rabbit manure, watered the small plants and talked to them encouragingly.

Soon I noticed that a very special sunflower developed in the center of the patch, taller than all the others. Something was afoot! I followed the impulse to trim always the lower ring of leaves, so that its whole power surged to the crown. The plant formed a huge bud. It took its time to unfold and grew higher and higher. Soon it was as tall as I was, it kept on growing, the bud gaining in

size and the rough stem felt strong and firm like a young tree trunk. It grew taller and taller throughout the entire summer and them one day the mighty bud started to open. It took its time. For days I observed every small change. It blossomed into a radiant flower, protected by the uppermost circle of leaves, and started to slowly bow down due to its own weight and finally looked down on me with its wreath of warmly radiant, yellow rays. By then it had gown way above my head!

This radiant flower being had developed from the small sunflower seed; I had witnessed it and yet had not been able to help much in this process. It was hard to believe! The other sunflowers surrounding it had also flowered, each just as lovely in its own way, but none matched the Queen of the Sunflowers, as I had secretly named her.

When the work of the day was done and the other people went home I liked to linger for a while and enjoyed the silence pervading the garden; it was only in that stillness that all things seemed to reveal their innermost essence to me. It happened quite naturally that I started talk to my sunflower. “You are so beautiful!” The big face of the flower above me moved gently in the evening wind. “A flower like you shall have a name, all to yourself, different from all others. I think your name is Sonja!” The flower seemed to be agreeable to that. “You have grown from a small seed. I have seen what great force was hidden in that small seed. People have built explosive bombs and nuclear bombs, which also contain a power, but only the power to kill and destroy. Actually, a sunflower seed is much stronger than a bomb, isn’t it? Something alive emerged from it.” Sonja, the sunflower answered me in her own way: she just bloomed! A bumblebee settled on the flower’s face and was looking for nectar. “I see you have a visitor! I think I would be glad to sometimes have a visitor. But our flat still looks like war. Who would want to visit us?” The bumblebee bade farewell and flew on. “I would like to know if there is anything that cannot be destroyed. It is very important. If that exists, I have to find it. But when it doesn’t exist, then I just wanted to say, ‘Then I don’t know why I should go on living.’ But then, in the very moment when I thought that, I couldn’t say it anymore (the flower seemed even to feel my thoughts) because she looked at me like life itself and it was as if she said: “Have you still not understood? For what did I grow here?”

Sometimes it was risky to talk with this flower. It caught me thinking thoughts that I had already left behind but which still trailed after me trying to cling to me like burrs, mostly when I least expected it.

Soldiers' Graves

One evening I didn't take the usual way home, but left the garden through the small gate that led to the neighboring cemetery of St. Luke's Church; I had never before gone that way. In a corner next to the school garden I discovered several soldiers' graves. They looked abandoned and were completely neglected. Rough, primitive wooden crosses marked them, as if stuck into the bare ground in great haste. On one or the other cross hung a steel helmet. On one of the crosses I read: "An unknown soldier." Some gave the name and rank of the soldier. Not all of them were German names. The date on the crosses of the dead showed that they all had died during the last days of the war.

I had to think of the far-away relatives of the fallen, who maybe still awaited their return home. The cruelty and meaninglessness of war touched me from these graves. From then on I visited them often, as if that could set things right again. The graves looked so neglected. At least I wanted to think of those who lay buried there. Their graves shouldn't look so abandoned anymore. So I went there again and again, secretly took flowers from the other graves in the cemetery that were adorned and cared for—the dead surely wouldn't object—and used them to embellish the soldiers' graves in the corner by the fence, in order to alleviate their desolation. I wanted to do it in lieu of their relatives. I didn't tell my parents about my frequent detours through the cemetery. I didn't want to touch upon the fear that we all carried in us without ever voicing the anxious question: if and when my brother might come back. We still had no news of him. The flower Sonja got an earful from me that summer, and the wind carried my words away. It also was very good to be silent with her.

From Stuttgart statistics from 1945:

- 80,000 Stuttgart men were drafted to serve in the German army
- 14,000 of them were killed and 7,000 were reported missing
- 4,500 Stuttgart residents had died in bomb raids. Alone in 1944 during 25 air raids, 2,750 people perished.
- 1,500 Stuttgart residents died in the resistance movement.
- 1,000 Stuttgart Jews had been murdered
- 40,000 school children were undernourished
- 5 million cubic meters of rubble had to be removed
- A new beginning: Arnulf Klett becomes governing mayor of Stuttgart
- Dr. Reinhold Maier is appointed prime minister of the German Provinces North Baden and North-Württemberg

Not Everyone Who Returns Truly Comes Home

Fall approached. In the garden we harvested peas, beans, potatoes, and tomatoes. The sunflowers stood in full bloom and their seeds were turning dark brown. Some had already been visited by the titmice.

At the beginning of November, our doorbell rang, and when I opened it, Dieter, a friend of my brother's was standing there. He said right away: "Günther will soon come too. He will follow in a few days." My parents had come to the door with me and just heard the last sentence, before they could even be frightened by the fact that Dieter was standing there alone; he and my brother had been inseparable.

The uncertainty was over. But we first had to get used to the good news, carefully, as if it could dissolve into smoke if we would dare to be too happy. Then we sat in the living room. Dieter told us only little. He looked skinny and seemed to me to come from a different world, burdened by experiences that we could not share and he didn't want to talk about. We only came to know that they had been captured in April as POWs, before having been involved in any actual war activities; they were stationed first for six weeks in Ludwigshafen, and then, until the beginning of October, in France.

Only many years later I learned the details: that they had been stationed with 10,000 POWs under open sky in Ludwigshafen, in groups if 1500 behind the barbed wire fences. There had been a number of barely fourteen-year-olds among them, who had been captured together with them. After about six weeks they were transferred to France, first a few weeks to a camp in LeMans, and then moved to the peninsula of Cotenin, south of Cherbourg, where they became inmates of an American prison camp. There they had at least tents for quarters, but they slept upon the bare sandy soil. During their captivity they couldn't know whether they would ever see their families again. So many had died in the bombing raids, and many of the POWs, when they returned after their release, only found a pile of rubble in the place of their former homes.

During the following days a welcome bouquet of three sunflowers appeared to decorate the windowsill by the entry door. I had grown them on my own garden plot for his return. Now their time had come. When Günther entered through that door, it all came full circle. He finally was back.

I remember the first time after his return only like a movie with fuzzy pictures. On one hand it seemed natural that we were all four together again and at first tried to slip into our old roles, because we hadn't had the time to grow into any new ones yet. On the other hand we were no longer the same people as before, even if we were in the habit of trying to conceal that. In the course of time it would become apparent that the former roles could no longer fit.

The Red Cross delivered his postcard a week after the arrival of my brother, he had written it to us from France, trying to inform us of his pending release from the prison camp.

Not everyone who returns, comes home. But at first this isn't apparent. Also, those of us who had stayed home were no longer the same people that we had been before. So much had happened in us and around us, since we had last seen my brother. He didn't talk about the time of his captivity, and we didn't share our various experiences during the end of the war and the collapse of the Reich. It was easier to talk about the garden, about work that needed to get done, about the rabbits and the three hens that we still kept in the back yard. We didn't tell him about the young rooster, who had so far slept in the basket with the cat and her three kittens: that rooster had already been designated to turn into a strengthening meal for Günther. None of us would have been able to eat it, after it had practically become a family member for several weeks and had lived in our apartment. It was part of the same hatch as our chickens, but was somewhat of a runt and the other chickens didn't tolerate him in their cage. By now the young rooster had visibly improved. If a cat doesn't object to a young rooster making his nest in the basket with her kittens, then you are not talking about an ordinary cat nor was it an ordinary rooster either. A special reason was necessary to sacrifice that animal, so that an emaciated and starved homecomer could regain his health and strength. Since my brother did not know the story of the young rooster, he was the only one who could eat it with a good appetite.

Since Jacob Magier still lived with us, we were now five people in that small apartment. Günther and I slept in the living room, he in the bed (which he first had to get used to again) and I across from him on the old sofa in an old army sleeping bag—an unusual but in my eyes quite adventurous way to sleep. My father had brought the sleeping bag one day when he had helped with unloading a truck that had transported a load of them. They were lined with sheep fur and the outer shell was made from sailcloth. With such a sleeping bag one would have been able to camp out in the open even in winter. I sometimes imagined going on expeditions to other countries, and this would be a preparation for such endeavors.

A Farewell

Fall was nearly over. At some point it was time for my brother and his class to go back to school and prepare for the final exams *(Abitur).* The garden had been mostly harvested. I also was preparing for a good-bye. One afternoon I stayed alone in the garden and looked up to the great sunflower. There was no denying that it had undergone a change. The formerly yellow petals had taken on

a brown hue. Its green leaves had turned yellow and hung wilted from the stem. The heavy crown bowed ever deeper down to me and here and there the ripe seeds were already spilling out.

Then, as so often, I looked at her and understood what she told me, without audible words. The thoughts just emerged in me. A conversation sprung up between us. I sensed this would be the last time. But she didn't seem to be sad. She started out: "You see my yellow petals turn brown and wilt. Soon I will lose them all. It doesn't matter! I don't need them anymore. I don't have to invite bumblebees and honeybees anymore. My seeds are ripe. Now the titmice visit me."

I said, "The time in the garden is coming to an end, and in the next spring you won't be there anymore." (I didn't want to say what I had just thought: and you also are coming to an end and I don't want to realize that) when she interrupted my thoughts, "In every ending there is a beginning."

"How can that be," I queried?

"Think about it, how did I come here?"

"I put sunflower seeds into the soil, the biggest one in the center, watered and fertilized them, loosened the soil around them and you have grown from that center seed. You have grown tall, so strong and so beautiful."

"And where did you get the seeds?"

"From the garden shop—no, of course they came from another sunflower."

"Ripe seeds like mine. A seed was the beginning. Look at me—what do you see in my flower crown?"

"Many ripe seeds"

"How many?" "I don't know. I am not good in math, but I believe there are hundreds, maybe even thousands of them."

"And in each seed is a beginning, the power to become a sunflower. Even if I give many as presents to titmice, many will stay leftover that will become sunflowers. The titmice are important too and they need me. Now look again at my crown. What do you see now?"

"I see—I see hundreds, thousands of beginnings! Oh, now I understand!

"I have to tell you something else. I learned it from you, better said, it sprung up in me (like you have sprung up, opened into a flower and unfolded your blossoming crown). There is more power in a sunflower seed than in an explosive bomb or an aerial mine. They can only destroy, kill; they cannot create life but only destroy it." The flower waited.

"There is something else that I still have to tell you. I can't talk about it with anyone else, because there are words that are just like bombs or aerial mines. When my brother returned home from captivity, my mother didn't know how to

welcome him other than by saying, ‘How could you do that to us!’ And her entire face was one big accusation. I felt sorry for him but, as usual, I was tongue-tied. But I would have like to call to her ‘Stop! Don’t get going like that again! Leave him in peace, finally!’ But then I also feel sorry for her and I can’t get angry at her, I see both sides at the same time and that she is like a prisoner of her own offended feelings. Then I wax angry or sad about myself, because I cannot help them. And what will I do next year when I no longer can talk to you?”

The flower seemed to deliberate. “You know now that an ending is full with beginnings. You will take a handful of my seeds and next spring you will plant them in the soil. They will grow and unfold and will remind you of me. You will see many more sunflowers in your life, and they will all remind you of the flower Sonja, with whom you could speak and who conversed with you in her own way, by flowering and ripening. Think of the many beginnings in that which seems like my end. Listen, do not hesitate any longer. Cut off my stem and pull the roots from the soil. I do not need them any more. Do not wait till all my seeds fall out. Do not forget: I have only blossomed in order to become ripe.”

I thought about that. She was right, even if it hurt.

“We always make a feeding spot for birds on our kitchen porch. We stick evergreen branches into the empty flower boxes like a hedge as a protection against the wind. And within that hedge there is the feeding spot.”

“My stem will make a good perch for the birds. Don’t be sad if I am no longer recognizable. I live on in each sunflower seed. Remember, each ending is full of beginnings.”

“I will do as you say. And I will plant sunflowers again. But I will give them no more names. It is better like that. You remain the One, you are like none other, you are . . . mother Sonja. Maybe I will write your story one day. Then I will tell the people: One day I knew a very special sunflower, who helped me discover that there is more power in a sunflower than in explosive bombs and aerial mines, that one blossoms in order to ripen and that all endings are full of beginnings.”

So I cut off the sunflower and carried it home carefully. Its strong stem made a great perch for the birds. I fed them part of the ripe seeds, but kept enough for the planting in spring. The flower Sonja proved to be right: All the sunflowers I see remind me of her and of our conversations in the “temporary garden.”

Chr**istmas 1945**

We had gotten a small spruce tree. Because we couldn’t buy any, I tried to make candles by pouring a brown, stearin-like substance from tin cans into glass test tubes serving as molds.

When lit, these candles didn't smell that good, but they fulfilled their purpose, even though they burned down much faster than real candles. We hand-made many little gifts. There was very little that one could buy. Our imagination was challenged to create something out of nearly nothing. While we were all immersed in these preparations, we felt connected and full of anticipation. It was as if we were celebrating the fact that we were all reunited, having survived the war safe and sound. On Christmas Eve, we lit the candles on the tree, the gifts were spread out underneath and we wished each other a merry Christmas. But someone was still missing. "Where is Mr. Magier?" My brother went to look for him and found him sitting alone in his room. He invited him to celebrate with us. "I didn't want to bother anyone," Mr. Magier said to him. "You know, you give gifts to each other for Christmas, but I don't have any. That is embarrassing to me. I can't come without gifts." Finally my brother succeeded to convince him that we would be happy to have him join our celebration with or without any gifts, because that wasn't the point at all. And so he joined us in the living room, where the table had already been set. But it must have bothered him nevertheless—he had found a gift after all and produced a little package that he handed to me with a friendly, somewhat shy smile. When I unwrapped it, I found a new pair of knee socks, beautifully red and white striped, and exactly my size. I admired them appropriately and thanked him. I had to think back to the evening when Mr. Magier had moved in with us and I had opened the door. He was the first Jew I ever met and I was very timid. My parents were not home when he arrived. It all flashed again before my inner eye, how I showed him to his room, and he pulled a roll of cookies from his pocket and offered them to me; how I was fighting an inner battle, and didn't want to accept anything from him, still swayed by the propaganda slogans of the BDM . . . until all the sudden I realized that there was a human being standing in front of me who didn't fit into any of the enemy stereotypes that they had instilled in us. I accepted the biscuit, because I didn't want to hurt his feelings. That had broken the ice. Months had passed since then, and now he was celebrating Christmas with us and gave me knee socks as a gift.

