

Waldorf Journal Project #7

July 2006

AWSNA

Musings from Norway

Compiled and edited by

David Mitchell

We measure the success of schools not by the kinds of human beings they promote, but by whatever increases in reading scores they chalk up. We have allowed quantitative standards, so central to the adult economic system, to become the principal yardstick for definition of our children's worth.

— Kenneth Keniston,
Professor of Human Development at MIT

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Foreword

The *Waldorf Journal Project*, sponsored by the Waldorf Curriculum Fund, brings translations of essays, magazine articles, and specialized studies from around the world to English-speaking audiences. This seventh edition of translations is comprised of articles intended for personal and faculty study and takes us inside the thoughtlife of Waldorf teachers from Denmark and Norway.

The first article is a call-to-attention for Waldorf teachers by Karl Brodersen; he discusses the inner pathway necessary for a Waldorf teacher. The next article is a cosmic call to meet the spirit of our time, Michael. This is followed by an interview with Sven Åke Lorentson which furthers this call by tapping every teacher on the shoulder and relating the cosmic picture to our tasks on earth. David Brierly then masterfully addresses the theme of “play” which is followed by a study of the child at the age of six. Linda Jolly takes us out to the garden and inspires us with her experiences, and Lars Wegge takes us into the woodworking shop and further activates our will. In “About Seeing with the Heart” Arve Øgaard addresses the artistic impulses in our teaching and in our self development as teachers.

We conclude with Karl Brodersen, once again, as he examines the role that old age plays in our biography. Our final article by Conrad Englert-Faye is a study centered on ancient Greece and how the great cultural epochs have formed human development to our present age.

We hope that you will be inspired by these presentations.

All the articles are available on-line at

<http://www.waldorflibrary.org>

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The editor is interested in receiving your comments on the articles selected. We 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

The Path through Life

by
Karl Brodersen

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

We are all on a path, every day all through our lives. All of humanity is on a path, from the beginning of time to the present and then further towards an unknown future. We each walk on our own road, yet we all walk the same road, and that is the road of humankind.

The road is an ancient metaphor for the life conditions within which we move. The image indicates a dynamic element, an intentional force in our existence, which leads us from one experience to the next. Sometimes we might have the experience of coming to a standstill, of feeling stuck. However, if we look at the totality of our life, we have certain proof that movement has taken place. This dynamic form is most obvious and energetic in the first phase of life. Later, as adults, we can look for this dynamic element in our own inner being.

Something happens to us every day, the numerous small and the few large events shape us and reshape us, and our insights, feelings, and deeds are slowly transformed. We can search in our memories for the geological layers of our personality. We have left behind faces, changed perspectives and outlooks, moods we now can laugh about, deeds about which we might feel ashamed. It would be too simplistic to say that on this journey we are steadily changing into more perfect beings. We lose the innocence of childhood, the light-heartedness of youth, and we are in danger of becoming a rigid caricature of ourselves, disappointed and bitter with life, living in a state of soul poverty.

When we stop to really examine the movements of our lives, the results may seem bleak. There is a natural growth and expansion of strength and opportunities up to the mid-point in life. Then out of a natural necessity stagnation and decline follow. With more careful observation, however, we can see that, from the first moment, growth and decline go hand-in-hand. Every day something is lost in the life of the child, just as in the old person. We move in the polarity between life and death; the life forces and death forces strike the notes for the existential transitions in our lives.

However, something in us stands “above” this polarity of forces, something eternal, that which we refer to as “I.” This “I” is the same indefinable constant in the perpetual transformational process of life. This “I” is not conditioned to the moment, it lives also in the past and with awareness of the future. The “I” encompasses—consciously, half-consciously and unconsciously—all of life from cradle to grave.

The “I,” which should not be confused with our socially conditioned persona, is our being’s innermost kernel, the most personal in us. Curiously enough, it is this most deeply personal element which is at the same time the transpersonal, commonly human aspect in our being. This “I” can never settle down to some final expression of itself, it is always pushing onward, forcing us further along. Everything we attain in the realms of earthly perfection, happiness or fame, becomes, in the words of Thomas Aquinas, like straw in the eyes of the “I”. The dynamic element in our lives is the obvious, and the experience of the reality and activity of the “I” is possible for everyone. The contemplation of these two realities is the foundation for all religions, for every conscious effort to place oneself in life in a realistic way. The “I” is working in us from the beginning, it raises us from the horizontal to the vertical, and leads our first steps. It is with us in all of life’s situations, but we only slowly become aware of its constant presence. We have to reach a certain maturity to become fully aware of the dramatic mission of our existence.

The “norm” is that at around our twenty-first year, we have some inkling of the activity of the “I” in our life. We start to see more connections, sense the shapes in our life patterns, and distance ourselves from wishes and hopes which lie outside of this pattern. For many this constitutes a period of crisis, to find one’s place within the limitations of the final circumstances, a process which starts at puberty and culminates with a life decision during our twenties. With a better-developed sense of reality and a budding self-knowledge, one can ask the question: What can take place in the course of my life? The processes of metamorphosis go on relentlessly, noticeable for ourselves and others from year to year. But it is now accompanied by an observing awareness, and this awareness is not only as a passive onlooker. We learn to accept more events as they unfold, to work with the limitations of our outer circumstances, and to connect an inner soulful reality with many possibilities. Life might bring us to this point without much effort on our part. Then we may become interested in the dynamic aspect of our inner life, aware that something is growing on a developmental course for which we ourselves are responsible, just like a parent towards a child. Behind the mask of convention and in the midst of the gradual decline of the physical (and also perhaps the soul forces), a being is developing,

a personality kernel in us, who is searching for ever more independence from the outer conditions in which life between birth and death places us.

What we are discussing here has nothing to do with mysticism or clairvoyance. It is about a common human experience everyone can have, but perhaps described differently. We become aware of the kernel of truth in all religions and in all the thought constructs of the great philosophers, in the sum total of striving, which reaches way beyond the limitations of time and space. We can experience a need for this just like for food and drink; it gives strength and direction for our budding spiritual life. Let us now look at Rudolf Steiner during his work as a teacher and how he answered the questions each human being will encounter on this path.

In his philosophical writings, and first and foremost in the *Philosophy of Freedom* (1894), Steiner gave the reasons for and the strong impulse towards the kind of knowledge we are trying to characterize. His entire philosophical authorship at the end of the nineteenth century was geared towards the contemporary public and is built on the European and German cultural and spiritual traditions and what they had to offer.

The next phase in Steiner's activity has a very different character. People with specific pre-conditions and questions wanted guidance within the area that, for them, had great relevance: the world of religions and esoteric traditions. This transition is clearly visible in the title of the last book in the philosophical series *Goethe's Worldview* from 1897, and then the *Die Mystik im Aufgang des Neuzeitliche Geisteslebens und ihr Verhältniss zur Modernen Weltanschauung* in 1901. Then follows the book *Christianity as Mystical Fact and the Ancient Mysteries* (1902), *Theosophy* (1904), and finally *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* (published first as articles during 1904–1905, then later published in a book in German in 1909).

The questions and needs which can awaken through real self-knowledge, through the experience of an inner space and its growth processes, is addressed in different ways in this series of Steiner's writings. He offers nurturing for needs and an orientation for a state of consciousness which now sees itself in relationship to a whole new set of facts, but initially more like an inkling. It was decisive of Steiner to establish the continuity of our development of consciousness, to show this fact and also help us care for it. The task for our time is to move with a wakeful sense of judgment and a clear light of intelligence into the areas that up to now have been shown only in the twilight of mere hints.

The paths towards such an expanded sense of insight can be varied. Steiner has with great clarity explained his road, from a biographical perspective in his book *The Course of My Life*, from a methodical perspective in many of his

writings, but first and foremost in the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*. A fruitful engagement with this book pre-supposes a certain inner readiness, a certain elementary experience of the dynamic force in our inner lives. Further, this road towards insights demands the will and capacity for a strong inner activity in concentration and meditation.

It was Steiner's perception that people in our time, through the strict schooling of natural science, have attained the possibilities for an inner discipline and an active thinking, which made it possible to develop a true spiritual science, an exact clairvoyance. In this connection it might be necessary to point out two sides of the modern scientific attitude.

The one side includes the results, the sum of achieved insights, results which have their validity within its not always clearly stated premises. With different premises, very different insights are possible. Apart from the personal and historical imitations which dictate these premises, there is a will towards objectivity, towards selfless observation, which has to permeate the one who wants to pursue the path of spiritual science.

When we try some of the seemingly simple meditation exercises that Steiner indicates, we become quickly aware of the challenges they pose. We experience how filled we are with inner restlessness, random thoughts and moods, rigid perspectives and prejudices, much-loved habits and instinctual, emotional reactions. This level of self-knowledge is valuable in itself and could awaken the will to become master in one's own house. If we persist with some simple exercises, we will soon become aware of certain effects. We achieve a more inner calm and better perspectives, and also a heightened self-awareness in many of the delicate process that we tend to ignore in the haste and bustle of everyday life.

At a certain point we might experience a tendency towards hubris; self-satisfaction spreads like a cloud in the soul and creates new difficulties, especially socially. In this cloud many a good beginning can come to an end. Steiner pointed out this danger, and gave the explicit advice that one step on the road towards spiritual insights needs to be accompanied by three steps in moral development. What does this mean?

Our starting point was a contemplation of the journey through life. We are placed in certain life conditions, we "owe" something both right and left, we have responsibilities to take care of. A spiritual training does not exempt us from these responsibilities; we have to learn to love them and we have to discover the larger responsibilities that follow greater insights. This is far from easy for us, we are by nature "escapists" and prefer "the strong wine of the spirit above the sour bread of everyday life."

When we have achieved a certain inner calm and strength, we may, with renewed interest, turn towards nature, towards our surroundings. Among the fundamental exercises Steiner indicates is contemplation of the fundamental gestures expressed in nature: the living element in the plant kingdom, the death forces in the mineral kingdom, and the ensouled qualities in the animal kingdom. On this path of discovery we can create a concrete picture of the forces that also work in our own inner nature. We find them all there, and, in the pendulum swing between inner and outer contemplation, can let the one throw light on the other. To get a sense for what this is about we can remember the intense quality of experiences in our early encounters with the world, before the gray shadow of the world of concepts obscured them.

It is a very long road to travel from these humble first attempts at “higher insights” to the exact clairvoyance which deserves the distinction of spiritual science. This road is at least as long as the road from multiplication tables to higher mathematics, and significantly more dangerous. We must perceive Steiner as a pioneer, way ahead of his time and unrecognized. However, it is just in this way that things happen in the life of mankind: everything which needs to come forth grows first in secret.

What filled Steiner’s later years as a teacher? In his lectures he concentrated his attention with increasing intensity on the social tasks which were weighing on the modern human being, and which he felt could only be solved with a real acknowledgement of the world of spirit. We must return to our starting point, the path through life.

If we have come so far that we can see the boundaries of our lives drawn, and we have learned to accept existence, then we can easily become stuck in a place of resignation versus the ideals and dreams of our youth. If we look a little more closely, we will discover that this life which now can be perceived as growing inwardly, in a strange way stands in relationship to our outer existence. What emerges is that it is not without consequence how we handle it. Thoughts and feelings are not just byproducts, a powerless reflection of the world of actions that surrounds us. The brutal reality of the world of action is in an inner correspondence with our soul’s spiritual processing and what meets us in life. Thoughts and feelings have the power for both good and evil in the world, which might surprise us when we first think about this.

To remind us of some common situations: what we dread often turns out to be quite manageable and simple; what we regret often will right itself even if we do not intervene on the physical plane; tasks that seem insoluble get solved. These examples belong to everyday psychology. However we can increase our attention in this arena and come to see that what we usually divide into inner and outer experiences actually belong to the same whole.

If we want to pursue these perspectives and the advice Steiner has given for the practical areas of life, we ought to keep this in mind. Steiner does not give any recipe for solutions to problems (for example, there is no systematic teaching manual for Waldorf education). It is about a methodical attitude, to learn to see the well-known phenomena with new eyes and in a broader context.

A contemplative consciousness is a prerequisite for all social practices in the spirit of Steiner's teachings. Only from a deeper self-knowledge will we human beings be able to solve our social problems.

If we try to take a hold of some of the tasks Steiner has indicated, we will also experience our human limitations. The extensive activities in many areas which happen today in the name of Rudolf Steiner will all have to be viewed as humble attempts. It cannot be other than at this moment in time. Steiner's efforts can be judged fairly only in a larger time perspective. We ought to look forward to seeing the journey of humankind into a future which starts with ourselves. We do not have permission to hope for a miracle, but we have been given a certain freedom to shape our lives, to connect ourselves with this or that. If we have discovered the sprouting inner life in ourselves, and in all human being's inner life who has good will, we can then know that this inner life is also growing in humankind. Only to this life can we attach hope and good deeds for the future.

Time: Rudolf Steiner's Contribution to a Modern Mythology

by

Jacob Qualburg

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

A central theme in Rudolf Steiner's activity as a spiritual scientist is the description of the force and the being that carries the name of Michael. As with many other connections, Steiner connects this to the existing cultural traditions, in this case the Christian one: "The force which is the source to the thoughts of things was in olden times called Michael. This name we will keep." With this as a starting point, Steiner adds aspects and pictures which can be seen as a contribution to a new mythology, a thought content to be worked with for the present time and for people into the future. In this article I will try to give a synopsis of some of this content, based mostly on Steiner's so-called "Michael Letters" published in 1924 and 1925.

The name Michael, who is like God, already exists in the Old Testament, first and foremost in the prophet Daniel, to whom this angel or a mighty heavenly being reveals deep secrets. In the New Testament Michael is mentioned in the Deeds of the Apostles as he whom Moses spoke to on Sinai, and also as the highest inspiration and protector for the people of Israel. He is also mentioned in the letters of Judah, but the most famous place is in the revelations of John, where Michael wins the heavenly battle with the dragon.

The pictures of the archangel Michael, his characteristics and his activity, received central place in the Christian consciousness. Churches were built in which he was especially revered throughout Europe and also in Denmark and Norway. The legends about him were told all the way up to the time when people's attention was more turned and bound by outer nature. After this shift in human consciousness, the stories and legends live on in a tradition that has never died out, even though the immediate insights are no longer present. The Michael that we know through legends stands forth as Lucifer's conqueror in the grand cosmic battle. In countless pictures Michael stands forth as the superior of the

dragon. He is most often depicted with a sword because he continues to battle the evil in the world while at the same time instilling courage and strength in the human being. But we also see him with the scales as the just judge, a task that he also holds in the last sequence of the dream song of Olav Asteson. It is this judging Saint Michael who leads all human souls towards Christ. Even though Michael stands forth as a leader in the service of the highest beings, he shows a particular care for human beings. In the *Legenda Orea* by Jacorbusta Borajene, Michael is described as the angelic being who stands closest to the human being with help and guidance. This takes place in multiple concrete legendary happenings, perhaps the most well-known being the revelation at Monta Gargano in the year 390. Jacobes also emphasizes the importance of the deep insight that Michael expresses towards the human being as an important guideline for the awareness of good and evil in the world.

When Steiner brings the description of Michael as a result of his spiritual research in the twentieth century, it is not a question of repetition of earlier insights or an interpretation of earlier stories. What he gives us is concrete information about spiritual realities as they are revealed to the spiritual scientists today. We meet in these descriptions a spiritual being who not only has followed with the times, but who has actively given impulses to the development. We will perhaps recognize the old Michael. At the same time we will also meet new and important challenges which are connected with the future development of the human being.

If we want to gain a deeper understanding of the riddles of history, it is important to acknowledge two principles: first, that both the human being (and other beings visible or invisible) go through development and transformation over time. Secondly, this development does not happen in a linear fashion, but more or less through specific leaps. The impulses are given with a momentous character, and later they have the possibility to consolidate over time. The historical turning points therefore turn into important keys if we interpret them right. Already in his first Michael letter, Steiner turns his attention towards such turning points. One is the transformation that takes place in the thought-life of the human beings during the ninth century. Before this time people still had a sense that thoughts were given them as a gift from higher worlds or from spiritual words. Later, the feeling arose that they themselves created the thoughts in their own inner life. The other turning point is the transition in the last third of the nineteenth century. Before this Michael could be looked upon as the objective ruler of the cosmos. After this turning point the human being has a possibility to meet him in his or her own individual soul-life in our own hearts.

These two turning points are deeply connected with the theme indicated in the introduction, and which later became a main theme in Steiner's sharings: Michael's connection with the element of thinking. From ancient times Michael is closely connected with the world-thought, and this relationship goes through a transformation over long expanses of time and in grand steps. The quality and the specific characteristics of these developmental steps are mirrored in what happens on the earth in the different cultural forms which humanity lives through in the course of history.

It can be described that Michael's task in the earliest epochs was to take care of the cosmic intelligence. The concept "cosmic intelligence" is everything but easily accessible in our understanding. Steiner also used words like "intellect," "intelligence," and so on, in connection with the hierarchy beings' deeds who are an active force in the ordering of ideas as they stream through the cosmos into physical reality. At the same time, this phenomenon is related to the intelligence which is developed within each human being. In its origin this cosmic intelligence is looked upon as one aspect of the creator force which is the foundation for our cosmos. In this regard cosmic intelligence also has a relationship to Logos, the creative word. And in what we call natural laws we have an abstract result or a shadow picture of the divine intelligence. Thinkers from earlier times without a doubt had a deeper sense when they referred to the "music of the spheres." Despite the difficulties, we are using this expression in subsequent descriptions in the hopes that we can develop a wider understanding for the concept.

The relationship between Michael's cosmic activity and the development of humankind can be described also from a human or an earthly perspective. The human being's experience transforms from an immediate relationship with the ordering principle of the world to a state of consciousness which we could call mythological, wherein the gods lead the human being. Then comes the split between the human being and his surroundings, and as the split widens the human being, in an inner devotion, experiences the connection between his own inner life and an ensouled nature in what we call an alchemical awareness. At the transition to the old Greek culture this connection is also lost, but still thoughts are experienced as living and filled with being-ness in an artistic, philosophical awareness. At the beginning of our modern times at the fifteenth century, thoughts and the experience of thinking became totally separated from a spiritual origin, and we developed the natural scientific state of awareness where thoughts can be grasped through physical organs. Steiner also describes Michael's own experience of this same developmental process. "His task is to safeguard the cosmic intelligence, and he wishes that the development will take place in this

arena.” He has made sure that the intelligence is fitted to a form that can fit the human being so that it can still have a connection with the cosmos. But this original living contact gradually goes over into a state where Michael is left to express his activities in the form of revelations, especially through the world of the stars. And he acknowledges that the cosmic intelligence is torn away from its origin among the gods and brought down to the earthly humanity. In the end the intelligence has sunk all the way down to the pure earthly, material world, where it is now in its present form available for the use of the human being.

But when the cosmic intelligence sinks down to the earthly plane, it is also accessible by those spiritual beings who from earlier times were Michael’s enemies. The so-called Ahrimanic beings try to conquer and control the world-thought process for their own purposes, and at the same time they wish to bind humanity in their own sphere. These are the real dragon forces which exist in the world today, and which from their own characteristic will hinder the human beings to develop a state of consciousness which will be needed in order to gain new insights into the spiritual worlds. To this Michael sees for himself no danger – he himself has overcome the dragon once and for all – but his cosmic task, combined with his deep interest for humanity, leads him to be drawn closer to the earth. He follows the road of the cosmic intelligence to be close at hand for what needs to be attended. He has been on his way since the eighth century and arrived in the nineteenth century to a place where his task now rests. This journey is also between those two great turning points to which we referred earlier. Within this space of time there are also the impulses for two important developments for humanity. In order to gain a closer understanding of what this journey of development means, we can look towards states of consciousness mentioned earlier.

The earliest stage contained a total insight into the spiritual, material connections of the world, but was at the same time overwhelming and binding for the human being. The human being was totally under the guidance of the will of the gods. Our modern state of consciousness is cleansed of compulsive spiritual insight, and at the same time the human being has gained a sense of freedom in the realm of thoughts, which brings something totally new. Pure individual freedom has its price. It can really only be gained in isolation, in loneliness. The foundation for this capacity was established through what the mythology refers to as “The Fall” and culminates in the loss of the last vestiges of old wisdom. The individual human, each to his own inclination, feels either a sense of loss, or praises the impressive results of natural science. Neither of these points of view in the long run is fruitful. The true progress which has taken place is marked by the capacity for pure and impartial thinking which the human

being has gained. This capacity is used for research on the physical plane, but also for research of spiritual realities, and free thought will become the human being's most important tool on the road towards new insights. This development has taken place in the human being partially at a conscious level and partially unconsciously. This can happen because we still, to a certain extent, are protected by angelic beings. But at this last turning point the freedom has to become real and fully realized so that each human being can make his or her own choice. Therefore we must become conscious of our own situation.

We are standing at a crossroads, equipped with wakeful thinking, consciousness which we can use as we see fit ourselves, and the choice is between two attitudes or paths: either activities that serve and support a developmental path (which will no doubt require sacrifice and selflessness) or activities which aim to increase our own field of power and our own self-interests. In this situation Michael cannot force or influence the human being. Human intelligence has become the domain of the human being. But Michael has a legitimate tool: he can step forth as an ideal. This he does by unfolding his own thought-permeated being as close to the human world as possible, and, for those human beings who are capable of gazing into this nearness, Michael's image stands ready to guide those who ask for his help. Michael does not step forth in a visible form in the physical world, but he stands in freedom, accessible to those human beings who, through an ethical self-awareness, seek him.

In his Michael letter dated November 23, 1924, Steiner gives two concentrated and concrete pictures. First: "Michael strides through the cosmos permeated by a deep seriousness. He steps through the stream of time in the capacity of carrying the light from the cosmos and creatively he shapes the warmth from the cosmos as a revelation of his being. He appears as a being who has likeness with the world, and he acknowledges himself only by acknowledging the world, and from all the corners of the cosmos he brings strength to the earth." The dragon is described: "Ahriman has on his path through time a desire after conquering space. He has darkness surrounding him, even though he sends out his own light. The more he succeeds, the more frost is surrounding him. He moves as if like a world who has contracted itself into one being, namely his own, where he desires only himself through negation of the world. He strides forth as if he brought with him all the dark forces from the dark caves of the earth."

These two pictures show the most extreme consequences – on the one hand, the selfless serving attitude and a sense of love towards the world, and on the other side a self-promoting, narcissistic love and hunger for power.

Ahriman's temptation is the supreme logic, the superior and uncompromising thought forces that are offered as something objective, but

which in reality only lead ultimately to a new sense of necessity. Michael's offer is a thought activity which is connecting with the world and which leads to growth in one's own inner being through taking the world up within oneself through love. The human being has this choice, to avoid egoism. Hence, wakefulness, self-knowledge, and the ethical development are so crucial.

Overcoming the naturally based self in order to find one's true self is also the problematic question for Peer Gynt in Henrik Ibsen's play of the same name. From the old button man, he hears the old mystery phrase, "To be oneself is also to die as oneself." This is Michael's challenge. He has never laid claim to cosmic intelligence but has only protected it, and connected himself with the spiritual and god-like forces in the universe. Therefore, he himself is always a truthful expression of the world. Human beings become more deeply human the more they are an expression of the world. Human beings find themselves not when they seek for themselves, but when through conscious, disciplined will, they seek the world and connect themselves with it through love.

At this developmental nodal point, our thinking capacity is also going through an important transformation. From the point of view of Michael it is so that he permeates the intellectual activity and therefore make it possible for thinking to be an expression of the heart, for the soul as well as for the head, for the spirit. This is connected with what Michael carries within him – something of the original creator warmth forces which are the foundation for the world and the creation of the human being. His relationship to thinking is not cold and soulless, but has in it something warm and essential and heart-felt. The thinking of the heart, the warming of the intelligence, stands side by side with freedom and the awakening of consciousness, which is central to Steiner's sharings about Michael. In the first letter he says: "Michael frees the thoughts from the region of the head and opens for the thoughts the path to the heart. The time of Michael has burst forth. Hearts are starting to have thoughts. Enthusiasm is not any longer just streaming out from a mythical darkness but from thought-carried soul clarity. To understand this is to take up Michael in one's inner life." Steiner refers to the Michael being as potentially being present in the human heart if we ourselves seek him. And the human being does this when he concerns himself with the kinds of thoughts that we have talked about here. The essential signature of heart-centered thinking is warmth and genuineness and a capacity for empathy. This transformed intelligence has as its function to be directed towards the world, and its organ for understanding is therefore empathy, the capacity to experience the essential nature of everything that surrounds us and meets us. One of the most shining examples this empathy is the question Parzival asks, with the support of the Grail, during his visit at Monseleuat. In

him who asks, there is a deep foundation both of insight into connections, and of a heart-felt capacity to live into, and identify with, the suffering King of the Grail. A third dimension is Parzival's acknowledgement of the help of spiritual forces—his referral to the Grail as something supersensible—and the fact that this can also work into decisive action. This is also in Michael's being, that his goal is not to represent himself.

The human being's capacity to connect with the impulses of Michael is a step on the road towards an even greater meeting. For Michael is also referred to as the face of Christ. Michael's activity was once concentrated on the preparation for the birth of Christ on the earth. Today his innermost concern is to prepare for the birth of the Christ within each individual human being. This requires that human beings develop a new understanding of both the mystery of Christmas and the mystery of Golgotha. This is Michael's most important concern in our time, and Michael is the one who steps into the lead position over the other archangels during this period of time.

From the last third of the nineteenth century and for over three hundred years forward humanity has lived in a Michaelic time wherein these themes are central in the evolution of humanity. Steiner points to the fact that anthroposophy wishes to serve Michael in this decisive process of transformation. The supersensible described above can, be rightly called a new mythology for they are thought-filled pictures intended as a supportive foundation for people who during this problematic time seek spiritual insights and understanding. This new mythology is not the only possible road. In this time of individualism we also encounter Søren Kierkegaard's statement, that from the subjective perspective it is truth that counts. What Steiner does is to contribute from his perspective so that anybody who feels touched by his words can, in freedom, choose to connect with this spiritual content in his thinking, in his heart forces, and in his will forces.

The Michaelic Human Being

An Interview with Sven Åke Lorentson
Priest in the Christian Community in Oslo

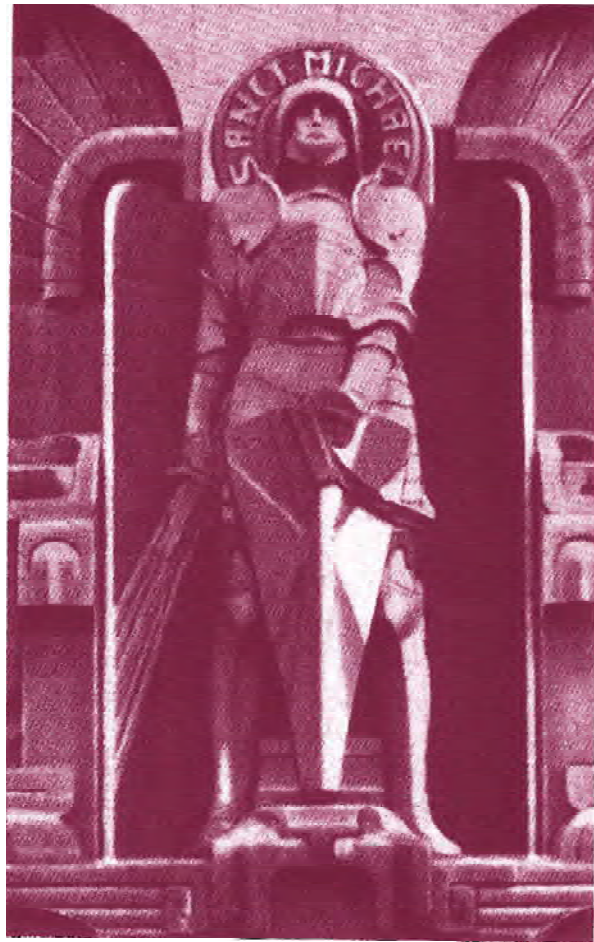
Translated by Anniken Mitchell

Q: Why do we celebrate St. Michael in the Waldorf school, or the nodal points of the year at all? What does Michael represent for the children and for us adults and for the world? These questions led us to someone who could answer more than many a priest could ask!

A: Why these celebrations in Waldorf schools? “Which month is the darkest?” some adults ask. Many people will actually answer November rather than December because for them it is a reality, a concrete experience—the Christmas mood brings forth an inner light.

So on the emotional level we experience an inner course to each year—we could call it the mystery year. In order to understand the mystery year it is important to take into consideration the experience we had as children. For many this is forgotten or suppressed. For Norwegians, Easter is often connected with traveling to the mountains. As a Swede I have to ask which mountain is it that has such a magical quality. In Sweden we have the midsummer night’s eve, which has its own ritual, and for Norwegians it is Easter time in the mountains.

In earlier times we had traditionally a sense for an inner course of the year in our culture. We celebrated and received a real relationship, each one of us. Gradually this has decreased. Just as with puberty in the young person’s life, the Lutheran impulse in the North European spiritual life brought a break with this more instinctual connection and brought a new sense of freedom, in itself the foundation for atheism and a sense of disconnection or alienation. The inner course of the year can give us a renewed connection to the world. With different values than those that speak to the ego, a real experience is created in this relationship, and it is different than belief. In the Steiner/Waldorf schools we have emphasized to strengthen this anchoring from early age. The little child is by nature religious. The experience of the celebrations of the festivals is natural up to puberty. After puberty we have to ourselves establish our own relationship to the religions, and this is also the goal of the schools—to practice the independent, seeking human being, not the human being steeped in belief.



Q: So it seems important to have a constant forming of the rituals so they are not just repeating old beliefs?

A: All religions have to do with repetition, with practice. But in the artistic there is also a repetition which is connected with the religious deeds. The creative is a process. In order to then experience what has been created, it is the archetypal picture: God created the world, and on the seventh day, when he rested, he saw that it was good. In this way the artistic practice also contains insight and knowledge. The intellectual process goes in the opposite way: from question to awareness to insight. This can also be the road towards a religious experience if you go in depth. When we talk about the rituals in the school, it is important to have courage to explore what truly is contained in the sacred celebrations. And it is important with new creations. Here a lot of exciting events have taken place around the celebration of Michaelmas, both within the Waldorf school and slowly also within the church.

Q: Does Michael kill the dragon?

A: A good picture of this is of Michael holding down the dragon under his feet, or holding it at bay. The evil forces are not just outside ourselves, but also within ourselves. The medieval mystic said, "The human being is like the crow: both white and black, not mixed." So we have to acknowledge the evil forces and hold them at bay. A precondition for forgiveness is to see that another human being is in a circumstance where he or she does not have the forces and strength to hold these dragon forces at bay. But the strength to manage this is attainable for the human being. It is possible through self-knowledge and through entering a healthy social process to develop these capacities. And this is what is characteristic for the Michaelic human being.



Michael subduing but not killing the dragon

Q: In this way Michaelmas is really part of a social and personal developmental process.

A: Yes, in the Steiner schools social process is always important, and a healthy self-development requires a healthy image of the human being. In this way the celebrations of the year are important in order to understand the world in which we live and in order to understand who we are, that we come from a certain place, and are headed for a certain destination. The Christmas celebration shows a certain opening: the birth of a child. The heavens are there and the angels. Easter shows us that death, which is an absolute necessity, is not a total and final ending, but also has the forces of transformation within it. With Saint John's celebration in the pre-Christian times through the ecstatic element shows that the human being's inner experience belongs to the spiritual worlds. In the Christian celebration of this time of year, it is possible to experience that through self-knowledge, we can wake up to an awareness of the spirit. The Michael message tells us that it is we human beings who have to participate in the future of humankind and the earth, that we can rely on the good forces within the human being, and that these good forces can overcome our evil tendencies.

Q: In this way we can talk about the Michaelic impulse in world evolution.

A: In our time we can see, above everything else, the individual human being's capacity for freedom. We are continually presented with new problems, which we have to make decisions about and develop a stance in relationship to ourselves. Because there are no longer any hard and fast moral rules or clear ethical guidelines that can help us, the impulses for right deeds have to be brought out from within ourselves: What we in the moment can see and feel as right and true. We can definitely observe a growing will-impulse in our time to take responsibility for our earth's life and future and to be able to see wholeness. We can see that the earth is a closed system with limited resources, and many people are starting to feel that these resources have to be shared equally. There are great expectations resting on the human being and a large responsibility.

All of these are characteristics of the Michaelic time. Michael can only help when the human being, out of his or her own will impulse and insight, takes action. The phenomenon of the "civil society" is an expression of the Michaelic through the challenges he asks of us. When people wake up and act out from their own moral and ethical impulses, then also a renewed impulse for democracy will grow in the world, which will live its own independent life between the life of commerce (with all its impulses towards greed) and the political life (with its impulse towards power structures). It is only a strong civil society that can get the political life to listen more intently to the value-imbued human motivations rather than the pure egotistical motivations which seem to dominate our business life today. Paradoxically enough, we can see that the new tools for this world commerce, the Internet and mobile telephones for instance, can become tools also for the spirit of Michael, and perhaps can help make more accessible a true democratic communication.