In the course of the evening he said: "You really have very little space here. Now that your son has returned, you do need a room for him. You know, I have an idea, I will go to the authorities that have referred me here and will say that this apartment is so damaged that nobody should have to live in it, and ask them to procure a new place for me to live. Then they have to withdraw the confiscation of your apartment and will never again place anyone here. Then you have your space and the authorities will leave you in peace." As much as we needed the space, we nevertheless were very sorry to lose Jakob Magier. We

would miss him. When he saw our shocked faces, he remarked: ”Oh well, I can always come back here for a game of chess.”

That is how it came about that Jakob Magier moved out the week after Christmas and the confiscation of our apartment was withdrawn. We owed him thanks for more than that: The encounter with a human being who helped us understand what it meant to “be human” more than all de-nazification programs.

My brother’s bed disappeared from the living room. He now could move into the small room that we formerly had shared, while I continued to unroll my sleeping bag in the living room, retreating to the sofa corner in the evening. Jakob Magier still visited us a few times, then we never heard from him again.

I remember Christmas 1945 for yet another reason. It left me asking, Why do we celebrate Christmas? I realized that we actually didn’t know why and were just following the general customs. When we were children, the light of the Christmas tree and the gifts illuminated that season—and the fact that we were allowed to play with special toys during that time which were brought down from the attic, where they usually were stored: my brother’s toy train set and my doll’s house, whose rooms looked more like those of a castle—it was a valuable heirloom.

But we both were far too old to celebrate Christmas in that fashion. Also, both the train set and the doll’s house had been destroyed during the last bomb raid. Nothing remained to fill that gap. It started already with the Christmas songs in the radio, which were unacceptable to us due to their Christian content. “High night of clear stars” was the only Christmas carol that I could honestly sing and without second thoughts. But no one joined in with me, it was not a family custom. Even with that song I had an uneasy feeling at times, which I never fully admitted to myself. Otherwise there wouldn’t have been even one song left to sing “honestly” and with conviction. I loved the melody, but the text seemed to stem from an awkward attempt of the author to consciously avoid all Christian notions and yet couldn’t quite do without them.

A Change of Schools

After New Year’s of 1946, the schools started up again and one day I was surprisingly asked to come to the principal’s office. I hadn’t done anything wrong, so I calmly anticipated the meeting with the principal. In Freudenstadt, he had been able to take over the nearly fully furnished home of my host mother, when she moved back to her parents farm with her three children after her husband had been reported missing in Russia. Because of that, this principal and his wife no longer had to stay at a hotel. At the time he was really glad about that.

The Mörike High School now was re-named "Evangelical Daughters' Institute," the same name it had had before 1937. It had been spared shutdown by the Nazis only because the city of Stuttgart had taken it over. The other private schools, like the Free Waldorf School and the Catholic Girl's High School St. Agnes, had been shut down in 1938. I didn't understand that at the time. I also was little concerned that I was now a student of the Evangelical Daughters' Institute. It was my school, even though it now had a different name. I noticed only one change, when the principal held morning prayer meetings. That's when I discovered that he was a Protestant minister. I didn't care. I like to attend this school, knew the teachers and after the evacuation I had reconnected with my classmates there. When I didn't attend religious studies class, I thought that a matter of course, since I did not belong to any church. I just had an hour of study hall during that time. But it had attracted attention. The principal let me know that I had to attend religious studies class.

I told him that I did not belong to a church and also hadn't been confirmed. He insisted on my attendance in that class, because after all I was in a private denominational school. I didn't see any validity in his reasoning and tried to explain to him that I couldn't attend a religious study class without believing in anything, certainly not just to conform to some rules. He remarked that I would then have to leave the school and transfer to a public school. So I said good-bye to him and enrolled at the Katharinenstift, a reputable public high school for girls. My parents only needed to confirm this surprising change of schools from their side! They had no objections. My way to school didn't change, because both schools shared the same building. The facilities of the Katharinenstift had been destroyed by bombs and hadn't been rebuilt yet. The schedules of the two schools interfaced in shifts. So I continued to head the same way, most of the time clinging to the outer platform of a crowded tramway. There was some change: I had to get used to the new teachers and classmates and catch up by learning pages and pages of English vocabulary. But while the other girls attended their religious studies class, I had study hall. That was the key difference. At that time I basically was still afraid to once more be deceived and disillusioned by adults. The shock and the confusion at the discovery of having followed a criminal regime had inflicted deep wounds. I had come to the resolution: "If there is any certainty anywhere, it would have to come from the inside." Sometimes, when I was all alone, I quietly said to myself: "God, if you should exist, then please let me know."

The Waldorf Years

When I heard that the Free Waldorf School Uhlandshöhe had been re-opened in fall of 1945, I told my parents that I was convinced I was meant to go to that school. They agreed on condition that they would not have to pay more than the fee in the government school, as my father's salary was not sufficient. We were poor after he had lost his former job. Neighbors who were influential in the Waldorf School and whom I had asked for advice, found a sponsor for me and so my parents had nothing against my wish to attend the Waldorf School. But what had given me the idea to become a student in the Waldorf School? Two important events paved the way for this decision—and both times books were involved:

One day I had discovered in my mother's bookcase a book whose foreign sounding name *Phaidon* attracted my attention, especially as I found the name "Socrates" while leafing through it. I had heard of him and knew that he was a wise man, a great Greek philosopher.

I began to read and was fascinated: for the first time I was able to read and understand a book that didn't just tell a story but developed trails of thought. I could follow these thoughts and this experience exhilarated me; yes, I took my place so-to-say among the students of Socrates and opened myself to his questions which led me further and further, soliciting knowledge from deep within myself—a knowledge I hadn't formerly been aware of. At that time I was about 13 years old.

These talks between Socrates and his students happened in prison, shortly before he was executed, and he helps them to realize that there is an immortal soul—that fact in particular deeply impressed me. I sensed that no man would deceive another in the face of death. I followed with mounting excitement the entire thought sequence of his argument—and at the end I was convinced that I had made an overwhelming discovery: there is an immortal soul; there is something in me, in all of us, that cannot be destroyed—by no worldly power! That was the key discovery, like a first breakthrough into the reality of a spiritual world. There was something in me that didn't come from my parents, something that could not be destroyed. I felt that I should keep this secret and shouldn't talk about it with anyone.

Around that same time I chanced upon a second book; it also stood in my mother's bookcase. It was written by an author, Gertrud Prellwitz, who is forgotten nowadays; she did have a certain readership though in the time after World War I in the circles of the Youth Movement of the twenties. The book was called Drude and its protagonist was a young girl, the daughter of an artist. She had died in Berlin in 1918—being barely 18 years of age. This girl Drude had

attended a "Wald School," a school for both girls and boys that didn't have regular classes but lesson blocks (modeled after the Odenwaldschule, a private school of the reform school movement of that time). I knew that Drude had lived. And now it happened that in my solitary quest for meaning, for a spiritual reality, I met Drude like a companion on the way. I talked with her in my mind, I dreamt of her, she became close to me like a friend. If there was a school like that I wanted to find it! The step from *Wald Schule* (forest school) to *Waldorfschule* was a small one, especially when I heard that they were also giving lesson blocks there, that it was a co-ed school, and that the curriculum included music, drama, painting, modeling with clay, and horticulture. In my imagination I sensed Drude guiding me on a spiritual plane towards this school, since I had no one else anymore to lead me.

When the Waldorf school opened the parallel B classes in fall of 1946 I was accepted: I was assigned to class 8b, with Herr Kõgel as our classroom teacher. My parents had reasons of their own to agree to this change of schools. I would no longer have to spend nearly an hour driving across town hanging onto the outer steps of overcrowded tramways, a common occurrence in those days. Since many trams had been destroyed in the war, one often had to get to school in this rather unsafe way. Sometimes a policeman ordered those hanging on to the outer platforms to get off, but that only meant one would take the next tram in the same way and keep going. Sometimes cars and trucks would pass dangerously close to us. That was exciting, but since we all were careful it was rare that anything happened. We students made a sport of this way of catching a tram ride. But now I could walk to my new school in ten minutes.

A New World Opens for Me

A new world opened up for me. In September of 1946, a healing impulse started to permeate my broken world. New horizons opened up in history class: I learned of ancient India with texts from the Vedas, then Persia with Zarathustra and Mesopotamia with the Epic of Gilgamesch, which particularly fascinated me. Eurhythmy was equally new for me. It felt good and revealed to me the connection between speech, music, and movement. I felt in these classes like a "whole person." I experienced Eurythmy as a healing and harmonizing influence.

I fully immersed myself in the colorful world of the school and absorbed everything like a drink after a drought. I think that was characteristic for my whole generation. We were starving for spiritual values.

Another new thing was the choral recitation before the classes started. I was not used to learning a poem only through listening and speaking and I found it

difficult at first. Later I noticed that even after many years I still could remember the texts that I had learned that way while things that I had learned by heart from books had long been forgotten. Reciting in chorus with others awakened in me a joy for the spoken word. The sounding body of a speaking choir was a new, strong experience. I could feel safe in it, carried by the entire class; I could forget my own shyness and myself and fully open up to the poetry.

I absorbed everything that was helpful in my solitary quest, but at the same time I clammed up when Rudolf Steiner was mentioned. I saw his picture in many of the rooms and regarded it with a mixture of awe and discomfort: I was very much afraid to be once more disillusioned. I thought to myself: He may have been a very good and wise person, but who can give me a guarantee that he didn't err? Hadn't I been horribly deceived once before? I still hadn't gotten over that and feared it could happen again. But since—as I learned later—Rudolf Steiner had well nigh forbidden his teachers to teach anthroposophy in class, and since our teachers abided by that wish, it was easy to live with these ambiguous feelings of wanting to keep a certain distance. They were not very important either. There was too much that was new and that I could fully and completely engage in.

For example, there were the horticulture classes. Working in the school garden I experienced the seasons much more intensely than ever before. I learned how to start a compost pile, and many other things that came in handy when I worked in Africa many years later. Weeding was not popular, especially when dealing with quack grass whose extensive root system had to be completely dug out, or it would keep proliferating. Mr. Ebert, our horticulture teacher, had assigned me a garden plot that was particularly infested with quack grass, and I struggled with getting this weed under control. It seemed to me that all the others had simpler tasks to do. But just when I wanted to feel sorry for myself because of my laborious task, Mr. Ebert suddenly stepped beside me and said quietly: "That will turn out good! I entrusted this lot to you in particular, because you are conscientious and I can rely on you. Here only a responsible person can make a difference!" Then he went back to the others. But I saw my work all the sudden in a different light and tackled the task with renewed fervor. I could have gone on weeding like that for hours, because his recognition inspired me so much.

One day a professional shoemaker was invited to the school, who taught us how to perform simple shoe repairs. On many an afternoon he would show us how to put new soles or heels on shoes, and I then proudly repaired the shoes of my family. That was a big help. At that time there was a lack of shoemakers and other craftsmen. Many had been killed in the war and others were still in the Allied prison camps.

There was a rhythm pulsing through the life of our school, that I gladly joined: the lesson blocks, monthly celebrations, school festivities, concerts, the final theater performances of the senior classes, the school Mardi Gras, the surveying class on the Suabian Alb in the ninth grade (which made mathematics palatable to even a weak mathematician like myself) and many other events. There was also something more: I learned—very timidly at first—as if stepping on unknown ground, unsure if it will carry me—for the first time in my life how to celebrate Christmas! There were the Christmas celebrations in the classes, especially also the Oberufer Christmas plays whose language was strange to me at first; but later I was able to understand them on a deeper level, in part because of the reverence with which the teachers performed them. That reverence took hold of me too and I sensed a spiritual world hidden behind the odd language and its content—a world that had been closed to me so far. The same thing occurred in the senior choir under Friedrich Wickenhauser, when we sang Motets by Bruckner, or Palestrina, Haydn, and Bach. I lived in this music; it opened for me the gates to a different reality, which I slowly started to approach. We performed the Final Fugue with Choir and Orchestra of Anton Bruckner's TeDeum; we also sang his Motets in choir, which resonated with my innermost search and my questions.

When Mr. Wickenhauser lent me a violin one day and arranged for me to take violin lessons from Gerhard Labudde, a music major at the University and former Waldorf student, he fulfilled an old dream of mine. My father was unemployed, and we would have never been able to buy a violin. From that time on I repeatedly worked in a manufacturing plant during summer vacations to earn money for the violin lessons and the reduced tuition. Gerhard Labudde had a special pedagogic talent. He managed to strengthen my self-esteem and to overcome my insecurity through music, so that I finally felt confident enough to play in front of other people during a home concert.

Tension at Home

At home the tensions between my parents grew, and the difficulties with my brother in particular increased as well. He had come back from the POW camp towards the end of 1945. My parents couldn't deal with him becoming an adult, and the fact that the war had practically catapulted him prematurely into adulthood left them helpless. He was unable to speak about his experiences during the war and in the POW camp. Neither did we ever talk about how we experienced the crash of the Hitler Regime. But our long-repressed conflicts broke open now, no longer glossed over by the illusion of a shared ideology, which had hidden these differences.

Every day there was trouble. I suffered with him, but I also felt for our parents, who didn't know how to deal with these conflicts.

More and more I lived in two different, nearly opposing worlds, whose invisible borders I had to cross every day. I tried to separate these worlds as well as I could, trying to shield my school world from that of our family. I for example succeeded in nearly never telling my parents about parent-teacher conferences. If it had been possible, I would even have liked to stay at school overnight. I couldn't speak with anyone about what was happening at home. It would have seemed disloyal to me. Even though I loved and revered my teachers, it would have been unthinkable for me to draw them into my confidence and to burden them with the troubles of my family. I didn't want the shadows of my family life to intrude on the world of my school, where I lived, breathed, and where I could unfold, where I was free of the oppressive scenes that took place at home. I also was not at all used to sharing my thoughts and expressing myself. I had gotten used to having to do everything by myself. Even in class I could for years express myself practically only in writing, except for short answers stating facts. To recite a poem or give a presentation was completely impossible for me. I felt strangled by fear: "If you said something, a dam would break and you would tell more than you want to tell; you would let on what's really happening and the shadows of the other world would permeate the world of the school."

Dr. Herbert Hahn

So I rather let the teachers believe that I hadn't learned a particular poem, than overcoming my fears and reciting the poem in front of the class. But then something happened, and it happened in the German block with Dr. Herbert Hahn.

We had to memorize the poem: *Urworte Orphisch* (Primal Words Orphic) by Goethe. It must have been in 12th grade. I had been touched by the poem, knew it by heart, but when one morning Dr. Hahn suddenly asked me to recite it, I once again stood there and couldn't utter a sound. I was allowed to sit down again, no fuss, and a classmate recited the poem instead of me. At that point I really got mad at myself. I was not at all satisfied with the intonation that I heard others give the poem. I felt within me how it should sound.

In the evening of that day when I was alone at home I went into my room and looked a long time at the Goethe picture that stood on my table; I fully opened myself to the meaning that Goethe himself would have wanted to express in this poem. After that I began to recite it out loud; I first had to get used to my own voice which I never before had heard like that. I realized for the first time

what I could express with my voice. I was fascinated and repeated the verses, in order to express with utmost purity the meaning and the changing moods of the different parts of the poem; in this striving I forgot myself and felt as if released. A breakthrough had happened. I now knew that I could give form and expression through the word and through my voice! I had the gift of imbuing a text with life.

The next morning something unprecedented happened. Dr. Hahn asked me again—right at the beginning of the class—to be the first one to recite *Urworte Orphisch*. I rose and was filled by the thought, "I will show them how Goethe had meant it to sound. It just has to come alive for them!" I began and spoke the poem from beginning to end, forgetting myself, as if I had broken free. When I had ended, the class was completely quiet. I sat down, and was suddenly attacked again by my fears; I would have liked to crawl into a mouse hole. I wasn't even able to look up anymore. But Dr. Hahn, after a short, appreciative "thank you" quite naturally went on to call up the next student. If he had made any gesture, said a word about the unusual thing that had happened with me—I would have retreated again into terrified silence. But his behavior allowed me to recollect myself during the class.

Sophocles and Ernst Weissert

Some time later we were supposed to think about the senior class play. We decided on *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles. The auditions began. I had counted on being cast as one of the members of the Choir of Thebes, since there was only one female lead role, that of Jocasta, and we had several good actresses in the class, whose talent was known. When Ernst Weissert asked me to read the part of Jocasta I didn't think anything but: "Now I have the opportunity to let this monologue come to life, and I want to make good use of that opportunity."

After several others had read the same monologue, Mr. Weissert asked the class who should play the role of Jocasta? The answer was unanimous: Margarethe! I could hardly believe it! Only now did I realize the ramifications: memorizing the part, being on stage, a hall full of spectators, I should do all this, I, who tended to still stumble over her own feet when someone as much as looked at me intently? Did Mr. Weissert know what had happened in the block with Dr. Hahn? Did he trust me to succeed? Then I mustn't disappoint him or the class! And it happened again: I opened myself fully and entered the role of Jocasta; I forgot my fears and myself. There was a completely new certainty within me: I would succeed. And that's what happened: I was Jocasta throughout the entire time of rehearsals and performances, and I played the role without any stage fright, as if set free. I moved on stage with certainty as if I had never done

anything else. My partner in the drama, Bernhard Rund, gave a great performance as Oedipus, and we mutually inspired each other to achieve ever higher excellence in the play.

After the last performance, Mr. Weissert asked me what I wanted to do after graduation. “First I need to make some money to finance my university studies, and then I would like perhaps to study German or Art.” Mr. Weissert: “Have you thought of studying to be an actress? You have the talent for it.” I was at first just speechless. After a while I replied with that strange clairvoyance one sometimes has at that age: “I don’t believe I could do this all the time. I have been Jocasta for weeks now. I would immerse myself into any other role just as intensely. I am afraid after sometime I wouldn’t know anymore who I really am.”

At that point I wouldn’t have been strong enough yet to withstand such a strain. But I have never forgotten how my teachers have waited patiently throughout the years for the right moment to come, and when the time for my breakthrough arrived, how they reacted immediately by entrusting me with the lead role in the senior play. The support of the entire class was a great encouragement for me as well. These experiences and others like it have been key influences on my later pedagogic work as a teacher.

After the Waldorf School

After the 12th grade I had to say good-bye to the Waldorf school with a heavy heart, because I had to transfer over into the matriculation class at the Königin-Olga-Stift. There was an agreement between the two schools that students who were weak in mathematics would go to the Königin-Olga-Stift during the final year of school to prepare there for the extensive final state exams (matriculation exam: Abitur). A few students from the Waldorf School Reutlingen joined us as well. The demands in math were not as high in the public school as they had been at the Waldorf School, where the students had to pass an external state exam after the 13th grade. It was a short school year when we were transferred, due to changing the begin of a school year from winter to fall. So we had to cover a lot of material in a short time; but we succeeded without difficulties. We were well received by the faculty and the students. In some subjects we were ahead of the others, in others we had to study up on some things.

I had learned at the Waldorf school to keep inquiring about the respective subjects guided by my own interest and to look for cross-references and connections. I was not concerned with the grade I received in math and physics, because I could gain a good grade point average by excelling in other classes; I also knew I wouldn’t want to pursue a study of these subjects. It was not until

many years later that I got interested in questions of modern physics. I think it is a strength of Waldorf education, as I experienced it, that one learns to think independently and approaches new situations creatively. It also awakens in us the realization that learning is a lifelong process.

Becoming a Christian

In March 1952 I graduated from Königin-Olga-Stift. While preparing for the matriculation exams, I had simultaneously undergone a deep-reaching inner development, which finally led to the decision to seek acceptance into the Catholic Church. This had been building up in me for several years. At the Waldorf school I got in touch with Christianity while I already was a seeker. In those years I had a profound experience of the Christ. When least expecting it, one day while reading the gospels (which had remained inaccessible to me during several previous attempts) Christ became such a living presence for me that I was struck as if by lightning by the realization: He lives, He speaks these words to me personally, He knows about me, He is present! I did not hear or see anything. I had no vision. But his presence filled the whole room; He was more real than all I could hear, see or touch. This experience was not influenced by concepts of those who had been raised in the church tradition. It was a direct encounter; even the words of the gospel were only the point of contact. This experience repeated itself—ever new and fresh—throughout the next weeks and months, whenever I read the New Testament. I hid this experience from the people surrounding me. I trusted my inner guidance, which finally allowed me to recognize that one cannot be a Christian on one's own, but needs a community.

So the next phase of my quest began, during which the figure of Francis of Assisi was my constant companion; I had come to know about him through the frescos of Giotto during art class, and I was familiar with his Canticle to the Sun through my Waldorf education.

In this search for a church community, the painful question emerged: Why can't I just become a Christian? Why did one have to be catholic, protestant, orthodox or reformed or anything with a label? When I reviewed the entire burden of Christendom, the dark chapters of church history and the schism into a variety of churches and communities of various faiths, I found it difficult to make a decision. The phrase of "salvation is only within the Church"—so often misused and torn out of context—was horrendous to me and contradicted the spirit of the gospels. Only when I saw it in its proper time constraints and gave it relative validity within that matrix, it no longer posed an insurmountable obstacle to me. But the problem remained. Could it be true that whatever church I would choose, that step would forever separate me from the others? In

addition, the Catholic Church had always been deeply rejected by my family. This all was very burdensome to me. Later these were the very experiences that prompted me to become involved in ecumenism and opened many doors for me.

In spite of all reservations and the knowledge about the dark chapters in church history, I decided to join the Catholic Church, fully knowing that I would find not only Christ and people trying to walk in his steps, but also the burden of a nearly two thousand year history with all its light and also its deep shadows.

Already years before Vatican Council II, I had experienced the renewed liturgy of the Holy Week, in particular the celebration of the Easter Vigil night which goes back to the early time of the church and that had been forgotten for a long time; the impression remained: a church that possesses such a liturgy and is able to re-awaken it after such long hibernation, will also find the strength to renew itself. Through the liturgy and the sacraments—even in their pre-council form—I was touched by a Mystery that had become a living reality for the early Christians—it touched me beyond all the historical overlays and beyond all human failures. I felt met and taken serious in my entire being—spirit, soul and body—in particular by the symbolic language of the liturgy.

From the beginning, my approach to the church was following in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. My decision was made in an ancient Franciscan monastery from the 13th century, San Francesco in Fiesole near Florence, which I had visited during an art excursion of the Waldorf school. The vision of St. Francis was that of the church as a community of brothers and sisters with no higher or lower ranks, no positions of power, and no possessions at the expense of others, where faith is a shared and personal, responsive listening to the will of God, transposing the gospels into a lived reality; this never attained and yet ever newly inspiring ideal determined my choice.

Being Received in the Catholic Church

In April 1952, just after my matriculation, I was received into the Catholic Church. It was a peculiar synchronicity that the priest, who prepared me for this step, had taught catholic religious studies at the Stuttgart Waldorf School for years, and he held that school in high esteem. I only came to know about that later. I had never met him at the Waldorf school, since I had taken part in the non-denominational religious studies course.

In spite of all my efforts to bring about a peaceful solution, my joining the Catholic Church caused a rift between my parents and me. They gave me the choice to either leave the church or to leave the house. With a heavy heart I decided to do the latter and traveled to Switzerland where I worked until I came of legal age. Since I had no work permit, I could only work for food and lodging,

and was not allowed to earn money. I worked as a household helper in various places. After a few weeks my parents had the police search for me to bring me back to Germany, and so I was forced to frequently move from job to job and town to town. Finally the German consul in Zürich took up my cause, after having learned the true reason for my Swiss exile. He had followed me to the St. Gallen Highlands, where I was just working at House Margess near Flums, a vacation facility for children in need of recuperation.

When the consul heard my story, he told me I could call him day or night if I should get into any difficulties. He could hardly believe that such a case of persecution due to membership in a church could actually happen in 20th century Germany.

According to the law at that time, I came of age when turning 21. Now I could return to Germany.

In the Footsteps of St Francis of Assisi

In 1954 I joined the Franciscan Sisters of Siessen, an educational Order that had over time also taken on other tasks, such as in the fields of nursing, pastoral care, and social work. After my novitiate year, I took my first temporal vows and then was sent to the University of Freiburg where I studied German and English literature and linguistics and also did my teachers' training course. I wrote my pedagogic thesis on "Waldorf Pedagogy and Private Church Schools: A Comparison."

During that time I often attended as a Sister, the Open Summer Courses on Education, organized by the Waldorf school at Uhlandshöhe. Our Superior General fully agreed with my attendance and encouraged me to participate; she still knew and valued the Waldorf school from the time when she had been the Principal (Headmistress) of our St Agnes Girls' High School in Stuttgart. She repeatedly said that she liked me keeping in contact with my former school. There was much good there, she said, and she had the impression that this school had given me much of value. She told me that there had been good contacts with Waldorf teachers during private school conferences. After the war one had together looked for common ways of starting over and led joint negotiations with government agencies. She felt that there were good impulses coming from the Waldorf schools.

Only now did I come to know the theories that informed the practical education I had experienced as a student. I read the humanistic and pedagogic writings of Rudolf Steiner and studied the lesson plans. Much of what I had witnessed as a student became alive again for me. Now I could reflect upon it.

After finishing my assistant teacher years, and after passing the pedagogic state exams I taught for seven years at the *Aufbaugymnasium* (Integrated High School) of our Convent Siessen near Saulgau. Shortly after starting there, I founded a school theater, with the male roles being played by the students of the Public High School (*Aufbaugymnasium*) Saulgau. That was an innovative thing to do at that time, which soon became part of the school activities. Our school director gave me free reign. I wanted to enable the students to experience some of what I had learned at the Waldorf school: this great common involvement in performing a theater play, where everyone can contribute their talents. We performed *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder. It was a great success. Here, as on many other occasions, my educational creativity was inspired by Waldorf pedagogy, in spite of the constraints of a state-imposed curriculum.

Africa

In 1973 I volunteered to go to South Africa, where our sisters were teaching more than 400 girls and boys of the Basotho and Tswana tribes at a high school with boarding facilities; they didn't have enough teachers there for that many students. The school was situated in a rural area, with its own water supply from drill wells and its own system of trash removal. Much had to be improvised. I stayed and taught there for 19 years. The challenge was to immerse oneself into another culture and language, and my African sisters helped me greatly in that endeavor.

There were barely any teaching materials when I started. I had to start from the very beginning, improvise, learning to understand a different way of thinking and feeling—and all of this happened in the context of an apartheid society which poisoned human relations and sowed mistrust. But there were also a lot of positive possibilities: An ecumenical movement within which the various churches cooperated in common concern for the African people, a movement which sought to undercut apartheid policy. We were free to teach ecumenical religion in school, and we had access to ecumenical learning materials in the framework of the GABA Program that had been produced cooperatively by all the main line churches in East Africa; it was a sensitive and creative program and had been given full support by the East African Catholic Bishops Conference. This program includes the values of African cultures and fosters the mutual understanding of cultures, races, and religions. Since our students belonged to different churches, the ecumenical GABA Program was doing them the most justice.