The Playful Human Being

by

David L. Brierly

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

Children have lost the capacity to play. They only want to be entertained. How often we hear this expressed. Parents and teachers are concerned with this phenomenon. They are asking if the time for playing is past. Yes, what is truly the nature of play, and what is the life-long importance of the play of the child?

Our neighbors to the east are going to learn to play! Last autumn the Swedes instituted the first official “Play Weekend.” The Swedes’ movement for play was completing a two-year project focussed on the importance of play for learning. They established a “Play Weekend” for the entire nation. “Arrangements for Play in Sweden” was held on the first weekend in September. The premise behind the project was that play develops fantasy, creativity, and empathy, and that children at play will develop a richer adult life. According to the *Dagblade*, the largest newspaper in Sweden, they hoped to sell a hundred thousand red clown noses before the Play Weekend which was modeled after the event of “Comic Relief day” in England.

Play and Work

Society’s understanding of the playful human has changed radically in the modern time. According to the well-known British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), the industrial revolution led to changing the independent thinking, life-enjoying and will-strong human into a disciplined and dependent worker. With James Watts and James Hargrave’s inventions the character of work was totally changed. From certain perspectives this brought many advantages, but in terms of the place of play in society, this development was also detrimental. Children’s play was deeply effected. Many children and young people got jobs in factories and in the mines.

The playful relationship to life is first established in the phase of life before puberty when habits are most easily established. From an anthroposophical, pedagogical, perspective, this is the leading theme between the ages of seven and fourteen, a stage in life where memory and habits are seen in conjunction with

the individualizing of the life forces in the child. This gives a pedagogical possibility to actively work to establish good habits. The creation of habits in the school-age child suffered severely as a result of the industrial revolution. Even the church supported this development to a certain extent. Ministers preached that dreamy children without proper work could more easily fall under the influence of demonic forces. This implied that free time and enjoyment were sources for evil, a perspective that is still prevalent to a certain degree. Everything was arranged to be conducive for man to work as much as possible.

Back to James Watt, whom all Waldorf students hear about in the ninth grade. As a young boy James was sickly and needed a lot of care; he exhibited an unusual sensitivity. He avoided robust boy play, and was often teased at school, so he ended up spending the larger part of his days at home in bed rather than at the school desk. He could be in bed with a headache for several weeks. His mother had a deep understanding for the boy, and had the courage to protect him against family and friends who had the perspective that he was lazy and needed a good beating. However, the father, a carpenter, did shout, “Look, my child is occupied and busy!” He had provided his son with toys that could be put together and taken apart, so the young James would work with these toys for hours. “At his age it’s important to have toys between the hands, not work,” the father admonished. In that respect one has to say that the playful human truly changed the world. The principle of metamorphosis is an important one in every biography, as well as in every pedagogical effort. Then Watt left his childhood home to go out and learn the art of clock making. His sensitive fingers and peaceful demeanor came in handy. He carried two things in his knapsack: a necessary leather apron and the Bible. James was sickly all his life, but he survived all his relatives and friends, and with a deep religious belief to the very end. He could not understand the critical attitude towards the so-called useless play.

Play and Usefulness

In his book about the moral being (1887), Nietzsche talks about the sense of guilt that is created when the human being is engaged in something that is considered not useful. Today’s attitude towards the playful is first and foremost promoted by politicians whose primary thinking is economical and quantitative in nature. In pre-industrial society, the human being thought differently. After a round of games, useful work could be executed with renewed energy and effectiveness. This wholesome perspective made us capable of thinking up new solutions to problems. The kind of guilt that Nietzsche describes has to be actively countered if we are to establish truly a space for children’s play.

The Nature of Play

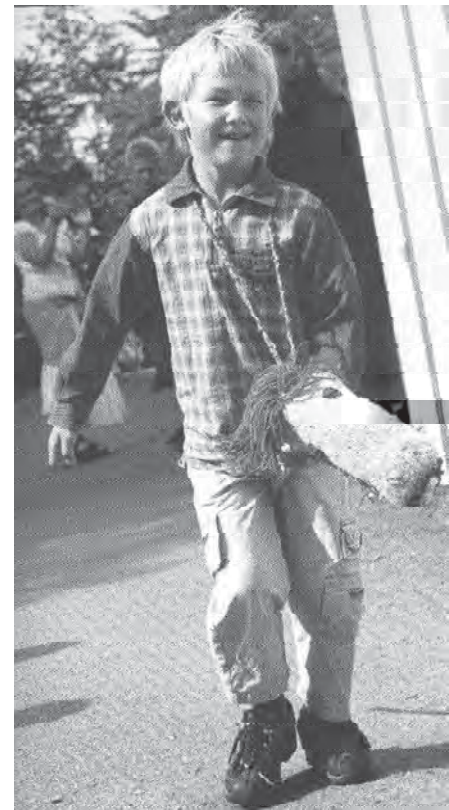
Play is much more than a physiological or psychological reflex activity. In its very nature it steps out over boundaries and far exceeds the immediate necessities of life, even though our understanding of play is very limited. This is expressed, among other things, in pedagogical training. The theories about play and its importance can be summarized as such:

1. Play is one effective way to get rid of excess energy. It was especially the philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who proposed this perspective. He thought that play had very little productive importance in itself.
2. Play means relaxation. Play is a kind of counter measure against the hurried state of our times.
3. The importance of children's play is that it also contains economic potential. Children's joy in play, combined with the family's capacity to buy, has created a large play market.

It is important and joyful to register that the Swedish authorities are starting to acknowledge the importance of play in the ever-increasing market-oriented, quantity-oriented society. What historically happened to adults' work has also happened towards children's play. That which once was recreational, as sports, music activities and such, have now more and more become professional and competitive activities. And when public budgets are tight, the first areas that get cut are drama, music, and other artistic activities.

Around the end of the nineteenth century and towards the World War I, there were many theories around the important connections between play and the later life of an adult. This perspective was in principle embraced by many new reformed pedagogical perspectives, as for instance the Montessori pedagogical philosophy that play is the work of the child and the Waldorf pedagogical perspective elaborating the importance of imagination, inner pictures, and fantasy as central aspects of children's play.

But these perspectives were not compatible with the current psychological findings being expressed by Freud and his followers.





Different Interpretations

For Freud it was the importance of instincts and the inner tensions that they created in the human that was the foundation for his psychological theories. Play was for him a way to get rid of damaging aspects of the personality. For Freud play meant a kind of security valve for social difficulties and it was a helpful process in integration. Play was, for instance, a way to learn how to lead and to be in competition. A dream, in Freud's perspective, is also a form of play. Play is a permissible way to express unacceptable feelings and wishes. Therefore many educators and therapists encouraged students to express and live out their frustrations in dramatic play. But is this truly real play? Play is a way to socialize. We can practice social relationships. During play a common togetherness and a common will-impulse are established, which we could characterize as a kind of joint intention. A child's personality is developed in response to the ever-changing relationships in the environment. In such a play the individual will show itself and is corrected by other children. The human characteristic is that we have a wish to exert influence on others. The social world means that we are also able to identify our own will-impulses with those of others. Then what we call a common social feeling of responsibility is developed.

John Locke was most likely the first to try raising school children through formalized play. Jean Paul was quite in disagreement with this way of moving forward. “I tremble,” he said, “When I think of an adult who is mixed into the delicate activities of childhood.”

Usually one would not intervene in the ethical individualizing which is made visible in the world of play, where a quiet, contemplative nature is brought together in corroboration with the world of the senses, the more active, willful side. Here one’s own will and the more social in the will-life is combined. The most important job of the adult is to protect the space where this creative free-play can be expressed, and to protect the child from the destructive influences from result-oriented and strictly useful-oriented society.

The Joy of Mastery and the Aesthetic Dimensions of Play

Play is one way to develop physical motor capacities. That the human being’s physical capacities go through stages in childhood, there is much agreement. All parents have followed carefully the first efforts of the child from crawling to walking to running and jumping and climbing. All of these are controlled, conscious movements, which are practiced and also contain different levels of difficulties in terms of having mastery over the body. A mastery gives a sense of pride and joy and increased self-confidence. These movements are formed out of a will impulse, and are different from the more instinctive movements that predominate during infancy and toddler-hood. As opposed to the more instinctive movements, these latter ones have to be practiced. In his book *On Skis over Greenland*, Fritjof Nansen is talking about the beauty and the joy that people can have when they watch a beautiful ski jump over the hill. Nansen is pointing out the dimension within the body and its movements which is an important one in all play—the aesthetic dimension where the rhythmical movement element is showing its deeper nature. We can recognize this from the antiquity and the first Olympic games, where it was more important to show the beautiful in relationship to the body’s capacity for free movements. This we also can see formalized in movement forms such as circle dances and circle games. In such a developmental dynamic, the children use all parts of the body—head, the breast part, and also the limbs—movement patterns.

In the beginning there are actually two types of movements. We could call the first movement more passive, in which the impulse is coming from the outside, for example, the movement of the cradle or the swing. The second type of movement comes from the inside, out of the human being’s own impulses, and has an active will impulse expressed in relationship to the possibilities of the

body. Today we can see that the first, the entertainment games, are totally dependent on the outer impulses, and therefore also on technical apparatus.

As a medium for education, play has a large and important function, among other reasons because the necessary physical mastery is a freeing experience from the loss of gravity. The light upwards-striving movement is connected with the gesture of stretching oneself upward, the actual main theme of education. One feels happy in this. The child is touched on the soul level. As Schiller expresses it, the child is freed from the heaviness of life. Play is not about entertainment, but about a deeper pedagogical principle: joy. The downward movements have another character. The little child screams when he or she falls down, but to be thrown into the air creates a delightful squeal.

The Imaginative Quality of Play and Its Importance for Memory

When we look quickly at the mental aspects of play, we will not get past the names of Herbert Spencer and Friedrich Schiller. Both noticed the joy, the practice and the will quality of healthy physical expression. These are the three main aspects to play. The first one is often forgotten—joy and the warmth of enjoyment—something that is of great importance in our time, when data games have invaded the playroom. The second is concerned with consciousness, and the unconscious imitation of essential movements. The third is the necessity of play as pure activity for the activity's own sake.

The way of thinking which is first and foremost concerned with the usefulness of human action looks upon play differently: Play is not there for its own sake but needs to be directed to activities that are useful. Such an attitude has a quantitative orientation and seeks a measurable result; the aesthetic, qualitative aspects of play are ignored. In the Waldorf pedagogical perspective, a huge importance is put on especially in the preschool years to understand the qualitative aspects of play, its own character and origin.

The simple fact that it is fun on a deeper level to play is difficult to explain. The joy reveals that play is more than a material reality. It is a spiritual activity which is based on the fact that the picture constantly changes. Play contains the imaginative creativity in relationship to the outer realities. The child is creating inner pictures in the activity of play. There is no doubt about the child's capacity to play, to let him- or herself into the imaginative world and the freely expressed will activity which needs to be protected from interfering outer stimuli. This inner world is the birthplace for the development of higher mental functions.

Rousseau felt that a lack of free play could lead to the negative development of intellectual capacities. In strong words Rousseau expresses that the child will develop to fixed conclusion and an unresponsive and rigid statue if the child is

not given the opportunity to play. Modern research on memory points out that play has within it capacities to recreate and recognize and then repeat again. The child naturally loves to create and to recreate repeatedly. The capacity to remember is totally dependent on this picture of repetition which in free play has the capacity to live deeply into something.

In the world of play the child is in a self-created world. Goethe writes in his notes under his work with Faust that play is an important connection with the shaping of one's own personal thoughts. Charles Dickens expressed similar thoughts in connection with his creation of David Copperfield. "This would not have been possible if I in childhood had not used much time alone under the wings of play." Today many parents would have concerns if their child played alone for five hours a day at a stretch as Dickens did, but as Dickens remembers it he was never alone. Many invisible playmates took part in his world. These grew slowly into characters in his novels. Leo Tolstoy comments that all of Dickens' characters from his novels had become his personal friends. Pablo Neruda says it this way, "In my house I have collected small and large toys which I cannot live without. The child who is not a playing child is not a child, but the adult who is never playing has also lost the child who lived in him, and whom he will miss very much. I have also built my house as a toy, and play in it from early in the morning until late at night."

The Liberating and Musical Character of Play

Another quality that we are concerned with is the fact that play is a totally free and voluntary activity. That means that it carries within it the element of freedom. This form of freedom gives play its joyful character. Play is started and ended as needed. Here there are no obligations. In the world of play we are just devoted and carried away with joy. From a more traditional perspective, one might be tempted to say that play is the opposite of seriousness, but this is not true. Play is often very serious, but without the gravity of the serious.

Schiller's thoughts about the playful human being are part of the foundation for the Waldorf school's relationship to the importance of play. In his groundbreaking work about the aesthetic education of the human being (1795), Schiller tries to explain the central importance of the playful instinct in the human being. For him the human is deeply connected with the aesthetic and the aesthetic with the capacity of the sensory experience. In play our capacity for sensory experience is brought to a higher plane. It is expressed in a creative process of transformation of the sensory when the child is playing. Play leads to a deeper sense of insight for the child. One could say that all creative activity is some form of play. There is definitely a connection between art generally and the art of playing.

In English “to play” is often synonymous with the capacity to play music. Music and play are free expressive activities. Music steps out over the logical and the visible in some way similar to play. Aristotle points out how both play and music have a fundamental place in the pedagogical process. The free man of antiquity in the Greek society did not work but used much time to play music. It was an important component in the education of the soul. Music, play and dance belong to the art of mime and have a great significance for the development of character and for the aesthetic development. The goal of these activities is to awaken and to move feelings for the aesthetic. Plato understood play as an entranceway to creativity because it opened up the cosmic spiritual expression

Music lives in an atmosphere of joy. “To play is to rejoice,” Shakespeare expressed in one of his sonnets. Schiller points out in his *14th Letter* that an inborn play instinct (*spieltrieb*) influences the sculptural through, for instance, a spontaneous instinctive need to decorate. We have all experienced sitting in a boring meeting with pen in hand, and almost without conscious activity we find ourselves doodling and making forms on the paper in front of us. This unconscious will impulse can be compared with the child’s early need to express itself through play, It mirrors the hands and the soul-playful creativity without the need for a goal or a specific usefulness.

Music and Play

Compared to the conditions for play in our time, it is interesting that music has gained a more central place than earlier. Never before have so many people played or listened to music as now. The access to electronic music is, of course, part of the reason. However, concert houses around the world have never been so well attended as today. Much of the music which is played is the so-called popular music, a type of entertainment which first gained its place in the general culture at the end of the eighteenth century. The most interesting fact is that so many people view music as a life necessity. This means that music has a unique place among the arts just because it is experienced as personally enriching. No culture in the world lacks play or music, and in both these activities speak the language of humanity. They are fundamental in the creation of culture because they express a totality of the communication form. They develop increased awareness, wakefulness, and an elevated experience of being. Many people experience that when they are fully present at a classical concert when, together with many others, they are transported above and beyond the trivial aspects of the world, yet, at the same time, seem more in touch with life itself. This state of being is like nirvana, and not unlike how a satisfied infant or a playful school child might experience life. To listen to music implies temporarily pulling back

from the hustle and bustle of life. When the typical age for play comes to an end, it is important in a Waldorf school that music becomes a natural part of the educational experience, otherwise the student might disengage for periods, not pay attention.

Play and Life

Creativity is dependent both on conscious and unconscious mental processes. Nietzsche, Steiner, and Jung all emphasized this form of aesthetic experience which has been described, and they pointed out that play promotes a feeling for the innermost being of the individual. The enchantment of play has no material interest and elevates play to the sacred world of the child. This state continues to work into the everyday life after play is over.

On a deeper level I think there is a public consensus that we need to protect a genuine culture of play. I think that this is the same around the world. There would be many who would join John Ruskin, "Play is necessary to give us a happy state of mind." One thing is the necessary seriousness of existence; another is the immeasurable value of a playful attitude to life – both aspects are needed. To play is to change the world. In play fantasy, creativity, and empathy are stimulated. In this way play creates balance and peace in the world.



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Six—An Important Year

by

Astrid Sunt

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

The human being goes through one of life's big transformational processes during his seventh year. It is well known that, from a physiological standpoint, it takes seven years to renew all the cells in the body. That means that the seven-year-old you have in front of you is not the same child from a physical perspective that was carried under his mother's heart. The child has worked through and renewed his whole organism. The inherited body is outgrown and put aside. We can see this quite clearly in children's drawings. The pictures often contain houses or a car or a boat with a person in it. Or the theme has a certain border around it. The person in the picture stands on the ground, and the child, so to speak, has moved into his own house and taken fully hold of his own body. Castles, forts, and jagged mountain ranges, together with as occasional less clear or more varied theme predominate his drawings. It is important for the child to express these phases freely through drawing and not have any particular agenda from a pedagogical adult perspective.