In class and in church service, drama and dance were natural means of expression. Danced prayers, accompanied by Marimba instruments, and here and

there, instead of a sermon, a skit with a scene from the gospels performed by the students in church—this all was part of our church services, not only on holidays. As far as possible in the framework of a public school, I could make use of the natural talent of the Africans for drama and expression, for dance and rhythm, while I sought to counterbalance the much too one-sided curriculum of the African schools.

How did my Waldorf school experience help me to meet all the challenges in South Africa? I believe it made it easier for me to meet a new situation creatively. I had changed locations and I learned to see Europe for the first time from the African perspective. From there, it all looks very different.

I quickly adapted to working under basic conditions, to achieve something with few means and I was glad to be able to perform smaller repairs myself when the need arose. I also continued to need artistic expression of some sort. When the opportunity presented itself, I dared to start sculpting and made two stone sculptures. The intense light of Africa actually challenged one to do a sculpture. Hopefully my students benefited from the patience I had to develop while working with stone!

I was well aware that there were a number of traumatized children sitting in my class, who had been exposed to awful experiences in their settlements during the riots. Some had been witnesses of "necklacing" (a person who was accused of being a sellout, an informer to the white government, would be forced to have a car tyre pulled over his body, around his neck, have paraffin poured over him and was then given matches he had to light and set himself on fire). There was often an atmosphere of fear and panic. All I could do was to be with them in their struggle and pain. Sometimes I saw healing taking place in the midst of the unrest and violence. At times when I found it difficult to understand a student's behavior it often helped me to meditate on him or her and then I could see that student in a new light. But much remained patchwork, because with a workload of up to 39 classroom lessons (of 35 minutes each) per week and the additional work in the boarding facilities requiring a lot of energy, I reached my limits again and again.

In South Africa I began to read the major works of Rudolf Steiner. Only now was the time ripe for me to handle them. I had anthroposophical friends, where I could borrow books and many questions were raised and answered in my conversations with them.

Africa gave me the encounter with people of other cultures and other religions. My own quest had been a preparation for meeting people not through preconceived notions and rigid concepts, but through respect for their own path and by knowing that "God always was there before"; I had learned that every

person—consciously or unconsciously—is carrying that which—in the language of the bible—is called “formed in His image”; other religions may name it differently but it always encircles the same mystery, which human speech and imagination can only approximate and express but insufficiently.

My involvement in various other churches, where I gave meditation classes and retreats, encounters with Sufis, with Buddhism and Islam and the meditation courses in an ashram in South Africa—this all helped my understanding of Ecumene to expand beyond the various Christian denominations to include other religions. I often thought about the words Dr. Herbert Hahn had spoken to us while reading with us the confessions of St. Augustine in non-denominational religious study class: “We must have reverence for the religious destiny of each human being.”

Rudolf Steiner said, teachers should meditate in preparation for their classes, so that they can present living concepts to the students which can then develop further, because only such concepts can continue to be meaningful in one’s life—I certainly experienced the truth of that in my own life. I could build upon the foundation that Waldorf education had provided. Most of all I have experienced my time at the Waldorf school as a healing influence, which like deep groundwater gave rise to life even in a time of drought.

It has nothing to do with glorifying the past when I say that my experiences at the Waldorf school were predominantly positive; it reflects my experiences and my personal situation at that time.

Looking back I would wish that there would have been some help available to us adolescents for integrating our sexuality; not necessarily as a separate class of sexual education, but integrated into the overall curriculum. As far as I know this is being offered now, as also problems of our times are addressed in general. I also would welcome a practice of conflict identification, peaceful conflict resolution, and of methods of active nonviolence. I had to learn all that in the conflict-loaded atmosphere of South Africa in the midst of political unrests.

Return to Germany

After working in South Africa for twenty-one years, I was called to Bonn in 1994 to the mission center of the Franciscans to take over the general secretariat of an international program of Franciscan spirituality that I had already worked with in South Africa. It is a course in Franciscan spirituality, which has become instrumental in the renewal of Franciscan communities worldwide. The authors come from different cultures and Franciscan communities. The course explores how the life testimonies of Francis and Clara can be fruitful for our existence and work today. The course does not attempt to imitate the past, but to find new

paths nowadays in that same spirit. The course is ecumenical and includes Franciscan orders and groups in the other churches.

The work with this course program and its new edition, which has been translated into seventeen languages, brought me many new challenges. For example, I also participated in teaching introductory courses in Africa and Asia. Among others, I traveled to Kenya, Malawi, Cameroon, the Philippines, and to China (Hong Kong, Macau and to the southern mainland). My service to the international Franciscan family extended across five continents, from Canada to Papua New Guinea. My own order gave me leave for this task and I lived for eight years in the Bad Godesberg mission center, a small international Franciscan community of two sisters and six brothers (of German, Indian, and Brazilian nationality). We had fifteen employees in the project departments for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and in the bureau for human rights and education.

This course program has challenged us and has given so much to me and many brothers and sisters: the advocacy for justice, peace, and the stewardship of creation, engagement on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged; the prophetic criticism of systems such as capitalism and Marxism and a continued critical questioning of the power structures in church and society, always guided by the spirit of the gospels. How must we change our lives, how must grown structures and institutions change in order to accompany men and women of our times on their own quest and to make the world a better place to live in? The course provides inspiration for this quest.

My service for this project ended in August 2002. A successor took over my work and I have returned to the motherhouse of the Franciscan Sisters. My former office has been relocated to Würzburg—with a new set of employees—where the work continues on a wider scale. I now have the time to write a long-planned book.

My understanding of church, religion, and God, of being human, and being in the world in which we live today—this understanding has undergone crucial changes in the course of the years through these encounters with people and ideas. I am still on the path, still in the process of learning. I still have contact with many of my former schoolmates. I thank all those who have given their support, so that in the midst of danger also the saving force could grow and overcome all obstacles.

Epilogue

They shall once
Be able to say
About me:
She loved bridges
And sunrises
And refused
To have enemies.

Afterword

For clarification I should like to point out that two independent texts, written at different times and for different purposes,have been merged here by the editor to make one consecutive story. The first text, "A Waldorf Biography," was written as part of a project of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany. In 1998 former students were invited to write a short biography with the emphasis on our experience of Waldorf pedagogy and its influence on our life: what had proved to be helpful and also what had been a hindrance or had even caused damage. We were encouraged to take a critical look at our experiences and give an honest account. The ensuing short biographies were intended to be a help for present and future teachers.

The second text "The Twelfth Year" is a chapter taken from the book I am presently writing. Both texts I had sent to Trauger Groh, who, between 1946 and 1952 was a classmate of mine at the Stuttgart Waldorf School. He shared them with others who took an interest in them. So it happened that the two texts were made into one and translated into English with the intention to have them printed. Certain repetitions are therefore unavoidable.

Following a visit to U.S.A. I had the opportunity to read and to correct the combined texts. May the outcome, "Memories of a former Waldorf School Student," serve to inspire and affirm teachers, parents and students in their effort of creating a school community in which healing can happen and young people can discover and develop all their gifts and talents.

I thank Karin Di Giacomo for the great work of translation, and the editor, David Mitchell, for his initiative and dedication to have these texts published.

– Margarethe Mehren

The following is the previous article in the native German language for use by upper grade language classes.

– Editor

Biographien ehemaliger Waldorfschüler

by
Margarethe Mehren

“Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch.”

Dieses Hölderlin-Wort hat für mich im Laufe meines Lebens immer tiefere Bedeutung angenommen, und so soll es diesem biographischen Versuch vorangestellt sein.

Ich wurde am 21. Mai 1933 in Stuttgart geboren. Mein Vater, Ernst Mehren, stammte aus Bendorf bei Koblenz am Rhein. Er wäre gerne Musiker geworden, musste aber Kaufmann werden, in der Hoffnung, später das Geschäft seines Vaters zu übernehmen. Der Erste Weltkrieg, an dem mein Vater als junger Kriegsfreiwilliger teilnahm, und die darauf folgende Weltwirtschaftskrise bereiteten den Plänen ein Ende, die elterliche Spedition am Rhein übernehmen zu können. Ein kleines Lebensmittelgeschäft war alles, was übrig blieb. Er liess sich in Stuttgart nieder, wo er auf einer Geschäftsreise meine Mutter kennengelernt hatte. Spätere Versuche, ins Rheinland zurückzukehren und sich dort selbständig zu machen, scheiterten immer daran, dass meine Mutter es nicht übers Herz brachte, Stuttgart zu verlassen und ins Rheinland zu ziehen. Alle paar Jahre wurde ein Umzug ins Rheinland geplant, wir Kinder verabschiedeten uns schon von unseren Kameraden , manchmal stand schon fast der Möbelwagen vor dem Haus, und dann kam es im letzten Augenblick doch nicht zum Umzug. Das bewirkte in mir schon früh ein Empfinden dafür, gleichsam auf Abruf zu leben.

Meine Mutter war Melanie Mehren, geborene Klemm, zwar in Ludwigsburg geboren, aber in Stuttgart aufgewachsen. Sie malte und zeichnete gut, interessierte sich für Kunst und Literatur. Als Hausfrau fühlte sie sich sicher nicht ausgefüllt. Das Leben in der kleinen Mietswohnung, in einem Haus, in dem neun Familien wohnten, war in sich schon belastend. Ich h rte immer wieder die Erwachsenen sagen, “wenn ich nur dieses oder jenes getan hätte,...wenn ich nur damals diese Gelegenheit benützt hätte, dann...” Würde es mir auch so ergehen? Was musste man tun, um dem zu entgehen? Einmal fragte ich meine Eltern, wer Gott ist, und ob es ihn gibt. Ich hatte andere Kinder auf dem Schulweg davon sprechen hören. Ich bekam zur Antwort, das könne niemand wissen. Vielleicht gäbe es so etwas wie ein höheres Wesen, vielleicht auch nicht. Das befriedigte mich nicht. Aber ich stellte diese Frage nie wieder. Wenn die Erwachsenen dies nicht wussten, musste

ich es eben selber herausfinden. Ich begann alle Bücher zu lesen, die ich bekommen konnte.

In vielem orientierte ich mich am Beispiel meines um fünf Jahre älteren Bruders, den ich sehr bewunderte. Als er ins Gymnasium ging, stand für mich fest, dass ich das auch tun würde. Und als ich entdeckte, dass er Gedichte schrieb, fing ich mit neun Jahren auch an, Gedichte und kurze Geschichten zu schreiben. Meine Schulaufsätze betrachtete ich mehr und mehr als Übungen für einen zukünftigen Beruf als Schriftstellerin. Es löste meine ersten kindlichen Berufstraum ab. Ich hatte zuvor Schäfer auf der Schwäbischen Alb werden wollen, seit ich bei einem Ausflug auf die Teck einem Schäfer mit seiner Herde begegnet war und mich mit ihm und den Tieren angefreundet hatte.

Dass ich im Jahr der Machtergreifung Hitlers geboren war, hat die ersten 12 Jahre meines Lebens entscheidend geprägt. Ich war in meiner Umgebung ganz dem Einfluss der nationalsozialistischen Propaganda ausgeliefert und lernte kaum etwas anderes kennen. Meine Eltern gehörten ursprünglich der Evangelischen Kirche an, müssen aber wohl bald nach meiner Geburt aus der Kirche ausgetreten sein, und so wuchsen mein Bruder Günther und ich ganz religionslos auf. Hitlers Propaganda, aber auch pers nliche Enttäuschungen und Missverständnisse haben offenbar zum Kirchenaustritt meiner Eltern geführt. Ihre Erfahrung des Ersten Weltkrieges und die Ereignisse der darauf folgenden Jahre haben meine Eltern wohl anfällig gemacht für die Versprechungen des Hitler-Regimes. Mein Vater wurde “Blockleiter” in der NSDAP.

Meine Kindheit war überschattet von den Spannungen in der Ehe meiner Eltern und sehr bald auch von den Kriegsjahren und den Bombenangriffen auf Stuttgart. Mein Bruder wurde kaum 15 jährig als Luftwaffenhelfer eingezogen, und für mich gab es auch bald darauf die erste einschneidende Veränderung durch die Kinderlandverschickung.

Nach vier Jahren Grundschule war ich auf meinen eigenen sehr bestimmten Wunsch hin in die damalige Uhlandoberschule aufgenommen worden, die anf nglich noch in den Räumen der von Hitler geschlossenen Waldorfschule an der Uhlandshöhe untergebracht war. Die Aufnahmeprüfung für die Oberschule hatte ich dort in einem Klassenzimmer der grossen Hofbaracke geschrieben! Damals deutete nichts darauf hin, dass ich einmal fünf entscheidende Jahre meines Lebens an diesem Ort verbringen würde.

Bald darauf zogen die Klassen um und wurden der Mörike-Oberschule in Stuttgart-Heslach angegliedert, und wiederum nur einige Monate später kam es im Winter 1943 zur Evakuierung der Stuttgarter Schulen. Unsere Klassen wurden nach Freudenstadt im Schwarzwald verlagert. Diese Stadt war zur internationalen Rote-Kreuz-Stadt erklärt (viele Lazarette befanden sich dort) und galt daher als sicherer Ort für evakuierte Schulen.

Ich war inzwischen ein Jungm del geworden, trug stolz meine Uniform und war bedingungslos bereit, dem "Führer" zu folgen, bereit mein Leben für ihn und für Deutschland hinzugeben, wenn es eine Gelegenheit dazu geben würde! Erst nach Kriegsende erfuhr ich, dass ich auf der Liste stand für die Aufnahme in eine Schule für nationalsozialistischen Führungsnachwuchs. Mein Bruder war inzwischen als Flakhelfer einer Fliegerabwehrstellung im Elsass zugeordnet worden. Unsere Eltern waren allein in Stuttgart zurückgeblieben.

Mich hatte eine Familie mit drei kleinen Kindern aufgenommen, deren Vater als Soldat in Russland war. Die junge Mutter, eine tiefgl ubige evangelische Frau, nahm mich ganz selbstverständlich zu ihren eigenen drei Kindern auf. Jeden Abend betete sie mit den Kindern. Das war für mich etwas ganz Neues. Es machte mich sehr verlegen. Ich wusste nichts damit anzufangen. Sie liess mich gewähren und nahm mich so an wie ich war. Ich fühlte mich wohl in ihrer Nähe, vermochte es aber nicht auszudrücken. Schliesslich gelang es ihrer herzhaften Güte, mich aufzutauen. Leider dauerte meine Zeit in ihrer Familie nur wenige Monate. Die Nachricht, dass ihr Mann als vermisst gemeldet worden sei, traf sie schwer und löste eine gesundheitliche Krise aus. Sie kehrte mit ihren Kindern auf den elterlichen Bauernhof zurück und ich kam in ein anderes Quartier.

Wenn wir Schülerinnen nicht in der Schule waren oder bei den gemeinschaftlichen Mahlzeiten (wir wohnten nur bei unseren "Quartierfamilien," hatten aber Gemeinschaftsverpflegung), dann hatten wir "Dienst," werktags wie sonntags, und waren so noch viel st rker unter dem Einfluss der Hitlerjugend als zuhause.

Nach acht Monaten war diese Zeit der sogenannten Kinderlandverschickung für mich zu Ende: ich war in den Sommerferien in Stuttgart, als die Nachricht kam, die Klassen der Mörike-Oberschule würden von Freudenstadt weg in ein Lager verlegt. Da weigerte sich meine Mutter entschieden, mich dorthin ziehen zu lassen und brachte es fertig, dass ich, nun ohne Unterricht, zuhause in Stuttgart blieb. Ich half mit beim Bau eines grossen Luftschutzstollens in unserer Strasse. Kinder und Frauen bildeten Eimerketten, um die Erde hinauszuschaffen, während einige der älteren Männer, die nicht fronttauglich waren, mit dem elektrischen Bohrer die Gänge in die Erde hineintrieben und ausschachteten, die dann durch Rahmenh lzer abgestützt wurden.

Ich machte schliesslich eine Lehrerin ausfindig, die nicht weit von uns einigen Gruppen von Kindern Privatunterricht erteilte: Deutsch, Englisch und Rechnen. Sie hiess Maria Fuchs und, was ich damals nicht wusste, war Waldorflehrerin. Wir gingen sehr gerne in ihren Unterricht. Sie verstand es, unser Interesse zu wecken und die verschiedenen Alterstufen dieser sehr gemischten kleinen Gruppe zu ihrem Recht kommen zu lassen. Wir spürten, dass es ihr Freude machte, uns zu

unterrichten. Ohne es zu wissen, war dies meine erste Berührung mit Waldorfpädagogik.

Die Fliegerangriffe verschärften sich, auch tagsüber war oft Alarm, und bald verbrachten wir so manche Nächte ganz im Luftschutzstollen, ob Alarm war oder nicht. Die Doppelangriffe (zwei Angriffe in der selben Nacht) waren besonders schlimm. Wenn man glaubte, es sei vorbei für diese Nacht, und viele Menschen noch mit Löscharbeiten beschäftigt waren, heulten wieder die Sirenen, und die n chsten Bomben fielen. Ich hatte mich inzwischen daran gewöhnt, zwischen Ruinen aufzuwachsen und mich in den Bombenn chten mit einem russischen Stahlhelm auf dem Kopf auf den Boden zu werfen, wenn die Luftminen detonierten und die Wände schwankten. Seltsamerweise hatte ich keine Angst, sondern konnte aus einer inneren Gewissheit heraus zu meinen Eltern sagen: uns wird es nicht treffen!

Im Februar 1945, als schon längst das Ende des Krieges abzusehen war, glaubte ich immer noch an den Endsieg. Einer der schwersten Luftangriffe auf Stuttgart kam Ende Februar. Ohne dass Alarm gegeben wurde, fielen auf einmal die Bomben. Zwei Häuser weiter kamen alle Menschen im öffentlichen Luftschutzkeller ums Leben. Das grosse Mietshaus, in dem wir wohnten, wurde vom Luftdruck der Sprengbomben schwer beschädigt und war längere Zeit unbewohnbar. Meine Eltern und ich waren noch rechtzeitig in unseren Keller gelangt, weil wir das aufgeregte Gebaren unsere Katze, das sie immer vor Angriffen zeigte, als Signal drohender Gefahr beachtet hatten. In jener Nacht gab es viele Tote, weil der Angriff die Menschen ohne vorherige Warnung überrascht hatte.

Mein Bruder hatte sich ein paar Monate vor Kriegsende siebzehnjährig noch freiwillig an die Front gemeldet, erhielt eine Blitzausbildung mit der Panzerfaust und kam aber schon bald danach in Kriegsgefangenschaft. Es dauerte fast ein ganzes Jahr, bis wir hörten, dass er noch lebe. Die Front rückte immer näher, und schliesslich war es so weit: Stuttgart wurde von den Alliierten eingenommen. Ich konnte es nicht fassen. Wir kamen erst nach dem Einmarsch der Truppen aus dem Luftschutzstollen wieder heraus, der am Ende Tag und Nacht unser Quartier geworden war.

Nun begannen die Hausdurchsuchungen nach Waffen und nach versteckten Soldaten. Die Versorgung in der ganzen Stadt war zusammengebrochen. Und nun erst erfuhr ich von den entsetzlichen Verbrechen in den KZs – und weigerte mich, das Ungeheuerliche zu glauben. Es dauerte fast ein halbes Jahr nach Kriegsende, bis ich auch die letzte Hoffnung auf ein Wunder, auf den "Endsieg" aufgeben konnte. Wilde Gerüchte, dass Hitler noch lebe und im Ausland Kräfte mobilisiere, hatten mich so lange noch zu t uschen vermocht. Ein Onkel, der früher in der Reichskanzlei aus und ein gegangen war und Beziehungen zu führenden Nazis hatte, die sich nach Argentinien abgesetzt hatten, brachte im Untergrund gedruckte Naziliteratur

zu uns ins Haus. Durch diese Lektüre wurde meine Illusion, es sei noch nicht das Ende, eine Zeit lang aufrecht erhalten. Ich trug immer noch meine braune Uniformjacke, wenn auch ohne Abzeichen. Denn ich glaubte, ich müsse treu bleiben. Aber schliesslich konnte ich mich den Tatsachen nicht länger verschliessen: es war zu Ende! Im Zuge der Entnazifizierung wurden in den Schulen Filme über die Befreiung der KZs gezeigt, die wir ansehen mussten. Die Bilder verfolgten mich bis in meine Träume hinein. Ich wusste nun, dass diese grauenhaften Verbrechen wirklich geschehen waren. Das ganze System, in dem ich aufgewachsen war, die Führenden, an die ich geglaubt hatte, waren als Verbrecher entlarvt. Die Nürnberger Prozesse konnte ich am Radio mit verfolgen. Ein fassungsloses Entsetzen über die in den KZs geschehenen Verbrechen packte mich und liess mich nicht mehr los. Mir kam es vor, als liege über ganz Deutschland das unvorstellbare Leiden von Millionen Menschen in den KZs wie eine schwere dunkle Wolke, die kein Licht mehr durchliess. Nun erst brach meine bisherige Welt endgültig zusammen. Ich wollte nicht mehr leben. Ich hatte keine Worte, um auszudrücken, was in mir vorging. Heute kann ich es sagen: ich hatte angesichts der Verbrechen in den KZs den Glauben an die Menschen verloren.

Meine Eltern, mein früherer Schulleiter, meine BDM Führerin, niemand wollte mehr etwas davon wissen, was man uns doch als höchste Ideale vor Augen gestellt hatte. Niemand schien zu wissen, wie es weiter gehen solle. Wichtig war nur noch, wie man überleben könnte. Aber wofür? Ich fragte mich: gibt es etwas, das nicht zerst rt werden kann? Die Erwachsenen würden mir nicht helfen können, das spürte ich. Also musste ich die Antwort selber finden. Davon würde alles weitere abhängen. Alles war plötzlich sinnlos geworden. Ich nahm mir fest vor, den Erwachsenen nie wieder etwas zu glauben.

Die verlagerten Schulen kehrten allm hlich nach Stuttgart zurück, und die Mörike-Oberschule war nun zu meiner grossen Ûberraschung plötzlich wieder "Evangelisches Töchterinstitut," eine kirchliche Privatschule; mein früherer Schulleiter entpuppte sich als evangelischer Pfarrer.

Da ich aber keiner Kirche angehörte und daher auch an keinem Religionsunterricht teilnahm, fiel ich auf und wurde aufs Rektorat bestellt. Aus dem Gespräch mit dem Schulleiter ergab sich, dass mir nur die Wahl blieb, entweder am Religionsunterricht teilzunehmen oder aber die Schule zu verlassen. Ich sagte dem Schulleiter, dass ich nicht in den Religionsunterricht gehen könne, denn ich gehöre keiner Religion an. Meine Bitte, statt dessen eine Freistunde zu bekommen, wurde abgelehnt, und so entschied ich mich, die Schule zu wechseln und meldete mich im Königin-Katharina-Stift an, das allerdings im selben Gebäude untergebracht war wie die Mörike-Oberschule. Wir hatten Schichtunterricht, da viele Schulgebäude zerstört worden waren. Ich war froh, dass ich nun an keinem Religionsunterricht

teilnehmen musste. Ohne Überzeugung daran teilzunehmen, schien mir unwahrhaftig.

Inzwischen hatte die Freie Waldorfschule Uhlandsh he im Herbst 1945 den Unterricht mit den A-Klassen wieder begonnen. Wiederum war ich es, die entschied: ich möchte in die Waldorfschule. Mein Name wurde auf die Warteliste gesetzt. Aber dass ich überhaupt auf den Gedanken kommen konnte, in diese Schule gehen zu wollen, dazu waren zwei bedeutsame Ereignisse notwendig, und beide Male spielten Bücher eine Rolle dabei.

Eines Tages entdeckte ich im Bücherschrank meiner Mutter ein Buch, dessen fremd klingender Titel "Phaidon" meine Neugier erregte, vor allem, als ich beim Blättern den Namen 'Sokrates' entdeckte. Ich hatte von ihm schon geh rt und wusste, dass er ein weiser Mann war, ein grosser griechischer Philosoph.

Ich begann zu lesen und war fasziniert: zum ersten Mal konnte ich mit Verständnis ein Buch lesen, das nicht nur eine Geschichte erzählte, sondern Gedanken entwickelte. Ich vermochte den Gedankengängen zu folgen und war ganz erfüllt von diesem Erlebnis; ja, ich setzte mich gleichsam unter die Schüler des Sokrates und liess mich auf seine Fragen ein, die immer weiter führten, und die eigentlich ein Wissen aus einem herauslockten, von dem man gar nicht gewusst hatte, dass es in einem war. Damals war ich etwa 13 Jahre alt.

Dass diese Gespräche des Sokrates mit seinen Schülern im Gefängnis stattfinden, kurz bevor das Todesurteil an ihm vollstreckt wird, und er ihnen bis zuletzt zu der Einsicht verhilft, dass es eine unsterbliche Seele gibt, das beeindruckte mich besonders. Denn ich spürte, dass ein Mensch im Angesicht des Todes sich und anderen nichts vormachen wird. Ich folgte mit wachsender Spannung der ganzen Beweisführung – und war am Ende davon überzeugt, eine überwältigende Entdeckung gemacht zu haben: es gibt eine unsterbliche Seele, es gibt etwas in uns, in mir, was nicht zerst rt werden kann, von keiner Macht der Welt! Das war die entscheidende Entdeckung, die wie ein erster Durchbruch war in die Wirklichkeit einer geistigen Welt. Es gab also etwas in mir, das nicht von meinen Eltern stammte und das nicht zerstört werden konnte. Ich spürte, dass ich dieses Geheimnis in mir bewahren und mit niemand darüber sprechen sollte.

Ein zweites Buch fiel mir etwa um die selbe Zeit in die Hände; ich fand es ebenfalls im Bücherschrank meiner Mutter. Es stammte von einer heute vergessenen Schriftstellerin, die nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg in den Kreisen der Jugendbewegung wohl eine gewisse Lesergemeinde hatte: Gertrud Prellwitz. Das Buch hiess "Drude" und handelte von einem jungen Mädchen, der Tochter eines Künstlers, die 1918 in Berlin im Alter von kaum 18 Jahren gestorben war. Diese Drude war auf die "Waldschule" gegangen, eine Schule, in der Jungen und Mädchen gemeinsam erzogen wurden und in der es nicht den üblichen Stundenplan gab, sondern Epochenunterricht. (Das Modell der Odenwaldschule bildete den Hintergrund).

Ich wusste, dass diese Drude gelebt hatte. Und es geschah nun, dass ich in meinem einsamen Suchen nach Sinn, nach einer geistigen Wirklichkeit, Drude wie einer Gefährtin begegnete. Ich redete in Gedanken mit ihr, ich tr umte von ihr, ich lebte mit ihr, sie wurde mir vertraut wie eine Freundin. Wenn es eine solche Schule gab, dann wollte ich dort hin!

Von "Waldschule" war es nur ein kleiner Schritt zur 'Waldorfschule,' als ich hörte, dass es dort auch Epochenunterricht gab, Jungen und Mädchen gemeinsam unterrichtet wurden, und dass Musik, Drama, Malerei und Plastizieren, aber auch Gartenbau zum Lehrplan gehörten.