It is quite striking how the body's outer proportions shift during this phase as well: the face becomes longer, the nose grows out, the cheeks are not as round any longer, the change of teeth happens, limbs and fingers are elongated, and the round little belly of the younger child disappears. The gaze is not as lively as before. These outer changes also have clear motor consequences for the child as well. This is often a period during which the children are a little more clumsy. It takes time to master a new body! The milk glass tips over, the chairs tip over, and often anger and frustration are not far behind. The child's sense of self is a little vulnerable. A harmony that was present in the five-year-old is no longer felt. Some children feel short periods of chaos, but the path to play and enthusiasm is still short as long as the right inspiration is present in the environment.

Spontaneously the children begin to compare themselves to their friends in the same age group. As five-year-olds they were still the strongest, the cleverest, the toughest, and at least either mommy or daddy was that! Now, as six-year-olds, they are more vulnerable and they are not as comfortable. They look carefully at the friends who can tie a bow or do a cartwheel or draw a horse, or at the friends who are good at finger knitting or kicking a soccer ball, or who understand all the rules about how to play a board game. A sense of melancholy can set in: “I don’t know anything.”

The differences in development are more visible for the child in a homogeneous age group than in a mixed age group. The absence of possibility for joint play with younger children, wherein the six-year-old can stand out more, can lead to a painful sense of self and a place that the child might have to struggle with for a while. Instead, if we have a mixed age group in the kindergarten, the older children have a positive role to play and tasks and privileges that fit their level of development. The older ones are looked up to and also imitated by the younger ones who also benefit in terms of having a relationship to the older children. Children who have not had the experience of playing with older children during the kindergarten years are not as well prepared for later school experience. During the kindergarten years the little ones take joy in and look forward to their turn to be the big ones! So when finally that year arrives—with its puberty sense of vulnerability and instability as well—slowly a new sense of awareness about time and space awakens. The life in kindergarten takes on a certain form—one thing follows another. The recognition of the repeating variations in everyday life and yearly celebrations awakens a sense of joy and a carrying force that now the big six-year-old can master! In a homogeneous age group in the Steiner/Waldorf kindergarten, the pedagogy works much the same way as in a mixed age group. The children’s relationships to each other will vary according to the individual children’s development and personality. The adults will encourage the more resource-strong children to take care of and support the ones who are less developed. (A lot of respect needs to be awarded the teachers who are dealing with these large groups of children.) What happens is that the core group of children that complete the kindergarten years together will fall away whereas in a mixed age group there is a sense of continuity.

The pedagogical principle during the first seven-year period is imitation—the spontaneous copycatting through which the child gains knowledge of the world. These are our tools in the kindergarten, and that is how it needs to be. We can see that the children from five-and-a-half years old slowly turns toward a sense for authority, and they are more open to verbal information sharing. In

reality this is still by imitation and is just the first stadium toward the next life stage, a necessary transition phase which often happens between the seven-year periods in life. For this introductory period, which actually stretches all the way up towards the nine-year-old, we are not going to misuse or prematurely start intellectual teaching but encourage and nurture playful stimuli of wonder and inquisitive attitude.

At the same time this is a period with a careful but visible transition from a “want” existence to a “should” existence. The clothes should hang on the little hooks, the table needs to be cleaned up after the meal time, you need to say thanks for the day, the tasks need to be completed, the flowers should be watered, the little knapsacks packed with lunch, the light needs to turn green before you cross the street, and so on. We are now approaching the seven-year period between seven and fourteen wherein the fundamental pedagogical principle is authority. In this way our pedagogy builds on the real knowledge of the way the human being develops.

There will usually be a period of boredom during the seventh year. “I have nothing to do.” This is often interpreted that now the child is ready for school. The child may want pre-made toys, grow a little more dependent on popular collection objects, and so on. In this phase there is a change in the child’s consciousness. The child has worked through his own inner organs, and according to Steiner the forces that have been used for the transformation of the body are now free and available as forces for memory. Memories for life can be created as a little looking glass into one’s own childhood. The child’s consciousness is now reflecting over many little happenings and over the large questions in life. The child asks a lot of questions and really wants our honest thoughts and feelings in the answers. The child can hold onto a thought, an idea, a play, a plan, over longer periods of time. In this year the children can come to kindergarten with a clear inner picture about what and how the play will happen and what they will make and be able to hold onto and be able to remember. Together the six-year-olds can develop projects that can take place over longer periods of time. They talk among themselves and experience how an idea can grow in a common fantasy world and take physical shape. Cooperation and friendship can grow through free play.

During the first seven-year period, Steiner says, the foundation is built for our courage for life, trust in the feeling that the world is good. In order for the child to thrive, this sense of trust, a sense of clarity, a sense of what is going to happen that day, comes first, and then secondly an experience of being heard and seen and understood and recognized for who she/he is, a sense of being loved.

It Is All about Values

The Norwegian experiment to start children in school at age six was not very successful in terms of making better students; what is then the medicine from our minister of education? Yes, more school, more learning, more hours at the desk, fewer adults to give nurturing, and more measuring of quantity (referred to as quality), less possibilities for quality. This is not building a pedagogical policy on real knowledge of the human being, but rather stubbornly holding onto a prestigious idea with no basis in reality.

Matti Bergström, Finnish professor, neurologist, and brain researcher, indicated during our big debate around school reform that the age for starting school should rather be pushed further up than down. Finnish children still start school as seven-year-olds, and they score the highest in Europe in terms of school readiness. If we put children in a kindergarten too early in terms of intellectual learning, we are hindering their capacity to develop their own abilities towards problem solving and good judgment later in life. “We will end up with value-handicapped people,” says Bergström, and he supports this perspective through his research. He has found, among other things, that the brain stem, which is already developed in the embryo, is the seed for creativity, and the outer brain is the seed for structure and information and does not develop until puberty. In his book *The Student: The Last Slave* (Semenadium, Verlag Sweden, 1991), Bergström writes about the schism between the children who are forced to start early and those who start later: “When the society finds itself at the developmental stage in the direction of the information society, the children are already on their way to build a new society that means a value society.”

As far as I am aware, nobody has been able to make a connection between early information gathering and our capacity as adults to be able to utilize and control this information. A local bank was recently advertised on the web page: “Create a culture of winners.” Is that what we truly want? If somebody wins, then somebody out of necessity has to lose. The goal with the Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy is to not create winners, but to create a foundation for every child to develop him- or herself into a free human being with a capacity to find his or her ethical values and life task.

Reality and Joy in the School Garden

by

Linda Jolly

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

School in itself needs to be a friendly place. Outside it is not only going to have a place for running and play, but also a garden where one can in-between send the students so they can take joy in the sight of trees, flowers and grass.

– Johann Ames Comenius (1592–1670)

In a time when society is hurtling forward at the speed of light, a school garden can seem like an anachronism, something left over from a time when people had plenty of time, when they could take joy in producing their own food products, and where the only entertainment that came through the air was bird song. But if we stop for a moment, we will notice that the school garden is about something very different than being nostalgic.

Many people have probably experienced themselves that to work in nature is a good counter-balance to time-pressure and a contribution toward regaining a



slower pace. A garden has to do with the idea that things take time. While we get a lot of facts via the Internet in the course of minutes, we cannot really get to know a plant until we have followed it through at least one cycle of growth. A garden also has to do with experience



permeated with feeling. A garden gives us the opportunity to connect with the outer nature through our inner lives. When I smell a rose today, I can still experience that moment in my childhood when I had my nose buried in the soft, delicate flower petals in my mother's garden.

All of this is even more important for our children, who are growing up in a much more restless time. How can the work in a school garden help to recreate a balance so that the children can take joy in their own self-expression in nature? I will look at some of the themes that have become important for my work with gardening and with outdoor pedagogical work in general.

Joy in Nature

Joy in nature has been an important theme in the work with school gardens, from the first time school gardens were introduced in Norway at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is still important for the teachers too. To be outside with the children in the school garden requires a lot of extra time and much responsibility, but also brings a great amount of joy. One gets to experience wonder together with the students over the peculiar and the beautiful that nature brings forth. One also gets to know the children from another angle than when they are inside a classroom. Everyone works together shoulder-to-shoulder on something that can develop into truly the heart of the school and the most beautiful area on the school grounds. To be a teacher today without the garden is for me unthinkable. My own starting point was my frustration as a biology teacher. The youths I was working with were at a certain distance from nature, and the teaching in the classroom became boring. They seemed to be almost illiterate when it came to the experience of nature outside the door. They knew a lot about the giraffe but nothing about the little porcupine in their own gardens. It was not just knowledge that fell short, but experience. And it is their own

experience which is the condition for interest which means that they are able to participate. I learned right away that the students needed to get out of the classroom at a much earlier point in time. Which arena for learning could work better than a school garden or a farm? Therefore my life as a teacher started with one foot in the field and one foot in the classroom.

The Invisible Source

The origin of our daily bread has disappeared from our children's curious gaze. The results of a research project in England about children's knowledge of the origins of their food help to illustrate this point. About one fourth of the children between eight and eleven, did not know that wheat was one of the main ingredients in bread. They thought that bread was made of rice, potatoes, and perhaps yeast. Only one out of five knew that apples ripened and were picked in the fall. And even here in Norway we have children who will draw a picture of a square fish! Food grows in the store—that is the experience children have. “I will always buy food at the supermarket, teacher,” I heard one of my students say during a garden lesson. We were talking about where we get our food. And when we take a class in the tenth grade to a farm and get milk straight from the cows in clear glass mugs, often some students do not want to taste. “Cow's milk” is something different from bottled milk from the store.

Is it important that the children should know from where the food comes? Yes, I am totally convinced that the more we surround ourselves with things that we do not fully understand, the more it will become difficult to develop a sense of belonging and safety. When the children do not know where their food comes from, this contributes to a feeling of rootlessness and uncertainty. The school should be a place where children grow comfortable with the world around them and gain an understanding of the foundations for daily life—in everything—from the food on the table to how the light-switch on the wall works and how the computer works. When they know where things come from and how they function, then the children will feel at home in the world.

To cultivate a meal themselves, from sowing the seeds to setting the table, gives the students an opportunity to explore what is good and what is not so good when it comes to nutrition. The reports from



professionals in this field are deeply concerning. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there is an decrease in nutrients in food products and an increase in food allergies, the intake of sugar and other stimulates, and eating disorders. The hysteria around weight and the growing problems with anorexia and bulimia speak



clearly. If the students gain experiences at school which make learning about nutrition less abstract, they could develop a sensible and balanced relationship to nutrition. And the joy and pride when they look at what they have produced themselves are perhaps the most important to get across the thought on the right diet.

It is totally wonderful to experience children who have loudly proclaimed that they do not like vegetables, proudly showing their own harvest and eating it with great appreciation. The grumpy complaints about dirty potatoes will not happen when the students themselves have cultivated and harvested the product. The process of cultivating the vegetables becomes so meaningful to them that any sense of antipathy that the students might have is dissipated.

The Passive Indoor Child

In contrast to the time when school gardens were very common both in the city and in the countryside, we have a very different child culture to deal with today. Researchers saw that during the eighties and nineties we were dealing with much more passive children in relationship to movement, and that they spend more time indoors than outdoors before they start school. The consequences of this shift for children shows up in ongoing new research. They have undeveloped large motor skills. In other words they are more clumsy and less capable of controlling their limbs. Doctors and physiotherapists in Denmark have concluded that the knee muscles in about seventy-five percent of ten-year-old boys are underdeveloped. And this can lead to back problems in later life. And allergies have increased proportionately as well.

During the last few years, in many of the school garden courses, teachers have reported experiences that point to a much more immediate, practical consequence of sitting still too much: much more restlessness during the lesson and more difficulties in concentration. A good sense of self and a good social sense are really dependent on the child's capacity to master his or her own body

and to be able to participate in the games. So it is clear that children need to move much more in the course of a school day. To handle a tool, for example, in the school garden provides the possibility to master motor capacities through meaningful tasks.

Active contact with nature in the school garden also invites a rich kingdom of experiences through the senses. Touch, sight, taste, smell, balance, and hearing are stimulated in the garden. A rich vegetation attracts many insects, birds, and little animals. Real first-hand experiences in which many senses are activated give children experiences to which they can connect. They will remember easier and be filled with impressions which they want to share. Teachers have reported how, for instance, language and mathematics lessons are more easy and more effective when they are combined with sessions in the garden, that the garden work gives both material and inspiration for many of the lessons that happen indoors.

The youngest students meet the world of nature with great reverence and respect. In the moments when they are immersed in watching the earthworm bury down in the soil or discovering the first little shoots of their newly-sown peas, they show no distinction between self and the world. They have the time to drink in the experience and make the world their own.

Older students who have a bit more distance between self and environment can be helped and stimulated to wakeful observations through drawing and careful descriptions of the cycle of growth. With too much intellectualizing, the distance to nature is increased. As the famous saying goes from Nordal Grieg, “Botany is the worst experience for the plants.”

Silent Knowledge and Practical Work

Out in the garden with the children, we have the opportunity to reflect all about what learning truly is. In earlier times society and home were real teaching arms and legs. Children experienced daily handwork and skills and how things were made. Going to school was a privilege which gave the children freedom from all the practical work and gave space to head knowledge. Now we experience the over-dominance of the intellect, both in society and at school.

The Swedish pedagogue Stephen von Botmer points out in his book *Ten Years in the School Garden* that the opportunities for practical work in the school garden give us the experience of something different than intellectual learning. Silent knowledge is visible, for instance, in the way a handworker holds a tool and the rhythm and the sense of self-confidence in how to use tools. I have observed children in the school garden when they have those moments of silent working. They look at the adult or the older students who are becoming really

good at doing something, and then they try to imitate by holding the tool in a certain way and trying it out themselves.

This is a form of learning that is more attractive to some students than others. Howard Gardener differentiates in the seven intelligences between different types of skills and talents other than intelligences in the pure, mathematical, logical sense. The students with a kinesthetic, body-based capacity can easily get lost in the traditional school setting. But can we create areas where they step forth and further develop their own skills and talents? I have often had students in the school garden who grow in their own and their fellow students' eyes through their capacity to tackle practical tasks easily. So we dare to call this also as important learning in line with what we teach in the classroom. There is an old saying that expresses this wisdom: "What the hand touches fills the heart, and what fills the heart enlightens the spirit."

Does Anybody Need Me?

The practical work in the garden, which with time and perseverance can include all of the school's environments, also has another side. The hectic life tempo that most adults feel burdened by can easily give children the feeling that they are in the way. They have to hurry everywhere and accommodate the parents who have so many tasks they have to accomplish. When the students experience that they can do important work in the garden and with care of small animals and plants, they have a confirmation that they can also contribute something important. It is therefore important that the finished products from the garden are made visible. The students identify with the products—if my products are needed, that means that the world also needs me. In this way they feel both seen and valued.

Community, the Invisible Harvest

Like all other important and meaning-filled tasks which are solved together, garden work can also strengthen the social life of the school. Through working together with the teachers, the students get to know each other from a different angle than in the classroom. Here they master tasks by joining forces. If one student is lazy and is just leaning on the shovel while another one is busily digging, a certain process happens between the students which the teacher can stand outside without scolding words. There is also great benefit when older students can instruct the younger ones in their acquired skills. The students' working together on the many common tasks during the gardening periods strengthens a sense of "we" and contributes to a sense of identity for the school. The little ones bring their parents to show them all that they have done day-by-

day, and to experience the teacher as a co-worker gives the students a sense that what they do is important. If we can also include periods when the parents can participate in the school garden, the school garden can act as a glue for the social life of the school.

Think Globally, Act Locally

In the general teaching plan for the Norwegian public school system, there is a general encouragement to strengthen the students' belief that they can actually participate in solving the ecological problems. It says: "The teaching must awaken the student's sense of a solitary social action and that common work can solve global problems." If we are truly to take this seriously, we are standing in front of a huge task. This is not solved by just having a few lessons of conversations about the global issues. The starting point for most children and youths today is that nature is threatened, and what is threatening nature is the human being itself.