In meiner Phantasie kam es mir vor, als führe Drude mich, gleichsam von der geistigen Welt her, in diese Schule, weil ich ja sonst niemanden hatte, an dem ich mich orientieren konnte. Als im Herbst 1946 die B-Klassen er ffnet wurden, war ich endlich dabei: in der 8b, mit Herrn Koegel als Klassenlehrer.

Meine Eltern hatten ihren eigenen Grund, mit diesem Schulwechsel einverstanden zu sein: ich würde nicht mehr auf dem Trittbrett überfüllter Strassenbahnen hängend dreiviertel Stunden lang durch die Stadt zur Schule fahren müssen, wie es damals üblich war. Da viele Strassenbahnen im Krieg zerstört worden waren, blieb einem nichts anderes übrig, als auf diese nicht ganz ungefährliche Weise zur Schule zu fahren. Manchmal holte ein Polizist die Trittbrettfahrer herunter, dann stieg man eben auf die nächste Bahn wieder auf und fuhr weiter. Manches Mal streiften auch Autos und Lastwagen bedenklich nahe an einem vorbei. Das war dann spannend, aber da jeder acht gab, passierte selten etwas. Von uns Schülern wurden solche Fahrten wie ein Sport betrieben. Aber nun konnte ich also innerhalb von zehn Minuten meine neue Schule zu Fuss erreichen.

Von jenem September 1946 an ging mir eine neue Welt auf. Ein heilender Impuls begann meine so unheile Welt zu durchdringen. Im Geschichtsunterricht taten sich Horizonte auf: Das alte Indien mit Texten aus den Veden, dann Persien, Zarathustra, und Mesopotamien mit dem Gilgamesch Epos, das mich besonders faszinierte.

Ebenso neu war für mich die Eurythmie. Ich empfand sie als wohltuend. Sie erschloss mir den Zusammenhang zwischen Sprache, Musik und Bewegung. Ich fühlte mich "als ganzer Mensch" in solchen Stunden. Die Eurythmie hatte einen harmonisierenden, heilenden Einfluss auf mich.

Ich tauchte in das farbige Leben der Schule ein und nahm alles auf wie eine lange verweigerte Nahrung. Das war wohl charakteristisch für meine Generation. Wir waren ausgehungert nach geistigen Werten.

Neu war auch das Sprechen im Chor an jedem Morgen zu Beginn des Unterrichts. Das Lernen eines Gedichtes nur durch wiederholtes Hören und Sprechen war mir ganz ungewohnt und fiel zun chst nicht leicht. Später merkte

ich, dass die Texte, die ich auf diese Weise gelernt hatte, mir nach vielen Jahren noch gegenwärtig waren, während ich aus Büchern Auswendiggelerntes wieder vergessen hatte. Das Rezitieren im Chor weckte meine Freude am Wort. Der Klangkörper eines Sprechchores war ein neues starkes Erlebnis. Man konnte sich sicher fühlen darin, war getragen von der ganzen Klasse, konnte sich selbst und seine Schüchternheit vergessen und sich ganz der Dichtung hingeben.

Ich nahm alles in mich auf, was mir in meinem einsamen Suchen weiterhalf, aber zugleich verschloss ich mich, wenn von Rudolf Steiner die Rede war. Ich sah sein Bild in vielen Räumen und betrachtete es mit einer Mischung von Ehrfurcht und Unbehagen: ich hatte grosse Angst, nochmals enttäuscht zu werden. Ich dachte fÜr mich: er mag ein sehr guter und weiser Mensch gewesen sein, aber wer garantiert mir, dass er sich nicht irrte? War ich nicht schon einmal furchtbar get uscht worden? Ich hatte es noch nicht überwunden und fürchtete, es könne sich wiederholen. Da aber Rudolf Steiner, wie ich später erfuhr, seinen Lehrern geradezu verboten hatte, im Unterricht Anthroposophie zu lehren und unsere Lehrer sich daran hielten, war es leicht, mit diesen gelegentlichen zwiespältigen Gefühlen einer gewissen Reserve zu leben. Sie nahmen keinen grossen Raum ein. Es gab zu vieles andere, auf das ich mich vorbehaltlos einlassen konnte.

Da war zB der Gartenbau-Unterricht Durch die Arbeit im. Schulgarten erlebte ich die Jahreszeiten viel intensiver als je zuvor. Ich lernte, einen Komposthaufen anzulegen und vieles andere, was mir viele Jahre später bei meinem Einsatz in Afrika zugute kam. Unkraujäten war nicht gerade beliebt, vor allem, wenn es sich um Quecken handelte, die man mit den ganzen langen Wurzeln heraus graben musste, sonst wucherten sie weiter. Ich hatte von Herrn Ebert, unserem Gartenbaulehrer, ein besonders verquecktes Stück Land zum Jäten zugewiesen bekommen und mühte mich, mit diesem zähen Unkraut fertig zu werden. Die anderen, so schien es mir, hatten alle einfachere Arbeiten bekommen. Als ich gerade über meine mühsame Aufgabe innerlich stöhnen wollte, trat auf einmal Herr Ebert neben mich und sagte ruhig: “Das wird gut! Ich habe extra dir dieses Stück anvertraut, weil du gewissenhaft bist und ich mich auf dich verlassen kann. Hier kann nur jemand, der verantwortungsvoll arbeitet, etwas ausrichten.” Dann ging er wieder zu den anderen. Aber ich sah diese Arbeit plötzlich in einem anderen Licht und stürzte mich mit erneutem Eifer wieder darauf. Ich hätte stundenlang damit fortfahren können, so sehr beflügelte mich seine Anerkennung.

Eines Tages wurde ein Schuhmachermeister in die Schule eingeladen, der uns einfachere Schuhreparaturen lehrte. An so manchem Nachmittag zeigte er uns, wie man Schuhe besohlt und Absätze anbringt, und ich reparierte stolz die Schuhe meiner Familie. Das war eine grosse Hilfe. Es fehlte an Schustern und anderen Handwerkern. Viele waren gefallen und andere noch in Gefangenschaft.

Das Leben in der Schule durchpulste ein Rhythmus, dem ich mich gerne überliess: die Unterrichtsepochen, Monatsfeiern, Schulfeste, Konzerte, die Schlussspiele der 12. Klassen, der Schulfaschingsball, das Feldvermessen auf der Schwäbischen Alb in Klasse Neun (es machte selbst mir schwachem Mathematikus dieses Fach schmackhaft) und vieles andere mehr.

Dann war da noch etwas: zum ersten Mal lernte ich, etwas zaghaft zuerst, - so wie man fremden Boden betritt, nicht sicher, ob er auch tragen wird: - ich lernte zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben Weihnachten zu feiern! Da waren die Weihnachtsfeiern in der Klassengemeinschaft, und vor allem die Oberuferer Weihnachtsspiele, deren Sprache mir zuerst so fremd war, die ich aber dann doch tiefer zu erfassen vermochte, nicht zuletzt, weil die Ehrfurcht, mit der die Lehrer sie spielten, ansteckend wirkte und ich hinter der seltsamen Sprache und ihrem Gehalt eine geistige Welt ahnte, die mir bisher verschlossen gewesen war. Genau so erging es mir dann im grossen Oberstufen-Chor unter der Leitung von Friedrich Wickenhauser, wenn wir etwa Bruckner-Motetten sangen, oder Palestrina, Haydn und Bach ... Ich lebte in dieser Musik, aus der mir eine Wirklichkeit entgegen klang, der ich mich langsam zu ffnen begann. Anton Bruckners Tedeum, aus dem wir die Schlussfuge mit Chor und Orchester aufführten, aber auch seine Motetten, die wir im Chor sangen, kamen meinem innersten Suchen und Fragen entgegen.

Als Herr Wickenhauser mir dann eines Tages eine Geige lieh und einen Musikstudenten und ehemaligen Waldorfschüler, Gerhard Labudde, als meinen Violinlehrer vermittelte, war für mich ein lang gehegter Wunsch in Erfüllung gegangen. Da mein Vater arbeitslos war, hätten wir es uns nie leisten können, eine Geige zu kaufen. Von da an arbeitete ich wiederholt in den grossen Ferien in der Fabrik und verdiente mir damit das Geld für den Violinunterricht und das ermässigte Schulgeld. Gerhard Labudde besass eine besondere pädagogische Begabung. Er brachte es fertig, mein Selbstvertrauen zu stärken und durch die Musik meine Unsicherheit zu überwinden, sodass ich es schliesslich mir zutraute, in einem Hauskonzert vor anderen Menschen zu spielen.

Zuhause nahmen die Spannungen in der Beziehung meiner Eltern und vor allem auch zwischen ihnen und meinem Bruder st ndig zu. Er war Ende 1945 aus der Kriegsgefangenschaft heimgekehrt. Sie standen der Tatsache, dass er dabei war, erwachsen zu werden, ja, dass der Krieg ihn verfrüht gleichsam ins Erwachsensein hineinkatapultiert hatte, hilflos gegenüber. Er vermochte nicht über seine Erfahrungen in Krieg und Gefangenschaft zu sprechen. Eben sowenig sprachen wir darüber, wie wir den Zusammenbruch des Hitler Regimes erlebt hatten. Aber lang angestaute Konflikte in den Beziehungen brachen auf, nun nicht mehr durch den Schein einer verbindenden Ideologie verdeckt, in die man sich bisher hatte flüchten können.

Es gab fast täglich Szenen. Ich litt mit ihm, aber auch mit meinen Eltern, die mit diesen Konflikten nicht umzugehen wussten.

Ich lebte immer mehr in zwei völlig verschiedenen, ja gegens tzlichen Welten, deren unsichtbare Grenze es jeden Tag aufs neue zu überschreiten galt. Ich versuchte, diese beiden Welten so gut wie m glich voneinander zu trennen und meine Welt der Schule vor allen Einflüssen der Welt unserer Familie zu schützen: So gelang es mir zB, meinen Eltern fast nie auszurichten, wann ein Elternabend stattfand. Am liebsten h tte ich noch in der Schule übernachtet! Ich konnte mit niemand über unsere häuslichen Verh ltnisse sprechen. Es w re mir unloyal erschienen. Obwohl ich meine Lehrer und Lehrerinnen liebte und verehrte, wäre es undenkbar für mich gewesen, jemanden unter ihnen ins Vertrauen zu ziehen und mit der Not in unserer Familie zu belasten. Meine Welt der Schule, in der ich lebte, atmete, mich entfalten konnte, wo ich frei war vom Druck der häuslichen Szenen, diese Welt wollte ich nicht durch die Schatten der anderen Welt beeinflussen lassen. Ich war es zudem auch gar nicht gewohnt, mich mitzuteilen. Ich hatte mich daran gewöhnt, allein meinen Weg finden zu müssen. Selbst im Unterricht vermochte ich mich mehrere Jahre lang fast nur schriftlich auszudrücken, abgesehen von kurzen Antworten sachlichen Inhaltes. Ein Gedicht aufzusagen, eine Referat zu halten, das war mir ganz unm glich. Es war, als ob eine Angst mir die Kehle zuschnürte: “wenn du etwas sagst, wird es aus dir hervorbrechen und du wirst mehr sagen als du willst; du wirst dich verraten; die Schatten der anderen Welt werden dann auch in die Welt der Schule eindringen!”

Also liess ich die Lehrer lieber auf dem Glauben, ich h tte das betreffende Gedicht nicht gelernt, als dass ich es über mich gebracht h tte, es vor der Klasse zu deklamieren. Bis dann etwas geschah, und zwar in der Deutsch-Epoche bei Dr. Herbert Hahn!

Wir hatten das Gedicht “Urworte Orphisch” von Goethe zu lernen. Es muss in der 12. Klasse gewesen sein. Ich hatte mich in das Gedicht hinein gelebt, konnte es auswendig, aber als Dr. Hahn mich eines Morgens überraschend aufrief, stand ich wieder einmal da und brachte keinen Laut hervor. Ich durfte mich wieder setzen, ohne Aufhebens, und eine Klassenkameradin sagte statt meiner das Gedicht auf. Da packte mich plötzlich der Zorn Über mich selbst. Denn ich war keineswegs zufrieden mit der Interpretation des Gedichtes, wie ich es nun von anderen h rte. Ich fühlte in mir, wie es klingen müsste.

Am Abend jenes Tages, als ich allein in unserer Wohnung war, ging ich in mein Zimmer, schaute das Goethe-Bild an, das auf meinem Tisch stand, und liess mich ganz von dem Gedanken durchdringen, wie er wohl dieses Gedicht gemeint hatte. Dann begann ich es laut zu sprechen; ich musste mich erst an meine Stimme gew hnen, die ich ja selbst so noch nie gehört hatte. Ich spürte auf einmal, was ich

mit meiner Stimme ausdrücken konnte. Fasziniert wiederholte ich die Verse, um den Sinn und die wechselnde Grundstimmung der verschiedenen Teile des Gedichtes ganz rein auszudrücken; und in diesem Bemühen vergass ich mich selbst und war wie befreit. Es war ein Durchbruch geschehen. Ich wusste nun, dass ich mit der Sprache und mit meiner Stimme etwas gestalten konnte! Ich hatte die Gabe, einem Text Leben zu verleihen.

Am nächsten Morgen geschah dann etwas, was noch nie vorgekommen war: Dr. Hahn rief mich noch einmal, und zwar gleich als erste auf, "Urworte - Orphisch" vorzutragen. Ich stand auf und war in dem Augenblick nur von dem Gedanken erfüllt: "Ich will ihnen zeigen, wie Goethe es gemeint hat; es muss ihnen ganz lebendig werden." Ich begann und sprach das Gedicht von Anfang bis zum Ende, selbstvergessen und wie befreit. Als ich geendet hatte, war es ganz still in der Klasse. Ich setzte mich: und pl tzlich fiel die ganze Angst mich wieder an, und ich h tte mich am liebsten unsichtbar gemacht. Ich vermochte nicht mehr aufzuschauen. Dr. Hahn aber ging nach einem kurzen anerkennenden, "danke" wie selbstverst ndlich zum nächsten über. Hätte er auch nur mit irgend einer Geste oder einem Wort an das Ungewöhnliche gerührt, das mir geschehen war, so hätte ich mich wohl wieder verschreckt in mein Schweigen zurückgezogen. So aber konnte ich mich langsam im weiteren Verlauf der Stunde wieder fangen.