During the 1980s at an environmental exhibit in Sweden, the visitors were met by the headline, "The Worst Enemies for the Earth" and a mirror in which you saw your own reflection. This is a good picture of the impression that has imprinted itself in our children—that the best thing we can do for nature is to put up a fence and not touch it. We adults have forgotten to communicate that part of our cultural history which is the witness to our cooperation with nature. The open landscape, for example, with its manyfold animal, insect, and plant life, shows that the human being can also work in fruitful cooperation with the natural environment. This is also what a school garden is all about. In order to create a garden we have to listen to nature's needs and possibilities at the local place. And after that we use a treasure that has been inherited through many thousands of years—the cultural plants. Vegetables, garden flowers and fruit trees have all come to us through the human being's positive cooperation with nature. Our continuous care for this is the foundation for handing them on to future generations. The tools and the silent knowledge of handling which also belongs to such a rich tradition are also witness of this dialogue with nature.



If we can manage to give children an experience of this when they are in school, we can take joy in the many little sprouts of hope that the students will have sweated and worked hard and played and laughed in the school garden to carry forward. They carry a slumbering wisdom which hopefully can awaken to meet the challenges of tomorrow. I wish you all the best in your school garden!

What's Inside Here?

Some Thoughts about Children and the Inner Nature of Wood

by
Lars Wegge

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

At the after-school activity house at our school, it often happens that children disappear and we find them in the woodwork room. You can almost predict what they are busy with: they are hollowing out slabs of wood. If you ask what it is going to be the answer comes quickly— “Bowl.” With bowl adzes and chisels they dig and hollow out all kinds of wood bits and pieces from the scrapbin.

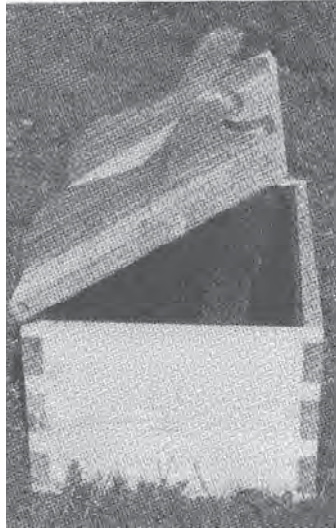
What is it with this digging and downward- and inward-moving activity that is so exciting and captivating? What makes the need to creep into old hollow trees irresistible for so many?



Prologue: From the Inside Out

In the sixth grade, the second year with woodwork according to the school schedule, the students at our school work with one piece as the raw material. Ideally they would truly start from scratch, cutting down the tree with the bark still on the trunk. We work with simple, resting forms. Out come mallets, little crochet hooks, and butter knives. The convex rounded form is the common denominator, and the little darning egg is the archetypal-task in the realm of convexity.

When I was a schoolboy I struggled terribly with these two principles in physics. At last I managed, at least in certain moments, with the help of the classic example of glasses that are pictured in profile, to connect the concept of convex with growth. It was something positive—something got thicker. Sympathy! The concave was in a following fashion associated with less dignified expressions. It was something receding,



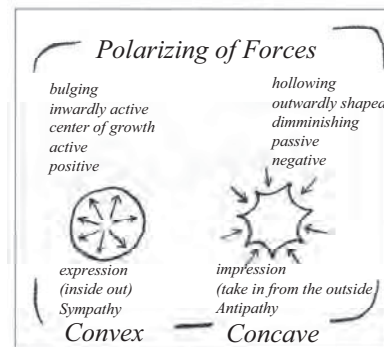
something that got smaller, something negative and even antipathetic. We can experience something active in connection with the convex, and something more passive with the concave surface.

The paradox in woodworking is that the activity leaves an impression. We dig and cut something away to leave behind the more essential, in other words, to become more visible. With clay and beeswax we have more freedom in terms of forming and shaping, alternating with taking away (minus) or adding new substance (plus). This plastic activity is in many ways less committed, perhaps more frivolous, than woodworking, wherein we cut in with great consequence and take something away. The material is continually getting smaller, so the activity is, in essence, a concave activity. The result stands forth as an outer impression which on the observer makes an impression.

Forms can be looked upon as results of impressions and movements from either outside or from within the form itself. They can be more or less static, frozen movements like a waterfall that has turned into a pillar of ice in the winter. Architecture is often referred to as frozen music. The first schoolwork for the seven-year-old is to practice drawing the straight and the curved line

on the blackboard. When the students later stand in front of new possibilities and form expressions, it is often fruitful to bring forth this strong common experience. A curved line shows itself as having the possibility to invert, for it has both concave and convex possibilities. Therefore the straight line becomes the golden middle road. But in many other connections it is quite anonymous in that regard.

What is the difference between the form of the round ball and the egg? The round ball



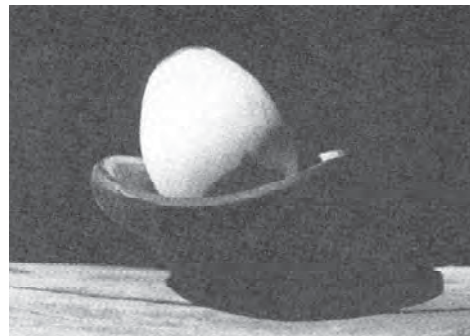
has, like the circle, a static peacefulness in its closed harmonious balance between forces working in both from the outside and from the inside. The egg is a round sphere that wants something! Convexity in a certain direction! In the same way as something that is filled with an inner force from the inside—the pregnant stomach, the little bud, the dough, the grape, the cheek of a child—yes, everything that is growing. The convex is in itself outwardly expanding. Convexity is a form that has excess forces within itself. This corresponds with the ideal healthy childhood nature the way we would like to see it expressed before puberty. It is seething, growing, and blossoming. Interest is overwhelmingly directed outward in the sense that activity expands and continues in the shape of strong fantasy forces. The sense of reality is much more expanded than for most adults. It is a living, pulsating state in which everything is possible.

The Inner Room: Impressions Finally Bowl!

From the clay we fashion the vase, but the most essential part is the empty space within.

— Laotse

In the seventh grade we turn everything inside out. The students are at the threshold of puberty, a time to start the task of shaping their own sense of self, their own inner space for thoughts and feelings, a space which will be the object for introversion, critical and self-reflective studies. Much of their interest is now turned inward. Now the time is ripe to dig and hollow out!



Woodworking also calls for the tools with which to learn. In North America one calls the grotto “cave,” a gigantic concave space. The German *schalle* means not only “bowl” but also “shell,” also something that encloses something that is on the outside to protect something on the inside. The more flat or shallow the bowl becomes, the more it will lean towards a tray, and the totally flat form is the cutting board. The concave is the more reserved form until it becomes self-effacing and ends up as a straight line.

First the student practices by hollowing out a little bowl which, after a while, shows itself to become a wonderful container for the egg that they made the year before, like a little nest! Often it becomes more beautiful if the inside of the little

bowl is polished with sandpaper until it becomes really smooth, whereas the edges and the outer side have a more rough texture with the imprints from the knife, chisel, or ax. What is important is that the students experience some choices about the surface texture of the bowl.

Around the time of the autumn vacation we are heading out into the forest outside the school gardens. There we have full-size logs which are waiting, preferably linden, brown ash, butternut, or black willow. The wood needs to be fairly soft if we are to have the strength to work with it during the winter.

No Risk, No Fun!

With newly-sharpened axes of different sizes, the students start their yearly project in woodworking. With the traditional ax one works away from oneself, but with the bowlmaker's adze one works toward oneself. One has to stand with a broad stance. Imagine that with these kinds of adzes huge tree trunks once upon a time were hollowed out to create boats! The sturdy ones in the class get a dreamy look in their large shining eyes when they think about the challenges ahead. This tool is hungry, and it really does a great job with little pieces of wood just flying off in big bites.

If one does it wrong, there are drastic consequences. This the teacher does not even need to mention. To set boundaries is easy—you will have an immediate corrective report back from life if the students do not pay attention. In this exercise, the teacher does not have to say too much but let nature be the ideal pedagogue. Nature has its own boundaries that the students will come up against. It is these boundaries and rules of nature we are searching for through the repetitive motion of the activity and the rhythm and experience; a sense for the material from nature's silent presence will start to be felt in the student, a kind of knowledge that has to be gathered as a capacity before it can be objectified into science. This the student cannot read about and know beforehand. It has to be experienced and speak its own language. On and off the teacher will stop up and ask those good questions, bring the sense of wonder in and bring the knowledge of the hands up into the awareness of the head to make it into science.





The rough work happens quickly and many of the children get a sense of intoxication with the quick progress of the work. But this asks for a sharpened sense of awareness, concentration, and therefore a stronger sense of presence, just as with whittling towards oneself. Are not these the capacities that we want to foster and strengthen through all pedagogical activities? Then the school will need areas where students through supervised activity can have the capacity to express themselves physically so that they can come to awareness of themselves. (These areas have disappeared in many homes.) This is what happens: students will meet a situation to the degree that they will sharpen their sense of presence and therefore have an experience of themselves. The opposite situation is the shallow reality of the electronic experience wherein the students are floating out far and away from the physical reality and return to the world as masters of just the

head. Through this kind of activity we will have intellectual children who have a lot of information and who can express themselves with great conviction but who are helpless when placed in front of practical challenges. When it comes to the meeting of the physical reality, the gap between information and true knowledge becomes painfully large for many. Anyway, we hear a lot this ongoing mantra that the students bring from home: you should not whittle towards yourself. For me this is like saying, “It’s wonderful to go skiing, but do not go down any downhill slopes—you can fall down and hurt yourself!” So what is childhood without Band-Aids and some scraped-up knees?

Much of this comes perhaps from the fact that many adults themselves do not feel so at home in the physical world and therefore have much anxiety in terms of trusting their children’s capacities. Instead of meeting the challenges, we pass on a sense of alienation and anxiety to the next generation. Will this mean that in the near future some day trips consist of traveling to folk museums in order to experience manual tools, and are we looking at a future in which the knife and the ax are just collection objects and not everyday use objects?

Anyway, back to the scene in the forest. Woodchips are flying, and I stand there and feel sad for many of the parents who do not get to see the fantastic things that the children are doing. (But I am also quietly glad that some of the parents are happily unaware of what’s going on!)

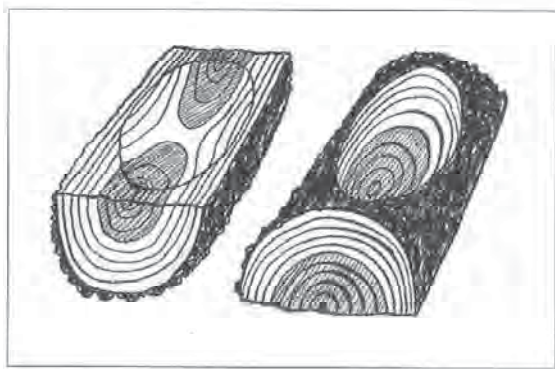
This Way? No, That Way: To Work with Two Sides of the Same Question

A central question here, as with all woodworking, is the direction of the cut. To form the convex surfaces, the cutting starts from a topographical high point

on the object, the center, and is directed outwards towards the sides, to come downhill with the tool and work out towards the periphery. This is, for instance, with the outside of the bowl. The student turns the bowl upside-down and cuts from the bottom towards the edge. When it comes to the inside, this situation is the opposite. Here we cut from the periphery, in and down towards the center, towards the bottom of the bowl. These fundamental principles correspond to the child and adolescent nature in terms of the base orientation towards life.

The young child has a sense of being in the center with an interest and orientation directed outwards towards the periphery, whereas the older youth experiences himself standing outside and orienting himself toward the inner space, toward his own center. The youth is fascinated by the periphery, which, with the help of the teacher, has to be brought close and connected with something that is known. The child, on the other hand, is constantly able to be captured by what is near and known, which still seems to contain unknown and wonderful aspects without bottom! Until puberty comes sneaking along and new pedagogical methods have to take place. What is important is to find the right material for the right time and to communicate through the right methods. Sometimes it is enough to just mention an exotic word and middle school youths seem to sharpen their ears.

Some will choose an open, receiving form like the tray or the larger bowl. The bowl is deeper, but not as deep as the cup or the goblet. If it becomes large enough lengthwise, the form will be a large wooden tray. There are many good reasons to start the hollowing process from the rounded side of the bark and to dig oneself inward towards the heartwood. This creates a concentric vein pattern



inside, like circles in water after a stone is thrown. Through the eyes of most people these patterns seem harmonious and beautiful compared to the more chaotic pattern that you get when you start hollowing from the inside out. The other advantage is at the outer edge of the bowl, at

the meeting point between the inner and outer forms. The rounded form of the trunk gives a natural play of lines between the two like the profile of a boat. Even when the students take the bark off with a good knife, nature provides them with a given form. All other starting points for hollowing out the bowl require that one has to finish off the top of the bowl oneself. This is a demanding

task for most young and inexperienced woodworkers, and the result can be for many a kind of less alive form. Nature is as a rule a more superior giver of form until one has truly mastered the art.

Another advantage by hollowing from the outside in also has to do with the strength properties in the wood. Generally the strength increases towards the outer wood and further up on the trunk where the bowl is most vulnerable to cracks. Many an old baking trough which has been hollowed from the inside out has cracked over time. The inner tension is the strongest here.

The work with this shell, the bowl, is much about learning to control the inside and outside forms at the same time. To manage to get uniform thickness is the starting point. Especially when the piece of wood is raw, it is possible to measure this, but our fingertips should also practice a sense for thickness. If we are not concentrating and not paying attention, if our thoughts are away from the work, we can suddenly cut a hole in the bowl. In order to check out and be forewarned about the thickness of the wood, the student can hold the piece of wood up against the sun or strong source of light and see where the light shines through. And if the student has a disaster happen, it is always possible to cut all the way through, make a clear circle and, then plug it with another piece of wood. With a little stain for color the student can camouflage where the mistake was made.



The Double-Bent Surface

You will discover that when we bend a surface, and then bend it again so that the bent surface again is bent, you have the most simple expression for inner life. We feel then how we can start to have form speak to us.

— Rudolf Steiner

Before we leave the question and the theme of the bowl, we should mention the phenomenon of the bottom—what is it? The bottom or foundation creates the transition between what is underneath, such as the table, and the actual hollow form itself. It can be tall and stately or totally absent so the bowl is rocking back

and forth on the table. It is important for the students to experience the different possibilities here. The bowl can move the direction of a goblet and have a tall and stately shape, or it can move towards a more open bowl. The teacher can have interesting discussions about this with the students. What is the purpose? Who are they planning to give the bowl to? Where is it going to stand? What is the intended use? This widens the perspective and gives their work a sense of meaningful connection.

Many Possibilities, Many Parts

One can also cut a small cylinder form and start hollowing from the cut surface, the end piece of the wood. In this way one will end up with a concentric vein pattern inside and totally even walls. And if one has cut precisely one can follow a single vein of wood. This is theoretically easy, but in actuality immensely challenging. Growths on trees have a chaotic, swimming vein pattern, which makes the wood extremely strong and very useful, for instance, for knife shafts. Straight and even walls are the end result, especially when one thinks of the process of drying when the students actually work in wet medium. A fresh tree trunk is softer and more malleable and is recommended for all hollowing out tasks. After cutting it must be placed in a cool and dry storage place until the piece of work can reach room temperature. One possibility is that the butt ends of the wood is sealed with tree glue or painted with liquid paraffin in order to avoid cracking while the piece is being worked. Hollowing out from the end wood can seem to be a little bit tough for most twelve-year-olds, but can perhaps be offered as an additional challenge for the ones who finish early. Drill a little hole on each side of the top, fill it with glue and put in a leather strap as a handle, and one will have a little bucket for a young child which can be used for berry picking. Drill all the way through and fit here a wedged piece as a bottom and one has a little box.



For the upper grades, especially middle school, it is tempting to cut a beautiful piece of wood in two and shape the parts as bottom and top. The inside could be hollowed into separate compartments for particular objects, for instance as a jewelry box. If this is done well and the student can follow the vein pattern, the box can be a beautiful esthetic piece. We use the same process in the ninth grade when we make a sheath for the knife. The parts are hollowed out so they will cover the knife exactly, and then are fashioned together with leather and

sewn, working from the whole to the parts towards a new whole, in other words, from analysis to synthesis.

Middle school concludes in the tenth grade with a focus on joining with a larger piece of work. This is a time when the young peoples' own inner space is closed for reconstruction. In the woodworking class they now have to build this with materials that they pick out themselves. They have to design dimensions, select the wood, and also decide for what this square construction is going to be used, often ending up as some form of container or cupboard.

Regardless of how carefully they prepare the technical drawings—from the front, from the side, and with little models, with an acceptable margin of error—this is a trial for most students. Patience and careful precision are required. Only sharpened pencils are acceptable! The payoff is deep, happy sense of contentment when in the end the parts actually fit. Then the students smile from ear to ear. They have built up their own inner room out of a jointed flat board! And it holds itself together through the strenght of the fitted joints. A high point happens when the student and the teacher each take a hold of an end piece of the box and pull in opposite directions and the box holds together without glue.



A healthy relationship to cause and effect is a central theme in all pedagogy during high school. I cannot think of a more specific task than this where one in a most immediate way can experience and practice the relationship between cause and effect because the students themselves have set the conditions.

We could say that during the elementary school years, the woodworking has to do with exploring and analyzing which culminate in the hollowing out of the bowl. During middle school the emphasis has to do with joining and creating of different spaces, and is marked by the experience of synthesis. The students at the high school level develop a sense of form and utilize both artistic principles. During artistic, playful activity during the elementary school years, and careful training of skills and technical capacities during the middle school years, we have built a foundation for independent, artistic, scientific work for the high school years.

About Seeing with the Heart

by

Arne Øgaard

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

In his book *The Little Prince*, Antoine de St. Exupery lets us meet a little fox, who wants very much to become tame so he can befriend the Little Prince. When the two of them part, the fox tells a secret: “You can only truly see with the heart. The most essential is invisible to the eye.” This secret can be called one of the main intentions in the Steiner pedagogical approach. Many people probably have discovered that with the heart, but it is more difficult to put into words. This essay is my attempt to do just that.

How can we see with the heart? It must have something to do with feelings, but it is not that all feelings can express insights about the most essential aspects in life.

We live in a time where pleasure is essential. Therefore, it is important to stimulate the feeling life so that we can attain a high level of pleasure. Of course I want people to have good experiences, but this fixation on pleasure can also exceed a certain healthy level and become self-absorption. It is not always pleasure that gives us the most lasting enrichment or tells us something about the most essential aspect in our surroundings. Often pleasure only awakens in ourselves the need for more pleasure. Among young people, many talk about looking for “kicks.” They seek out extreme experiences in order to attain momentary intense life sensations. The drive for these kicks and these intense feelings is so big today because a good and general development of our feeling life is not naturally taken care of in our society.

Often when we talk about feelings, it is really about how people are feeling right there and then. A reporter might ask in many different connections, “How do you feel?” A larger question is how our feeling life really is connected. What are feelings? How do we meet our life of feelings? And how can we develop feelings such that they can meet thoughts in an expanded organ of perception, the thoughts of the heart?

The little infant senses with all of himself. When we experience little children who are heartfelt, it is because they both receive and give out from a heart-felt immediacy. As children grow and develop, this heart-felt immediacy gradually changes. With increased self-awareness, the child closes herself more off within herself. This process of closing off intensifies around the age of three and again around the age of six. And in the Waldorf pedagogy, we actually work with the perspective that children go through these periods every third year. When the child becomes older, these periods can express themselves as inner crises. Self-awareness can bring an experience of loneliness or uncertainty. It is a positive and important thing that self-awareness increases, but the key question is how can this happen in such a way that the heart-felt qualities can still hold warmth, so that the child can still both give and sense with the heart? This is the main challenge in all areas of the Steiner pedagogy. Here are some examples.

The Art of Education and Art Education

As in earlier childhood years, the art of storytelling during the first years of school is a central way to meet the child. The teacher has to be able to tell stories so that the children can have an experience of many different moods—sorrow and joy, anticipation and fear. A main goal is to activate the entire register of feelings in the child. This is important in the rest of teaching as well, whether it is to play the recorder or to do a chemistry experiment. This achieves a double effect: the child is enthusiastic and wakes up while at the same time retains some of the heart-felt quality. The storytelling material in a Steiner/Waldorf school is chosen so that the content also deeply touches the child. This is everything from the fairytale in first grade, to biographies and historical events during middle school years.

A story is first and foremost a picture. Out from the picture in the fairy tale, one can get a sense that it might be helpful to help the old woman who is standing locked with her nose in the little stump or to share one's food with those who are hungry or to listen to the songs of the birds. As the children develop and mature, the teacher can bring forth more logical and sensible learning facts in the stories. But the pictures always contains something that is more than what common sense and logic can reveal. They contain something that is experienced with the heart. Can it be something with Askeladden's relationship to life that opens up a sense for living?

The great challenge for a Waldorf teacher is to be an artist, somebody who can communicate what is essential, somebody who can help the child to discover the hidden treasures in the world. He or she has to strive in this direction. But the students cannot just receive. So the teacher also has to help activate the creative

forces in the child. Children are inwardly active when they listen to the stories, but they also have to practice expressing and creating on the outer plane. They have to be helped to make the connection with the artistic process in themselves. Steiner/Waldorf schools are not schools that educate artists. The aim is to develop the artistic in all people, whether they will become policemen, doctors, lawyers, factory workers, or sculptors. As best as he can the teacher tries to stimulate the capacity to create something of beauty and harmony in all the children. It is not easy to explain why something is beautiful, but the heart senses what is beautiful, and perhaps something essential can come to expression.

In the artistic expression it is striking how different the different students solve the task. In their variety of expressions, the individual comes to expression. In mathematics and grammatical rules, we have to follow the objective world. The same rules hold for all. But in the domain of the artistic we have endless possibilities to express something and create something that is beautiful. And because the individual quality can come to expression, through the artistic work we come to awareness of the individual in ourselves, and we also have the possibility to discover and value the individual in others. It is often pointed out that Steiner/Waldorf school students develop a sense of self, as opposed to self-assurance, perhaps because through the years of artistic work they have discovered something essential within themselves.

When young children paint wet-on-wet, it is often quite quiet. They are totally living with the colors that are expressed on the wet paper and living deeply into the beauty of the colors. As the children grow older, and their awareness becomes stronger, children can become frustrated because they cannot paint the way they would like to. They now have particular inner pictures as to how the painting should look. But these inner pictures are quite difficult for them to actually express on paper, so then a problem exists, and perhaps the outer frustration will mess up the painting and make the student feel that painting is stupid. In artistic work the children will come up against themselves and their limitations, and this at times can be painful. Most of us do not like to be reminded of the areas in which we are not so accomplished. Instead of acknowledging our weaknesses, and starting at the level where we now find ourselves, we tend to withdraw from the challenge. It can be especially difficult for children who have had a rough childhood, and who have few areas where they have experienced safety or self-assurance. For many it is often necessary to start with something more handwork-oriented. They have to first experience that they can make something, to give form to something simple in a personal way.

To guide today's children in the world of artistic exercises can be challenging, especially in movement subjects such as eurythmy. Here the child has to expose many different sides of him- or herself at once, in movement and body awareness, in musicality and rhythm, and in his capacity to move in conjunction with others. Eurythmy is not an achievement-oriented subject, where it is the most important to be the best, but is a subject where the aim is to do as well as you can. In such a subject the teacher can still see sides of the child that comes forth. Not all children will show that they get rather restless, and because of this it can be easier for them to act in a play where they can be disguised as someone else. In these artistic exercises the teacher is trying to get the child to forget him- or herself and fully enter the process of experience. To the degree that the teacher manages to get the child to experience form and movement, so she can also help strengthen the child's connection with the heart space in himself. It will become easier for him to sense what is essential, what really gives him something, but also to develop what is essential so he has something to offer others.

Phenomenology

The natural sciences are often referred to as areas of pure knowledge, but in the Steiner/Waldorf schools they are also something more: exercises in observation. The teaching of phenomenology starts with observed phenomenon. The teacher sets up the experiment. It can be as simple as adding acid and base to the juice of red cabbage. Most people will observe that different colors are formed, and the students can quickly draw their own conclusions. They will also be able to experience that the colors that have been created are very beautiful, and for many at this point that is even more essential than the rules and scientific laws that they are extracting with their pure reason. Why do we get just these colors? Why do we experience them as beautiful? Those questions are not so easy to answer, and it will be this way with all experiments. We understand much of what happens in nature, and the students will gain this understanding as well, but they also must have the possibility to experience that nature has secrets that we cannot look through so easily.

Many people today are so absorbed in their own views, dreams, and worries that they do not sense much of what is actually happening around them. But to what extent we are able to engage vision, smell, hearing, and other senses, it will become easier to live into what actually is happening around us. That we use the senses actively is a prerequisite to connecting ourselves through our feelings. This means that we are really observing with our hearts.

One of the main points in the Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy is that we choose phenomena and stories which touch the children at their different developmental stages so that they can connect with the content of the lesson with enthusiasm and feel the essential nature of what is being presented. In first grade when the children hear fairytales, it is the capacity for connecting and living into the story that are important. As the children develop, the intellect will be activated increasingly and the teacher will stand before different challenges. Some of the children will prefer to remain in the intense inner experience, and they will find it more troublesome and difficult to work systematically with the forces of thinking. Other students might be awakened intellectually early, and they have already picked up different perspectives from media and from the adult world, which they have transformed into their own opinions. With these students it is important to help them get movement into their thinking so they do not become too fixed too early in their opinions. When the first group of students might struggle with mathematics, another group might get it right away. But the day that the assignments get more difficult, the ones in the last group also have to activate their own thinking, and not always do they have the energy. During the middle school years, it can be a great challenge to activate all students in their thinking, yet not have the students get lost in a purely theoretical world of thought.

The natural science subjects have been designed so that the process of thinking starts in realities that the students themselves can experience. Everything we have experienced also appeals to the feelings. The students have to think about something to which they have had a feeling connection. In this way it is possible for thoughts and feelings to be connected in the experiential world of the students. The students can find ideas they both think and feel are true. At the end of their secondary education, the students are first fully able to distinguish between models of reality, and then we can move into purely theoretical understandings, which we can discuss and make conscious through questions. How is it experienced to work with purely theoretical chemistry as opposed to the phenomenological approach?

The Helper Parzival

Puberty brings with it an intensifying of the feeling life. One of the dangers during this developmental phase is to become too self-absorbed and too body-fixed. In the Steiner/Waldorf schools we try to counteract this with an increased awareness towards our environment.

Not a lot needs to happen in order to awaken enthusiasm. When the storms of puberty are over, there is a new critical point. In the eleventh grade it can

often be amazingly quiet in many classrooms. Some students go through different crises and become a little more uncertain in their relationships to others. It seems as if they are looking at themselves with new eyes, and what they see is not always something about which they feel enthusiastic or confident.

One of the main lesson blocks during this year is intentionally the epic story *Parzival* from the Middle Ages. As a young man, Parzival rides out with a clear and strong vision to become a knight. For a long time this career seems to happen by itself, but then the problems start to mount, and Parzival ends up in crisis. What can help him is to find the road to the Holy Grail. Already as a young man he had the possibilities to find the Grail, but he missed this opportunity through his lack of independence and his lack of wisdom. Completing his schooling with the wise hermit Trevezant, Parzival is given a new possibility, and he now understands that it is important to ask the right questions. And how is he going to ask the right question? Yes, through compassion. The Holy Grail is the picture of something essential, something that points beyond what the eye can see and intelligence can understand. It has something to do with the essential kernel in life, the kernel none of us will find if we do not have compassion for our fellow human beings and for nature, so we are able to ask the right questions.

Goethe's Road to Knowledge

Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy seeks in many ways to advance Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's intentions around the process of knowledge and the essential being of nature. In his main work, *Faust*, Goethe describes the learned one who has thorough knowledge of all scientific areas but is distraught because he is not a master of what is essential.

Even though I have more wisdom
than all Philistines, clerics and popes, doctoral magistrates,
I have no scruples, I have no fear
for the devil and hell. All dread is dead,
but also my joy was lost with this.
I do not think I any longer know what is right,
I think I cannot give people a part
In what frees the human soul.

In order to find his way out of this inner crisis, Faust makes a choice to cooperate with Mephistopheles. In the hopes of gaining Faust's soul, Mephistopheles offers different forms of pleasure. In the first book he tempts Faust with a young woman Gretchen, and in the second book the temptation is to attain power in society. The agreement with the devil says:

If I can say to the second:
You are so beautiful! Stay here! Linger!
Then you can bind my soul with chains
And I will happily meet my end.

But so content, Mephistopheles has difficulties in chaining the longing soul of Faust.

Goethe himself sought happiness and meaning in other areas. He was especially concerned with the development of a scientific method that could give people more than what the science had done to make Faust so distraught. He describes his connections: "I let very peacefully the world of objects work in on me. Then I observe their effect and then try to describe the effect carefully and to the point. This is the secret of what we usually call genius."

In other words Goethe is sensing not only with the eyes but with all of himself. He was not only a very awake observer but also a sharp thinker. But Goethe was also aware that the human being has the tendency in his thinking to become more concerned with his own perspectives than to truly see reality. He admonished against the dangers of abstractions. In his lecture "Goethe's Secret Revelation," Steiner says:

Goethe belongs to those people who in the sharpest way distance themselves from the fundamental premise that knowledge is only gained through our observations and only through our thought capacities. It is a prominent and very fundamental aspect in Goethe's being that he more or less clearly states that, if the human being will solve the riddle of the world, the entire human soul has to work out of all its forces.

If we are going to use all of our soul capacities, we have to use our feelings. It is a goal in the scientific world today to exclude feelings, since feelings are looked upon as subjective, but science needs to be objective. In order to understand Steiner and Goethe, we need to have a more exact and refined understanding of what is meant by feeling life

In our language traditions we have many expressions that clearly point to feelings as being very subjective—"I like blueberries and my wife likes strawberries," and so on. We are attracted and repelled by different things, and our feelings on that level are dictated by sympathies and antipathies which are obviously felt subjectively. But Steiner points to the fact that we can use our feeling life so that it becomes a tool for objective experience. In his lecture about Goethe's secret revelation, he says further:

So therefore it is actually possible to distinguish what is personal from feelings so that what in the things themselves that awaken

feelings are not any longer a reflection of us as personalities. It has nothing more any longer to do with us as people, with sympathy or antipathy, but is a revelation of the essential being of the thing itself.

In the twelfth grade we work further with the difference between Newton's and Goethe's theories of color. Out of Newton's thought construct, today's scientific world has arrived at a view of color as electromagnetic rays with different wave lengths, and this can be useful in many connections. But Goethe wanted something more. He wanted to have as experience and know the essential being of the colors. This he did not do by promoting a theory but by revealing the phenomena of color through many-fold examples and exciting experiments.

Most of us experience that color is something that engages us deeply, that color has something to say to us human beings. Today's natural scientific world cannot give us more about this, but Goethe tried to lead us in on a different path of knowing. Today's scientific world has done a great job in describing the different phenomena in great detail, but it says very little as to what holds it all together. It is interesting that we still talk about having a feeling for the whole. From *Faust*:

If living things are to be known and described,
we first have to ban the spirit.
Then we stand there with the parts in our hands,
but oh! without the living thread of the spirit.

We do not understand the whole inner world where we are more and more often taking radical steps. This can be of great consequence for the future and also for the whole of human development. There are many reasons why we have to strive to expand our capacity for knowledge.

The Schooling of the Teacher

The challenge for the teacher is to communicate something essential, something more than just knowledge and capacities. Knowledge and capacities are useful tools, but it is the essential aspects of life which help us find direction in our lives. How are we teachers going to be able to do this?

The starting point has to be that the teachers themselves actively strive in this direction. This is not something that can be learned once and for all, but is a world in constant development, and has to be regained again and again. For those who seek in this arena will discover that behind one level there is always another and deeper level, just like the Norwegian mountains—behind one there is always a new mountaintop. Every day has to be full of new discoveries and

new insights. The Waldorf teacher has to become both artist and scientist. This makes it an incredibly exciting vocation!

In his task as scientist, the teacher must use himself as instrument, and this instrument also has to be developed and perfected. In this regard we have Steiner's anthroposophy, a body of work that also has to be read with an open heart if one is going to take a hold of what is essential. Especially useful is his book *How to Attain Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. What is most surprising when we study this material thoroughly is that to a large degree it is about how we attain knowledge about the physical world and the social world.

As opposed to many others who talk about personal development, Steiner is not so concerned that we should attain spiritual experiences. His path is to reach insights about higher dimensions through an increased awareness of the immediate world around us. He starts off with recommendations about the schooling of our feeling life. By developing a sense of awe for everything that surrounds us, we are, to a large degree, able to meet our surroundings with an open heart. When we develop a sense of inner equilibrium, we are more able to break through our sympathies and antipathies and truly meet the phenomena as they present themselves. And therefore we are more able to sense what the other, both in the human world and in the world of nature, is offering us.