Einige Zeit sp ter sollten wir uns über unser Schlussspiel Gedanken machen. Wir entschieden uns für "König …dipus" von Sophokles. Das Probe-Lesen für die Rollen begann. Ich rechnete damit, im Chor der Bürger von Theben unterzukommen, zumal es nur eine einzige weibliche Rolle gab, die der Jokaste, und wir mehrere gute Schauspielerinnen in der Klasse hatten, deren Talent bekannt war. Als Ernst Weissert mich deshalb bat, einen Monolog der Jokaste zu lesen, dachte ich nichts anderes als: nun habe ich die Gelegenheit, diesen Monolog lebendig werden zu lassen, und ich will sie benützen.

Nachdem dann noch einige andere den selben Monolog gelesen hatten, fragte Herr Weissert die Klasse: wer soll die Rolle der Jokaste spielen? Da hiess es einstimmig: Margarethe! Ich konnte es kaum fassen! Nun erst ging mir auf, was das für Folgen haben würde: Rollenstudium, monatelange Proben, und dann auf der Bühne stehen, vor einem Saal voller Menschen, ich, die ich doch über die eigenen Füsse stolperte, wenn jemand mich scharf ansah? Wusste Herr Weissert, was mir in der Epoche bei Dr. Hahn geschehen war? Traute er es mir zu? Dann durfte ich ihn und meine Klasse nicht entt uschen! Und wieder geschah es: ich lebte mich ganz in die Rolle der Jokaste hinein und vergass mich selbst und meine Ängste. In mir war eine ganz neue Gewissheit: ich werde es schaffen! Und so war es: ich war Jokaste, die ganze Probenzeit und Spielzeit lang, und ich spielte ohne die geringste Bühnenangst, wie befreit. Ich bewegte mich auf der Bühne mit einer Sicherheit, als h tte es nie etwas anderes gegeben. Mein Partner im Drama, Bernhard

Rund, spielte sehr gut die Rolle des …dipus, und wir spielten uns gleichsam aneinander hoch und steigerten uns gegenseitig.

Nach der letzten Aufführung fragte mich Herr Weissert, was ich nach dem Abitur zu tun gedenke. “Zunächst Geld verdienen, um ein Studium zu finanzieren, und dann vielleicht Germanistik oder Kunst...” Herr Weissert darauf: “Haben Sie noch nie daran gedacht, Schauspielerin zu werden? Sie haben die Begabung dafür.” Ich war zun chst sprachlos. Und nach einer Weile sagte ich dann mit der seltsamen Hellsichtigkeit, die man in diesem Alter manchmal hat: “Ich glaube nicht, dass ich das immer tun könnte. Ich bin nun wochenlang Jokaste gewesen. Ich würde mich genauso intensiv in andere Rollen hinein leben. Ich fürchte, ich könnte eines Tages nicht mehr wissen, wer ich nun wirklich bin.”

Mein Ich war damals noch nicht stark genug, eine solche Belastung auszuhalten.

Ich habe aber nie vergessen können, wie meine Lehrer mehrere Jahre lang geduldig auf den rechten Augenblick gewartet hatten, bis die Zeit reif war für einen Durchbruch, und dann sofort darauf reagierten und mir die weibliche Hauptrolle in unserem Schlussspiel anvertrauten; auch die Unterstützung durch die ganze Klasse war eine grosse Ermutigung für mich. Diese und hnliche Erfahrungen haben später, als ich selbst Lehrerin geworden war, mein pädagogisches Tun wesentlich beeinflusst.

Nach der 12. Klasse galt es für mich, von der Waldorfschule schweren Herzens Abschied zu nehmen, um auf dem K nigin-Olga-Stift die Abitursklasse zu besuchen. Es gab eine Vereinbarung zwischen den beiden Schulen, dass Schülerinnen, die in Mathematik schwach waren, vom Königin-Olga-Stift übernommen wurden, um sich dort auf das Abitur vorzubereiten. Auch von der Reutlinger Waldorfschule kamen einige Schülerinnen dazu. Die Anforderungen in Mathematik waren auf der Staatsschule nicht so hoch wie in der Waldorfschule, wo nach der 13. Klasse das externe Abitur abgelegt werden musste. Es war ein Kurzschuljahr, als wir überwechselten, und so musste in verkürzter Zeit viel bewältigt werden, was aber ohne grosse Schwierigkeiten gelang. Das Lehrerkollegium und die Schülerinnen nahmen uns sehr gut auf. In manchen Fächern waren wir den anderen voraus, in anderen mussten wir einiges nachholen.

Ich hatte an der Waldorfschule gelernt, aus Interesse am jeweiligen Gegenstand selbst ndig weiterzufragen und Zusammenh ngen nachzuspüren. Dass ich es in Mathematik und Physik nur auf eine Vier brachte, kümmerte mich nicht, denn ich konnte es mit anderen F chern ausgleichen und wusste, dass ich diese beiden Fächer ohnehin nicht studieren wÜrde. Erst viele Jahre später erwachte mein Interesse an Fragen der modernen Physik. Ich glaube, es ist eine Stärke der Waldorfpädagogik, wie ich sie erlebt habe, dass man selbständig denken lernt und neue Situationen kreativ angehen kann. Auch wird das Bewusstsein und die Bereitschaft geweckt, ein ganzes Leben lang Lernende zu sein.

Im März 1952 bestand ich das Abitur am Königin-Olga-Stift. Parallel zur Abitursvorbereitung hatte sich in mir noch eine tiefer gehende Entwicklung vollzogen, die schliesslich in den Entschluss mündete, mich in die katholische Kirche aufnehmen zu lassen.

Das hatte sich über einige Jahre hin vorbereitet. Die Berührung mit dem Christentum in der Waldorfschule geschah zu einer Zeit, als ich bereits am Suchen war. In diese Jahre fiel eine tiefgehende Christus-Erfahrung. Als ich es am wenigsten erwartete, wurde mir eines Tages, beim Lesen der Evangelien, (die mir bei mehreren vorausgehenden Versuchen unverst ndlich geblieben waren) Jesus Christus so lebendig gegenw rtig, dass mir fast blitzartig die Einsicht kam: er lebt, er spricht diese Worte zu mir pers nlich, er weiss um mich, er ist da! Seine Gegenwart füllte den ganzen Raum meines Zimmers, eine geistige Wirklichkeit war aufgebrochen, die den Sinnen nicht zug nglich war. Sie war auch nicht beeinflusst von Vorstellungen, wie sie Menschen gel ufig sind, die in einer kirchlichen Tradition aufgewachsen sind. Es war eine ganz unmittelbare Begegnung; selbst die Worte des Evangeliums waren nur "the point of contact." Dies wiederholte sich, doch stets neu, über Wochen und Monate hin, jedes mal wenn ich im Neuen Testament las. Ich verbarg dieses Erleben vor den Menschen meiner Umgebung. Ich vertraute einer inneren Führung, die mich schliesslich erkennen liess, dass man nicht allein, isoliert, Christ sein kann.

So begann die nächste Etappe meines Suchens, auf der immer wieder die Gestalt des Franz von Assisi mich begleitete, dessen Leben ich durch die Fresken von Giotto im Kunstunterricht kennen gelernt hatte, und dessen Sonnengesang ich ebenfalls in der Waldorfschule begegnet war.

Die schmerzliche Frage bei diesem Suchen nach einer Kirche war: warum kann ich nicht einfach Christ werden? Warum muss man entweder katholisch oder evangelisch oder orthodox oder reformiert oder was immer sein? Die ganze Last der Geschichte des Christentums, die dunklen Seiten der Kirchengeschichte und die Spaltungen in eine Vielzahl von Kirchen und Glaubensgemeinschaften machte es mir schwer, mich zu entscheiden. Der so oft missbrauchte und aus seinem ursprÜnglichen Kontext heraus gel ste Satz von der "allein selig machenden Kirche" war fÜr mich ungeheuerlich und stand im Widersprach zum Geist des Evangeliums. Erst als ich ihn in seiner Zeitbedingtheit erkannte und er damit relativiert war, stellte er kein unüberwindliches Hindernis mehr für mich dar. Aber das Problem blieb. Welche Kirche ich auch wählen würde: ich w re damit immer von anderen getrennt. Dazu kam, dass die katholische Kirche in meiner Familie zutiefst abgelehnt wurde. All das belastete mich sehr. Später waren es gerade diese Erfahrungen, die mich zu meinem Engagement in der … kumene bewegten und mir viele Türen öffneten.

Trotz aller Bedenken und dem Wissen um die dunklen Seiten der Kirchengeschichte, entschloss ich mich, dieser Kirche anzugeh ren, in dem vollen Bewusstsein, dass ich, wie überall, dort nicht nur Christus und vielen Menschen in seiner Nachfolge begegnen würde, sondern auch der Last einer bald zweitausendjährigen Geschichte mit allen Hõhen und Tiefen.

Ich hatte aber bereits Jahre vor dem Konzil die erneuerte Liturgie der Karwoche erlebt, vor allem die Feier der Osternacht, die auf die frühe Zeit der Kirche zurückgeht und lange vergessen war, und der Eindruck blieb: eine Kirche, die eine solche Liturgie hat und gleichsam wie nach langem Winterschlaf sie wieder zu erwecken vermag, wird auch die Kraft zur Erneuerung finden. Durch die Liturgie und die Sakramente, selbst in ihrer vorkonziliaren Form, rührte mich durch alle geschichtlichen Überlagerungen und alles menschliche Versagen hindurch ein Mysterium an, das den Christen der Frühzeit zu einer lebendigen Erfahrung geworden war.

Ich fühlte mich in meiner Ganzheit von Geist, Seele und Leib angesprochen und ernst genommen, vor allem auch durch die Symbolsprache der Liturgie.

Mein Zugang zur Kirche war von Anfang an in den Spuren des hl. Franz von Assisi. Meine Entscheidung fiel in dem kleinen alten Franziskanerkloster aus dem 13. Jahrhundert, San Francesco in Fiesole bei Florenz, wohin ich auf einer Kunststudienreise von der Waldorfschule aus gekommen war. Die Vision des Franziskus von Kirche als einer Gemeinschaft von Brüdern und Schwestern, wo es keine Obern und Untergebenen geben soll, keine Machtpositionen und keinen Besitz auf Kosten anderer, wo der Gehorsam ein gemeinsames und pers nlich verantwortetes Hinhören auf den Willen Gottes ist, ein Umsetzen des Evangeliums in eine gelebte Wirklichkeit: dieses nie erreichte, aber immer wieder neu angestrebte Ideal bestimmte mich.

1952 wurde ich in die Kirche aufgenommen. Eine besondere Fügung war, dass der Priester, der mich auf diesen Schritt vorbereitete, jahrelang an der Stuttgarter Waldorfschule katholischen Religionsunterricht gegeben hatte und diese Schule sehr schätzte. Das erfuhr ich erst später. Ich war ihm nämlich in der Waldorfschule nie begegnet, da ich am Freien Religionsunterricht teilgenommen hatte.

Trotz all meiner Bemühungen um eine friedliche Lösung führte meine Konversion zu einem Bruch mit meinen Eltern. Sie stellten mich vor die Wahl, entweder aus der Kirche wieder auszutreten oder aber das Haus zu verlassen. Ich entschied mich schweren Herzens für das letztere und reiste in die Schweiz, wo ich bis zu meiner Volljährigkeit arbeitete. Da ich keine Arbeitserlaubnis hatte, konnte ich jeweils nur “gegen Kost und Logis” arbeiten, durfte also kein Geld verdienen. Ich arbeitete als Haushaltsgehilfin an verschiedenen Orten. Da meine Eltern mir nach wenigen Wochen die Polizei auf die Spur setzten, die mich nach Deutschland

zurückbringen sollte, war ich gezwungen, immer wieder den Ort und die Stelle zu wechseln.

Schliesslich setzte sich der deutsche Konsul in Zürich für mich ein, nachdem er den wahren Grund meines "Schweizer Exils" erfahren hatte. Er war mir bis ins St Galler Oberland nachgefahren, wo ich zu der Zeit gerade im Haus Margess bei Flums arbeitete, einem Ferienheim für erholungsbedÜrftige Kinder.

Als er meine Geschichte hörte, sagte er mir, er sei Tag und Nacht telefonisch für mich erreichbar, wenn ich in Schwierigkeiten käme. Er konnte es kaum fassen, dass es im 20. Jahrhundert in Deutschland noch ein solchen Fall von Verfolgung wegen der Zugeh rigkeit zu einer Kirche geben k nnte.

Nach damaligem Recht wurde ich mit 21 Jahren vollj hrig. Nun konnte ich nach Deutschland zurück kehren und trat bei den Franziskanerinnen von Siessen ein, einem Schulorden, der aber im Laufe der Zeit auch andere Aufgaben in der Jugendarbeit, Krankenpflege und anderen Bereichen übernommen hatte. Nach dem Noviziat studierte ich Germanistik, Geschichte und Anglistik in Freiburg i.Brg und verbrachte dort auch meine Referendarzeit. Meine p dagogische Staatsarbeit schrieb ich über das Thema: "Waldorfpädagogik und kirchliche Privatschulen. Ein Vergleich."