Many of Steiner's exercises start out with concentrated observation followed by wakeful observation of the response in our inner life. He says:

The beginning has to lead the soul's awareness towards the process in the world around us. On the one side, the sprouting, growing, and life-filled life, and on the other side, all the phenomena that are connected with withering, death, and decomposition. Wherever people turn their eyes, these processes have been there simultaneously, and everywhere they call forth naturally feelings and thoughts in people. But under our normal circumstances we do not pay sufficient attention to these feelings and thoughts. We are hastening way too fast from one impression to the next. What counts is to very consciously direct an intense level of awareness towards these experiences and facts. Where we observe flowering and blooming of a whole specific quality, we also have to ban from the soul all other thoughts and just pay attention to this impression. We will soon be able to observe that a feeling which is called forth and which earlier was just hastily ignored, grows now and takes on an energy and strength of its own. This feeling form we have to peacefully let express itself in our inner being. It has to become quite quiet in our inner; we have to close ourselves off from the outer life in order to quietly pay attention to this inner after-image.

Steiner's path of development is often explained in this capacity to pay attention to the after-effects in the feeling life. This demands that a feeling has

arisen, but for many people this does not happen. Many people will experience that their feeling life is rather cooled down. We have grown up in a culture which has little room or encouragement for development of these sensitive feelings, so therefore we are not always as able to perceive through the heart.

We are therefore standing with a double mission: on the one hand we have to work intensively with ourselves, and on the other hand we have to work with the children and the young people in such a way that they have a better starting point from which to approach what is truly essential.

The poet Kate Næss ends her collection of poetry *Blindwalkers* with a vision in this direction.

We are on the path after a new and better reality,
which perhaps exists not so far away from here.
It is fully in the neighborhood
of what the heart understands.

The Role of Old Age in the Course of One's Life

by

Karl Brodersen

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

As we grow older, we realize ever more clearly that the course of our life is a gestalt that unfolds in three distinct phases: childhood, adulthood, and old age. Consequently, there are two transition times: youth to adulthood and again when we reach fifty, which we sometimes call the “change-over years.”

As an adult we might meet a childhood friend, whom we have not seen for a long time. Often it is difficult to recognize the cheerful blond boy of former years in the serious, well-established man now facing us. During adolescence one, so to say, sheds one's old skin, find new friends, a new environment, and develops new interests. Do we, during that time, form a new identity or do we remain the same person? In any case we are dealing with a profound change, a metamorphosis like that of a plant turning from leaf to blossom to fruit. This experience helps us understand the concept of reincarnation more easily, that is, how something entirely new can emerge from one life on earth. At the same time we are starting to intuitively sense the law connecting one life with the previous and the following ones, which is the Indian concept of “the law of karma.”

A distinctive characteristic of old age is that memories play an ever greater, even dominant role. Long-forgotten scenes and situations re-emerge in our memory with an astounding wealth of detail. As if we had never forgotten anything, we are carrying our experiences like a snail carries its growing house. When we call up such forgotten episodes in old age, we do not just observe the past with neutral attention because, in the process, we have learned one thing or another. We weigh and assess a situation in which we ourselves were intricately involved. We recognize where we failed, made mistakes, hurt someone, or obstructed the paths of others. This can build up into such a painful experience of repentance, soul torment, and shame that we come to an understanding of the medieval term “purgatory” or, the Indian term *Kamaloka*.

We are now talking about the third and last phase of life as the “fruit” of a conscious life. But a fruit also contains the seeds, which develop over time in each fruit. That is a good metaphor for what is actually happening to us in old age: we are developing desires and motives for a new life, with the intent to atone, to right the wrongs, to balance what was lop-sided as we are balancing the chapters of our lives.

It is important to clearly distinguish between the “voice of conscience” which impacts us early on and accompanies us throughout our life and that process which mostly occurs in old age, forming the seeds of the future. The voice of conscience comes to bear mostly in situations requiring a decision, and it demands action. For the older person, who is looking back on a lived life, something else is of importance: We may be able to gain insight into our mistakes and limits, but we do not know what to do with that. Our self-awareness tells us that seeds are forming for a new life, but we have no insight into how such a new life will unfold. We are facing something profoundly unconscious in our soul, like in deepest sleep. We can only become aware of the closer circumstances of our entry into life and of the ensuing constraints. We have no knowledge of the change which these factors will undergo later. We can only look to religious and philosophical traditions for clues to understand the process prompted by our unconscious. But these clues must perforce become abstractions, which can easily lead to misunderstandings and distort those ideas which tradition has guarded. We can therefore easily comprehend the necessity to let go of the idea of reincarnation for humanity at a certain point in time – about 700 B.C. The challenge at that time consisted in developing a new sense of self, which provided the foundation for Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, among others. In our time, with its scientific bent, we should be able to develop such a high degree of objectivity and self-awareness that we can correctly understand the meaning of the concept of reincarnation (repeated earthly lives).

We assume that the human being is essentially endowed with a “better self,” a higher moral center, which is manifesting as conscience on one hand and, on the other hand, as that review of life which is so characteristic of aging. Is this higher moral compass something different, more than a reflex caused by our education and other influences? This issue touches upon the wider question: Are we really dealing with a meaningful moral universe (world order) as opposed to a pure manifestation of natural laws? This is a fundamental question of ethics (moral philosophy), which we cannot examine here in depth. But one viewpoint deserves more attention than we are used to giving it: Our actions continuously meddle with the natural law, particularly in our century. Life on earth is now greatly impacted by human activity. But in these new environments the human

being feels increasingly alienated. It is quite a paradox that we feel like that in an environment which we ourselves created, and that we are now longing to return to original nature. Obviously a fuse has blown here: the world, as man created it, is experienced as being adverse to man. So we can safely assume that it is our one-sidedly naturalistic view of the world which has alienated us. Consequently, we have to regard nature (earth) as an arena and stage for our moral development. We are in fact facing a moral world order with which we must actively interrelate as we do with natural laws and the law of nature. We are part of the “realm of karma” that not only includes humanity but all life on earth and morally predicates the entire created universe. This is a dizzying thought and brings up the question of why we ponder such ideas.

Basically the answer is already there: The discomfort in our culture (to use an expression of Sigmund Freud) has become so urgent that a radically new perspective of life is not only a necessity of the soul, but, more than that, it has become a requirement for a humane life. The concepts of a moral world order and of reincarnation can form a new life impulse for all kinds of people, but first of all this may become an impulse for uniting a splintered humanity in a time that requires cooperation in all areas.

We started by contemplating the situation of old age, which is so difficult to appreciate nowadays. Maybe old people do not need more care giving, but greater understanding for the role of old age, its mission. In former times, the elders represented wisdom; they were those who possessed superior knowledge. In a time of all too rapid development, old people can no longer claim superior knowledge. On the contrary, the young quickly leave them behind. No, old people fulfill a radically different role in the gestalt of life: they carry the responsibility for keeping mankind connected with a moral world order, not by preaching ethics but by processing their own life experiences and contributing to the moral seed formation which will safeguard the future of humanity.

(Karl Brodersen was a former teacher at the Rudolf Steiner School in Oslo, Norway, and the author of many articles and books on anthroposophy and Waldorf education.)



Leonidas at Thermopylae, by Jacques-Louis David (1814).

The Development of the Human Being through the Great Cultural Epochs

by

Conrad Englert-Faye

Translated by Anniken Mitchell

The following is a transcription of a series of lectures presented in Norway in 1943 during the German occupation. It has been passed down through rough notes taken by Johann Holtsmark. The editor thought the content would be interesting for readers in North America.

Englert was fluent in Greek and Latin and was a scholar of Greek culture. These talks inspired several young men, such as Dan Lindholm, Karl Brodersen, Jørgen Smit, Torger Holtsmark, and other giants, to initiate the Waldorf school in 1945 at the conclusion of World War II. With approximately four million people and thirty-four Waldorf schools, Norway is currently among the leading countries with regard to Waldorf schools per capita in the world.

The great cultural epochs can be seen as a movement from East to West. We will start with a concentration on the Greek/Latin cultural epoch and examine some simple known facts.

Human Biography and the Biography of a Nation

A biography can be looked at through a description of a personality, his life and work, on the foundation of outer documentation. The biography becomes a description of the person's outer life, his or her façade. It is possible, however, to think about a different kind of biography where we do not examine documents and outer sources but rather turn our attention toward the impact made in the world by an individual's life. How does the memory of this human being live on? Which impulses has he/she imprinted into the world? How is the world different as a result of this individual's life? In order to accomplish this kind of biography, we have to seek out and describe what stands behind the human being. What lives in his/her ideas?

For example, let us consider Aristotle. We can describe the outer facts of his life or we can describe the “world force” called Aristotle which left an indelible imprint on the spiritual development of humanity up to the sixteenth century.

Or, we could consider Goethe. Ideas that Goethe brought forth in life have grown further just like a plant brings forth fruit and seeds. When we first see the plant, there is no sign of the fruit there. In the same way it is with historical personalities: they set out in life ideas, which unfold and give birth to new ideas unforeseen to the originator.

That which a human being brings forth in the world has its own existence and development. The spiritual is an element within a human being that contains its own reality. In a biography we can search for the human being’s spiritual gestalt.

The same holds true for nations and time. The term Middle Ages calls forth a world so different from our time as, perhaps, the tropical rain forest might be for the arctic flora. If we think of a “people” a whole world might arise with particular qualities, a certain mood, a certain atmosphere. What comes to your mind when you hear the words *Italian*, *Scotsman* or *Apache*?

Words and Expressions

We constantly use words which are fundamentally foreign in their origin, but have been adopted into all European languages with specific meanings. Different words cannot quite describe the essence that these foreign words contain layers of time.

Expressions that have to do with a *gallant* world originated in the French language. How would we want to translate *gallant*, *charm*, *bouquet*, and so on? Expressions that are connected with fashion, for instance, *haute couture*, *barber*, and so on, have French origins. Militarism also began in France and spread to other cultures. Military expressions come from France. With this reality came concepts. *Mitrailleuse* is a manually-fired volley gun used by the French Army, something very different from automatic weapons. We cannot quite find better words because we receive the words packaged with the issues themselves. Another example is expressions dealing with the activity of banking come from Italy. The money-changers put up benches for their money piles, and the concept gave birth to *banke* (*bench* in Italian), which is today’s *bank*. Musical expressions, such as *fortissimo*, *largo*, *pianissimo* and so forth, are also Italian. We find them on sheet music and leave them as such; it would be inaccurate to translate them.

By taking these expressions as representative fossils in the same sense as geologist use fossils to determine geological layers of time we can draw wide-sweeping conclusions. These fossils in language are the result of a kind of

sedimentation process that has become part of the development of humanity. In the same way we can study what occurred at specific times, for instance the time of the Romans. Without the Romans we would not know words like *empire*. To call it a *kingdom* would be misleading.

Imperialism has its roots in Roman times. *Auctoritas* or authority is difficult to translate. It is a challenge to find another word that totally represents the meaning. *Dignitas* or dignity is another example. *Discipline* is no longer a foreign word but is contemporary. It comes from the Latin word for *disciple*. Consider the word *pietas*, piety. No word from any European language can convey the deeper meaning of the Latin word *pietas*. *Remorse* is a word that filled the medieval human soul with a force unknown to us in modern times. The same is true for *belief*, *hope*, and *charity*. Spiritual elation, compassion, and mercifulness, are words that live as qualities that have developed in particular people at particular times.

The Middle Ages is not determined by nations. It is beyond nationality. The languages of that time are enchanting and somewhat childlike—they captivate the modern soul. The medieval way of expressing thoughts has disappeared because we are no longer living in the soul qualities where that qualitative belongs. What is it in our times that still lives on from the classical Greco-Roman times? We look at words such as *period*, *epoch*, or that something is *logical* or *focused*. Here we have expressions which characterize spiritual nuances. *Strategy*, *economy*, *autocracy*, *diplomacy*, *meteor*, *mechanics* are all words of Greek derivation. Within the medical field we have a profusion of words inherited from Greek, which shows that there has been a stream of wisdom down through the ages. Politics originated with Aristotle. *Konpolitikon*, “the human being is a political animal,” said Aristotle. *Democracy*, *monarchy*, *plutocracy*, and so on, are Greek words even though the modern meaning is far removed from the original meaning of the word.

All areas of spiritual and cultural life are the beneficiaries of Greek inheritance. We move within their forms of thinking. We use categories as tools, which we have received through this inheritance. Just imagine if we did not have all these concepts! Imagine if we did not have all these words from the Greeks! Most of our spiritual and cultural life would be condemned to silence.

Through time the human being’s spiritual development has been brought forth from the spiritual/culture of antiquity. We can think of the church and the universities as examples. Through the universities, *universitas*, the student met the whole world, not specialization. The student represented one part and met the whole in the university. With the Renaissance, antiquity touches directly into the human life without the go-between of the church. We found *gymnasiums*,

academies, and Olympic games. In the gymnasium [high schools] the student learned Greek and Latin for eight to ten years so that his inner personality was influenced by the classical educational ideal, first and foremost through the writings of Homer. The European peoples' spiritual leaders represented Greek and Roman cultural ideas, not their own.

This points to a particular problem: what would the Greeks have said if one had come to Pericles and suggested establishing schools in which one had to get to know the old Egyptian and Chaldean writings? He would have been unable to understand such a proposal. For the Greeks it was self-evident that education was founded on Homer.

The classical gymnasium has played a leading role right up to our own times. The leading personalities in European culture have been raised on this classical foundation, yet they are supposed to function in the age of technology. We can see the contrast between the challenges of our time and the kinds of education that these people have received. It is equally impossible in our time to tackle present day problems as it would have been for the Greeks to tackle their problems if their education had been based on ancient Assyrian wisdom.

The crisis in our time, in all areas of life, is due to the fact that the concepts and ideas that we have inherited from the Greeks are no longer sufficient to meet the challenges of our present time. They are inadequate because new elements that did not exist during the Greek times have come into the world.

Inheritance through Language

Let us ask ourselves: does this or that inherited concept fully express what it means today? We will quickly discover that it becomes very difficult and even confusing for our sense of judgment. Take, for example, the Olympic games. Today, we look upon winning in the Olympics as something of great significance. If, for instance, a Frenchman wins a race, this accomplishment will have the same consequence as if France had torn down the Berlin wall. That was what happened in ancient Greece, one tore down the wall because when the race was won, one had in one's midst a god.

To be the winner in Olympia is hard for us to imagine with today's consciousness. An athlete was a human being who was considered perfect in his development. The most famous victors were Pythagoreans, who were also philosophers. How is that today? When an Olympic athlete retires from his sport, he becomes a commentator, opens a café, or sells sporting goods.

Our crisis in education today is that our consciousness is being asked to solve new tasks but we live on ideas and spirituality borrowed from ancient Greece. Therefore, we have to ask what the Greco/Roman epoch is in its truth

and in its essence. If we can discover this, we can then reflect our own being in contrast to what we have inherited and become clearer about our present historical situation. History serves the human being by showing us how to go forward and find our place. The crisis of our time is that we are not standing where we need to stand.

We have tried to show how we stumble over words that have their roots in the Hellenic culture. In a time full of new impulses and new problems, we still continue to use this inheritance. We still build upon concepts and categories that do not originate in our times and, therefore, we lose sight of the fact that they are, in fact, an antiquated vocabulary.

Consider one particular word that forms, perhaps, the foundation for our spiritual and cultural existence—“*logic*.” This expression is derived from *logos*, a word central to Greek existence. In a dictionary you will find page upon page of explanation about what this word can mean: “word,” “thinking,” “the power of thinking,” “insight,” “proposal,” “inspiration,” and so on. Let us disregard all these nuances and seek the kernel of its meaning.

The Blind Poet Homer

When Homer describes his heroes active in thought, where we would have said, “Odysseus thinks (within himself),” Homer says, “Odysseus said to his spirit.” To Homer the human being speaks with his inner self. The thinking capacity for the Greeks was dialectic. To them the human being was active in dialogue with his own inner being.

This dialogue presupposes two parts of the self that exchange *logos*, the word. There is always one part that develops the thought and one part that observes it. When the ancient Greek thought, he spoke with himself in the form of dialogue. We can observe this in Homer’s writing. Conversely, a modern writer would just write: “He thinks.”

Thinking is an activity that one becomes aware of, something one can experience. When we know this we are more able to see the intention of Aristotle’s comments that thinking is a particular activity that follows distinct laws. Aristotle was the first person to determine these laws by allowing thinking to reveal its own form free from content.

Logic does not depend on content but rather upon how one thought follows another. Schooled logic is, therefore, distinguished by banal examples, and through this the laws of thinking are more visible. This logical thinking is accessible and is taken up by all of humanity and becomes the obvious vehicle for the cultures that follow it. The force that developed during the course of the Hellenic culture grew into a capacity and a force for all humanity. At their

particular time in human evolution, the Greeks developed capacities that had not been present earlier in humanity. These capacities then flowered and worked further into human evolution.