Während dieser Zeit nahm ich als Schwester wiederholt an den Offenen Pädagogischen Sommer Tagungen in der Waldorfschule Uhlandshöhe teil, mit voller Zustimmung und Ermutigung meiner damaligen Generaloberin, die noch von ihrer Zeit her als Schulleiterin unseres Privaten M dchengymnasiums St Agnes in Stuttgart die Waldorfschule kannte und sch tzte. Sie sagte wiederholt, sie f nde es gut, dass ich mit meiner früheren Schule Kontakt behielte. Es g be viel Gutes dort und sie habe den Eindruck, dass ich dieser Schule viel zu verdanken h tte. In den Privatschulkonferenzen sei es mit den Vertretern der Waldorfschule zu guten Begegnungen gekommen. Man habe nach dem Krieg gemeinsam Wege gesucht für einen Neuanfang und mit den staatlichen Stellen verhandelt. Gute Impulse gingen von der Waldorfschule aus.

Jetzt erst lernte ich die Theorie kennen, die hinter der Praxis steht, welche ich als Schülerin erlebt hatte. Ich las die menschenkundlichen und pädagogischen Schriften von Rudolf Steiner und studierte die Lehrpläne. Vieles wurde wieder lebendig, was ich als Schülerin erlebt hatte.

Nun konnte es reflektiert werden.

Ich unterrichtete nach meiner Referendarzeit und bestandenen Pädagogischen Staatsexamen sieben Jahre lang an dem Aufbaugymnasium Kloster Siessen bei Saulgau. Sehr bald führte ich das Schultheater ein, wobei die m nnlichen Rollen von Schülern des staatlichen Aufbaugymnasiums Saulgau gespielt wurden. Das war damals ein Novum, das aber bald Schule machte. Unsere Schulleiterin liess mir freie Hand. Ich wollte den Schülern und Schülerinnen etwas von dem

erm glichen, was ich in der Waldorfschule erfahren hatte: dieser grosse gemeinsame Einsatz bei der Aufführung eines Theaterstücks, wobei alle ihre Talente einbringen können. Wir führten "Unsere kleine Stadt" von Thornton Wilder auf. Es wurde ein voller Erfolg.

Hier und bei vielen anderen Gelegenheiten im Unterricht wurde mein pädagogisches Tun, trotz der Grenzen, die ein staatlicher Lehrplan setzt, von der Waldorfpädagogik inspiriert.

1973 meldete ich mich freiwillig nach Südafrika, wo unsere Schwestern an einem Gymnasium mit Internaten für 400 Jungen und Mädchen der Basotho und Tswana unterrichteten und für die vielen Schüler viel zu wenig Lehrer hatten. Die Schule lag in ländlicher Umgebung, mit eigener Wasserversorgung aus Bohrlöchern und eigener Müllbeseitigung. Vieles musste improvisiert werden. Ich unterrichtete dort 19 Jahre lang. Es galt, in eine andere Kultur und Sprache einzutauchen, wobei meine afrikanischen Mitschwestern mir eine grosse Hilfe waren.

Lehrmittel waren anfangs nicht viele vorhanden, als ich begann. Nun hiess es wieder ganz von vorn anfangen, improvisieren, eine Lernende sein, sich in eine andere Mentalität einfühlen, und dies alles in der Atmosphäre der Apartheidspolitik, welche die menschlichen Beziehungen vergiftete und Misstrauen säte. Aber es gab auch viele positive Möglichkeiten: eine … kumene, in der die einzelnen Kirchen in gemeinsamer Sorge um die afrikanischen Menschen zusammenarbeiteten und die Apartheid zu unterwandern suchten. Es gab die Freiheit, einen kumenischen Religionsunterricht zu geben, Unterrichtsmaterial, das von allen Kirchen gemeinsam in Ostafrika erarbeitet worden war, einfühlsam und kreativ, und von der ostafrikanischen katholischen Bischofskonferenz finanziell und personell unterstützt wurde, das sogenannte Gaba Programm. Es bezieht die Werte der afrikanischen Kulturen mit ein und f rdert das gegenseitige Verst ndnis unter den Kulturen, Rassen und Religionen. Da unsere Schüler verschiedenen Kirchen angeh rten, wurde das kumenische Gaba Programm ihnen am meisten gerecht.

Im Unterricht und im Gottesdienst waren Drama und Tanz selbstverst ndliche Ausdrucksmittel. Getanztes Gebet, die Marimbas (hölzerne Xylophone) als Begleitinstrumente und hin und wieder statt einer Predigt eine Szene des Evangeliums von Schülern in der Kirche dargestellt, gehörte zu unseren Gottesdiensten, nicht nur an Festtagen. Auch im Unterricht konnte ich an der natürlichen Begabung der Afrikaner für Drama und Mimik, für Tanz und Rhythmus anknüpfen, wenn ich, so weit wie m glich innerhalb des staatlichen Lehrplans, für die Schüler einen Ausgleich zu schaffen suchte für die viel zu einseitigen Lehrpläne der südafrikanischen Schulen.

Was hat mir meine Waldorfschulerfahrung geholfen bei all den Herausforderungen in Südafrika? Ich glaube, sie hat es mir erleichtert, eine neue

Situation kreativ anzugehen. Ich hatte einen Standortwechsel vollzogen und lernte es, Europa zum ersten Mal aus der Perspektive Afrikas zu sehen. Da sieht es wesentlich anders aus.

Ich gewöhnte mich schnell daran, unter einfachen Bedingungen zu arbeiten, mit wenigen Mitteln etwas zu erreichen und war froh, im Notfall auch kleinere Reparaturen selbst machen zu k nnen. Es blieb mir auch ein Bedürfnis, mich auf irgend eine Weise künstlerisch zu bet tigen. Und als sich mir eine Gelegenheit dazu bot, wagte ich mich an die Bildhauerei und machte zwei Skulpturen aus Stein. Das intensive Licht Afrikas fordert einen geradezu heraus, eine Plastik zu schaffen. Die Geduld, die man bei der Arbeit am Stein entwickeln muss, kam hoffentlich meinen Schülern wieder zugute.

Ich war mir bewusst, dass ich manche traumatisierten Kinder vor mir sitzen hatte, die in ihren Siedlungen und in den Unruhen schlimme Erfahrungen gemacht hatten. Einige waren Zeugen von Halskrausenmorden gewesen. Ich versuchte, so gut es ging, Heilendes und Aufbauendes im Unterricht lebendig werden zu lassen. Wenn ich aus dem Verhalten einer Schülerin nicht klug werden konnte, so half es oft, diesen jungen Menschen zu meditieren und ihm dann ganz neu wieder zu begegnen.

Vieles musste allerdings Stückwerk bleiben, denn die Arbeitslast von bis zu 39 Unterrichtseinheiten (von je 35 Minuten) pro Woche und dazu die zusätzliche Mitarbeit im Internat forderten viel Kraft, sodass man immer wieder an seine Grenzen gelangte.

In Südafrika begann ich auch die wichtigsten Schriften von Rudolf Steiner zu lesen.. Erst jetzt war die Zeit reif dafür, mich damit zu beschäftigen. Ich hatte anthroposophische Freunde, bei denen ich Bücher ausleihen konnte und im Gespräch manche Fragen geklärt werden konnten.

Afrika brachte mir die Begegnung mit Menschen anderer Kulturen und anderer Religionen. Mein eigenes Suchen hatte mich darauf vorbereitet, nicht mit vorgefassten Begriffen und Denkschablonen anderen Menschern zu begegnen, sondern ihnen das Recht auf ihren eigenen Weg zuzugestehen, im Wissen darum, "dass Gott immer schon vorher da war," und jeder Mensch, ob bewusst oder unbewusst das in sich trägt, was in der Sprache der Bibel "geschaffen nach Seinem Bild und Gleichnis" heisst und in anderen Religionen anders genannt wird, aber das selbe Geheimnis umkreist, das jede menschliche Sprache und Vorstellung nur ann hernd und unzulänglich ausdrücken kann.

Mein Engagement in verschiedenen anderen Kirchen, in denen ich Meditationskurse und Einkehrtage gab, die Begegnung mit Sufis, mit dem Buddhismus und dem Islam und die Meditationskurse in einem Ashram in Südafrika. trugen auch dazu bei, dass mein Verst ndnis dessen, was … kumene meint, sich

über die verschiedenen christlichen Bekenntnisse hinaus auf die anderen Religionen ausdehnte. Dabei fiel mir oft ein, was Dr. Herbert Hahn zu uns einmal gesagt hatte, als er mit uns im Freien Religionsunterricht die Bekenntnisse des Hl. Augustinus las: “Wir müssen Ehrfurcht haben vor dem religiösen Schicksal jedes Menschen.”

Wenn Rudolf Steiner davon sprach, die Lehrer sollen den Unterrichtsstoff vorher meditieren, damit sie lebendige, entwicklungsfähige Begriffe an die Schüler herantragen, denn nur solche könnten weiterwirken, dann habe ich dies sicher an mir erfahren. Ich konnte auf dem weiterbauen, was in meiner Waldorfsschulzeit grundgelegt worden war. Vor allem aber habe ich die Schulzeit als einen heilenden Einfluss erfahren, der wie Grundwasser selbst in Zeiten der Dürre Leben erm glicht.

Dass meine Erfahrungen mit der Waldorfschule durchweg positiv waren, hat nichts mit Glorifizierung der Vergangenheit zu tun, sondern entsprach meinem damaligen Erleben und meiner pers nlichen Situation.

Im Rückblick h tte ich mir gewünscht, dass für uns Heranwachsende damals eine Hilfe zum Verstehen und Integrieren der Sexualität angeboten worden wäre, nicht als ein eigenes Fach Sexualkunde, sondern in den Gesamtunterricht integriert. So viel ich weiss, geschieht das inzwischen, wie überhaupt auf die Probleme der heutigen Zeit eingegangen wird.

Konfliktfähigkeit und Methoden aktiver Gewaltlosigkeit und friedlicher Konfliktl sung einzuüben, müsste heute auch dazugehören. Ich musste es in der konfliktgeladenen Atmosphäre Südafrikas mitten in den Unruhen lernen.

Nach 21 Jahren meines Wirkens in Südafrika erhielt ich 1994 einen Ruf nach Bonn an die Missionszentrale der Franziskaner, um dort das Generalsekretariat eines internationalen Kursprogrammes zu übernehmen, mit welchem ich schon in Südafrika gearbeitet hatte.

Es ist ein Kurs über franziskanische Spiritualität, der weltweit zu einem Instrument der Erneuerung franziskanischer Brüder- und Schwesterngemeinschaften geworden ist. Die Autoren stammen aus verschiedenen Kulturen und franziskanischen Gemeinschaften. Es geht darum, was für Impulse vom Lebenszeugnis des Franziskus und der Klara von Assisi heute für unser Sein und Wirken fruchtbar werden k nnen, also keine Nachahmung des Vergangenen, sondern ein Neuaufbruch im selben Geiste.

Der Kurs ist kumenisch und bezieht die franziskanischen Orden und Gemeinschaften in den anderen Kirchen mit ein.

Die Arbeit mit diesem Kursprogramm und seiner Neubearbeitung, die in 18 Sprachen übersetzt wird, brachte für mich viele neue Anforderungen mit sich, zB auch Mitwirken bei Einführungskursen in Afrika und Asien. So kam ich unter anderem auch einige Male nach Kenia, nach Malawi, Kamerun, in die Philippinen und nach China (Hong Kong, Macau und im Süden aufs Festland). Mein Dienst an

der internationalen franziskanischen Familie erstreckte sich von Kanada bis Papua Neuguinea, über fünf Kontinente.

Ich wurde für diese Aufgabe von meiner Gemeinschaft freigestellt und wohnte acht Jahre lang in der Missionszentrale in Bad Godesberg, in einer kleinen internationalen franziskanischen Gemeinschaft von zwei Schwestern und sechs Brüdern (Deutsche, Inder und Brasilianer). Dazu kamen noch 15 angestellte Mitarbeiter und Mitarbeiterinnen in den Projektabteilungen für Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika, in der Bildungsabteilung und im Menschenrechtsbüro.

Der Einsatz für Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und Bewahrung der Schöpfung, für die Menschenrechte, für die Armen und Ausgeschlossenen, und die prophetische Kritik an den Systemen wie zB Kapitalismus und Marxismus, sowie ein kritisches Hinterfragen von Machtstrukturen in Kirche und Gesellschaft, und dies in ständiger Orientierung am Geist des Evangeliums: all das und anderes mehr ist durch dieses Kursprogramm für mich und für viele Brüder und Schwestern eine Herausforderung geworden. Wie muss sich unser Leben , wie müssen sich die gewordenen Strukturen und Institutionen ver ndern, um die Menschen von heute in ihrem Suchen zu begleiten und die Welt menschenfreundlicher zu gestalten? Dazu gibt diese Kursprogramm Anregungen.

Seit August 2002 ist mein Einsatz für diese Aufgabe beendet. Ich habe meine Arbeit an eine Nachfolgerin übergeben und bin in das Mutterhaus der Franziskanerinnen zurückgekehrt. Mein früheres Büro ist mit neuer Besetzung nach Würzburg umgesiedelt, wo die Arbeit in erweitertem Umfang fortgesetzt wird. Ich habe nun Zeit bekommen, ein längst geplantes Buch zu schreiben.

Mein Verst ndnis von Kirche, von Religion, von Gott, vom Mensch-Sein und von der Welt in der wir leben, hat sich im Laufe der Jahre und durch all diese vielf ltigen Begegnungen und Denkanstösse entscheidend gewandelt. Ich bin immer noch auf dem Weg, immer noch Lernende. Dabei habe ich mit vielen meiner ehemaligen Mitschülerinnen und Mitschüler noch oder wieder aufs neue Kontakt. Ich danke allen, die dazu beigetragen haben, dass mitten in der Gefahr auch das Rettende wachsen und sich gegen alle Widerst nde durchsetzen konnte.

Epilog

Sie sollen einmal
von mir sagen können:
sie liebte Brücken
und Sonnenaufgänge
und weigerte sich
Feinde zu haben.

– Margarethe Mehren