Cultural Evolution

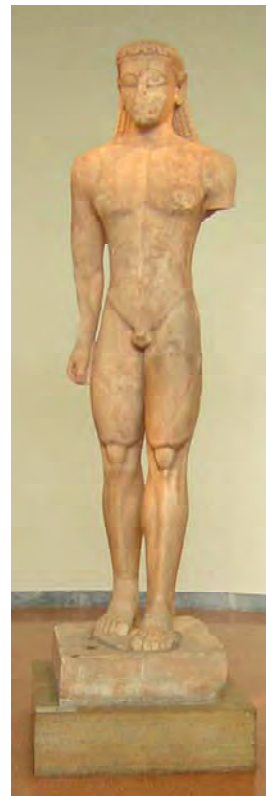
Every culture and every people form a life-organ in which humanity develops at a particular place at a particular time. This organ has a particular function—to develop forces that become available to everybody at every time, at every place. The discovery of this awakens our interests for such an organ-geographical stage. It involves understanding the “sense of place.” What is the landscape? What are the climatic conditions? What is the geology? And so forth. One can study the possible forces that the “place” contributes to human evolution and the people who live in that geographical setting.

The ancient Greeks appeared on the earthly plane at a particular historical moment. They arose out of an aggregate of forces, possibilities, and forms from earlier cultural epochs—just like ice is another aggregate state of water.

Greek Sculpture

Look, for instance, at the oldest Greek sculptures. They remind us of Egyptian sculptures. The figure is not standing freely in space; the limbs are rigidly attached to the body; the face is mask-like just like we see in Egyptian and Far Eastern sculptures. The bodily shape is like a sheath around the human soul, not portraying the way that the human is truly present in body and space. What we expect to find in the human is not there, but exists outside the sculpture. Just like young children who have not yet fixed their gaze, they do not “see” in a regular sense. They look around us, not at us.

Beginning in the 6th century BC, one hundred and fifty years before Classical Greek sculpture was developed, sculptors had almost perfected rendering the male nude in white marble. However, this perfection was largely superficial; the figures were no more than the sum of their parts, accurately sculpted, and accurately assembled. As the sculptures began to look more like real men, artists began to notice that the advantages of the *kouros* form, a product of the rigid Archaic period, posed several disadvantages: the figure,



Kouros

representing neither action nor stillness, looked awkward, and the calculated symmetry made it seem unnatural. When the Greek vase painters and bronze casters began their studies of the human body in motion, the marble sculptors followed with studies of their own. They studied the movement of the body, how weight is carried, and how a shift in stance affects the alignment of limbs, torso, and head. Around 480 BC, the first marble sculpture displaying the qualities of *contrapposto*, or weight shift, appeared in the *Kritios Boy*.



Kritios Boy

In this mature Greek sculpture the human being suddenly stepped forth in such a mighty form that one can understand Goethe's words, "Here is necessity. Here is God." Never has the human form received such perfection as it attained in ancient Greek times. Just like pure crystals can almost represent a geometric archetype—the archetype is present in the material. There has been a huge leap from the first archaic sculptures, that have the character of porcelain dolls with mask-like faces, to this new perfection where the human form stands freely and graciously in space.

This transition can be traced back to one particular sculpture and one particular sculptor and anonymity in world history comes to an end.

Art prior to ancient Greek times was anonymous. Certain families produced painters through generations. Artistic skills were inherited along bloodlines. Even in the earliest Greek times we can see this, but we can see a distinct shift in cultural consciousness with Myron of Eleutherae. He was the first to place the human form freely in space in his sculpture *Discobolus*.



Discobolus

In all art from this particular point, we can observe the emergence of self-awareness. For example, pottery makers began to sign their products, and in very distinctive ways. From about 550 BC we can trace a number of names to pottery that are considered among Greece's most famous. "This vase has been made by Ergotinos. Klithias would not be able to make this." This was not an attempt to put down Klithias, but rather it reflects a competition called "*agon*," which was a type betting-game. Who could promote his individuality the most? This person would then be the master.

Plato wrote dialogue in which those who spoke set their own power of thoughts against those of someone else. Now one wanted to assert the power of one's own *logos*.

The Emergence of the Individual

The great Greek writers, poets, and musicians considered themselves as craftspeople not as geniuses. Much like the potters, they "signed" their work: "This is said by Phokylicos. Then everybody will know that this is something that he and nobody else has said." Now everywhere we encounter clearly defined personalities. Even though they might still be interwoven with mythology, individual names are set forth in world history. We cannot talk about Greek sculpture without mentioning names. It is the same throughout all the other arts, and, indeed, all other human endeavors.

Thukydides was an unfortunate soldier who was removed from his duties as general. When he described, very impartially, the great civil Peloponnesian War, he said, "I will with this create *ktina esaie*." This means something that both he as an individual and humanity will own forever. He recognized that what he was doing was something new, something that would never disappear. His historical writings became the foundation for all history writing, which we view as scientific, up to our present time.

We read the philosopher in Asia Minor who wrote, "Everything originates from fire." Another philosopher said, "Everything originates from water." And yet another proposes, "Everything comes from the archetypal thought, *nous*." That the human being dared to do this is something immense in contrast to the anonymity of earlier times.

With the force that developed later into logical judgment, the Greek starts to look upon the world: an immense richness in all fields, strength, self-awareness, differentiation, competition, always self-promoting, but also one person always helping to elevate the other. The overall gesture was to elevate everyone.

We can observe that children, at a particular stage of their development, like to boast. "My dad is stronger than your dad." Their humanity lives in the boasting. Through this they express their own existence, much as the early Greeks did.

Another example: Greece was surrounded by other great powers in Asia and Africa, who together with the Etruscans formed a mighty coalition against their small country. The Greek city-states of Sparta and Athens were usually in competition, but when the Persians threatened them, they sent a joint messenger to the west Hellenic settlements on Sicily, an ally of the Greeks, in much the same way as the United States was for Europe in the middle of the nineteenth

century. The Greeks asked the Sicilian ruler Gelon for help, and he answered, “Yes, I shall help you because otherwise we will all be destroyed. But I want to be the supreme commander both on land and on the ocean.” The Spartans answered, “No. We want to have the supreme commander; otherwise you do not need to help us.” Gelon answered, “Then let us share. One will be commander on the land while the other can be the commander of the ocean.” The Athenians said, “No. If it is to be shared, then it will be with the Spartans.” “Well then,” said Gelon to the messenger, “travel home with the greeting that springtime has left the year.” [Sparta and Athens eventually won the battle, nevertheless.]

Greek Culture’s Place in World Evolution

What is the historical stage for the Greeks? Most of Europe was an unknown land mass. Greece was divided into numerous tribes surrounded by Europe, Asia, and Africa. Greece radiates out in all directions—to Russia, to Africa, to Spain—as a central force in a wide circle around it. The Greeks were the first to sail through the Straits of Gibraltar to the south along the west coast of Africa and towards the north to the areas of the Germanic tribes. They did not plunder or ruthlessly exploit the natural resources as the Phoenicians had done. Rather, they founded places of commerce. The Greeks brought culture to wherever they landed. Rome was established because the Greeks colonized Sicily and southern Italy.

Let us consider the configuration of the Balkans. It is quite differentiated: high mountains, long valleys, wetlands, forests, and gently undulating landscape all exist there. This same differentiation is reflected in the people: each group has its own characteristics with its own culture and conditions, its own almanacs and time-chronology, and so forth. The languages are especially differentiated. The god Poseidon, for instance, was referred to in different dialects: *Poseidon*, *Posseidon*, *Poseides*, *Posideon*, *Poseidan*, *Poteidar*, *Poteidan*, *Poteidas*, *Posswoida*, and so forth. The dialects are as different as, for instance, Gothic, Old German, Old Norwegian, and Anglo Saxon. In any given language the consonants come from nature, from the landscape, whereas the human soul tones come forth in the vowels. A dialect reveals both the human being’s relationship to nature and also what the soulful characteristics are for that people.

The Greek language developed as differently as the people developed—different on the low lands from the mountains, and so on. The various tribal groups did not use interpreters. For example, the Attic people never translated their language into the Spartan language. They all felt the Pan-Hellenic spirit so strongly that all Greeks were united. They came from far distances to all participate in the Eleusian Mysteries, and for something really important, they

sent messages to the Oracle at Delphi. They all were united around central experiences.

They all experienced themselves as “Greek” and spoke the Hellenic language. All others were considered uncivilized and spoke unrecognizable “bar-bar” (hence the word *barbaric*). The Greeks considered only themselves to be truly human—this was not the nationalism in our modern sense of the word. They felt that the people who spoke Greek in this epoch were called to carry the epoch’s central task. They felt that the life of humanity was in them. Aristotle said, “In the East live the ‘bar-bar’ who are very pious, but their power is past. In the North live powerful ‘bar-bars’ who will once come. We Greeks combine both. We are the center of the world.”

Look at Europe’s geographic shape on a map and you will observe that the finely chiseled little Europe is surrounded by continents that were the carriers of earlier cultures. India has tremendous plateaus between great mountains. The Near Eastern cultures were geographically undifferentiated. The old cultures were massive collectives without an inner mobility—without those qualities that we meet when the predecessor to the modern European is born in Greece.

The Greeks felt that humanity at that time had its center in Hellas. Their land was the world’s central life organ, Delphi was the navel of the earth. After the culmination of the culture of Mesopotamia, the Greek culture appeared as a new blossom. Just as Europe today, consciously or unconsciously, relates to third world countries, Hellas related to other peoples. Hellas was a microcosm of Europe. Today we try to identify the exact genesis and logical direction of an historical occurrence. For example, we cannot imagine that the “Dream Song” of Olav Asteson just happened spontaneously; the details would have to be prepared, organized, and then constructed. This is nothing else but Darwinism at its worst, a desire to identify the origin of things and then assume that one has found the whole connection. What the Greeks received from the non-Greek, they transformed to a higher plane of consciousness and manifestation in the physical world.

Plato admired the other cultures of his day, and he sought out the old mystery places to gather wisdom. When Odysseus was traveling home to Ithaca he came as an unknown guest to an island and was entertained by their king with songs about what had



Odysseus' Journey

happened in Troy. Odysseus heard his own destiny told to him by a singer, and he started to cry. The king asked who he was, and why he cried.

Odysseus answered, “I am Odysseus, the son of Laertes, who by his wise temperament am able to perceive all other people and whose destiny is in the hands of the care of the gods.” This is something that we today would look on as megalomania, but the Greeks felt that an individual’s awareness should be made visible. This awareness, which one experienced as a Greek, always strove for the highest and, therefore, one was expected to acknowledge it for oneself. Pride was part of one’s self-awareness.

King Darius hired the Samian architect Mandrokles to build a floating bridge over the Bosphorus. A builder today would ask for a percentage of the cost of the construction as a payment, but Mandrokeles asked only for a painter to make the bridge immortal with a picture of the king on his throne inspecting the army marching over the bridge. He dedicated the picture to Hera: “Mandrokeles has build this bridge over the Bosphorus, fish-rich flood, and has dedicated this picture to the exalted Hera. He has himself put the wreath on his head and thereby crowned all his fellow citizens because this will fill King Darius with pride.” This was payment enough.

Plato thought that what passed through the human eye transformed consciousness. Pictures became thoughts. The Greek culture took the steps for humanity from picture to thought and concluded with Aristotle who freed thought and established its autonomy in the world of logic. Plato, who himself never managed to consistently transfer image into thought, described Aristotle’s process. Aristotle was able to fully take the step consciously. His thoughts contained, from the point of view of thinking, the whole and then the parts.

The great philosophers like Plato, Solon, and Pythagoras, traveled to Africa, Asia, Babylon and India, where they met other wise teachers. What they brought back as knowledge became transformed. If we want to understand the developmental process of humanity we have to study these transformations. That something can exist on one plane and then be lifted up to another plane and therefore be transformed was a new experience. The Greeks were first and foremost Greeks, or more specifically, Athenians, Spartans and so on, each was a representative of the place from where he hailed. For instance, Plato is first a Greek, then an Athenian, and finally Plato, the individual.

In the Renaissance it became the opposite. First was the person—Michelangelo or da Vinci—and secondly it was about a Florentine or an Italian. During the time of Michelangelo, sculptures from antiquity were excavated and admired. But during the Renaissance, the individual human being stepped forth, and artwork became the creation of a particular individual. For example, Michelangelo wondered to himself how he could show that he was a Master,

that he could create the same quality sculpture as had been created during the antiquities. So he sculpted the image of a god and buried it. When it was found by a collector and identified as antique, Michelangelo knew he had passed the test. He had produced as a single individual what the Greeks had produced as a people.

Tico della Mirandola philosophized during the Renaissance, but his philosophy was his own, not like Plato who philosophized on behalf of all Greeks. We can see the difference when we observe how the Greeks inherited something compared to how the people of the Renaissance inherited something.

The Greek culture burst forth from the blossom quickly to a fully developed flower that existed for a relatively short time—between three to four hundred years. We tend to think that everything develops evenly but in reality this is not so. In the history of mankind growth spurts occur. Suddenly a new culture can appear with no visible bridge from the previous. Every culture is stylized in such a way that we can recognize it in the smallest details. The Greek culture did not exist earlier and did not exist later.

Our ideas today around culture are misguided because we have applied the laws of natural science with its uncertainties to other arenas. The old saying *natura confacit saltus* (nature does not make leaps) is not accurate. Nature can make great leaps, and the same can happen during historical development. We can, for instance, observe that great religious impulses have happened spontaneously. The Greek impulse is formed from the beginning not out of barbaric chaos.

Mythical Pictures

From ancient history it is not documents, but rather mythical pictures that have been passed down to us. These pictures contain names of god-kings or kingly-gods. The old Egyptian name for *kings* can only be translated with a whole sentence, “Amon led the people through me.” The king was a supernatural being, God’s representative on earth, just like the Pope.

In the papacy we encounter an ancient oriental ghost. A cardinal keeps his name but the Pope receives a new name. His personhood disappears. He becomes a functional representative of the Church. This is the last remnant of ancient practices.

“Ahura Mazdao has changed the people through me” is the Persian inscription. The king was the handyman of the gods. With the Greeks, the single individual becomes the carrier of history, even though the old traces still linger in the sense that everybody originated from one or another god, perhaps just a few generations back.

With his deeds the individual confirmed his own origin by referring to himself as “the son of the son of the son of Heracles.” A Spartan king, a descendent of Heracles, behaved in accordance with his heritage. When King Lysander behaved differently, he was challenged, “How can you, as a descendent of Heracles, falsely swear?” He answered, “My ancestor’s lion skin is not large enough. Therefore, I have to add some fox skin.” Through this example we can see how the human being began to emancipate himself from his heritage and to establish his own personality.

Could we, today, consider a political resolution like this: “Five thousand years ago Odin came on one of his wanderings to you and he was received in a friendly fashion. As a thank you we will now make certain concessions.” This was the style of the ancient negotiations. Or, one would tell a famous man that he was, in fact, not his father’s son, but rather the son of Apollo. The mythical was still part of everyday life.

Regardless of our opinions about these past interchanges, we must admit that our historical destiny was determined by impulses from mythical images. This is the documentation of the people. History grows out of mythology.

We read in old Egyptian inscriptions that a people called the Norse people or the Sea people burst into the old cultural world around 1600 BC to 1200 BC. The Norse were described in a similar fashion as the Vikings were described by the French a thousand years later. They plundered and made their way to Egypt. Here they were stopped and consequently they settled on Crete. The Greek culture developed rather suddenly. It followed the culture of Crete and Mykonos. Although we can read the written language, we might not comprehend its deeper meaning except for individual words such as: *labyrinth*, *hyacinth*, *narcissus*, *cypress*, and so on.

In the course of just a couple hundred years, the Greek culture comes into being and already around the year 800 BC Homer exists, just like a supersaturated salt solution can precipitate at the slightest shaking or the addition of a single grain of salt. It is the same with migrations. One world sinks into oblivion and barbaric conditions and a couple of hundred years later we have the Middle Ages with all its riches. The Greek folk soul performs in three differentiated qualities, and then we arrive at one of the most fascinating phenomena in history—the threefolding merges into the one.

We can observe three types of Greeks: the Ionians, the Dorians, and the Aeolians who can each be traced back to different ancestors: the Doros, Aiolos and Aion. A secret is hidden behind this threefolding. These three parts were not only visible in style (for example, the Ionic column), but were specific organs for the soul organization of the Greeks. The three are quite different but, if one is

removed, the whole would become lost. Let us look at what lies behind this principle of threefolding.

Threefolding

According to Hebrew legend, humanity has descended from Noah's three sons Japheth, Shem, and Ham, and until fairly recently we divided humanity into Jafites, Semites, and Hamites. Egyptians and Ethiopians were Hamites; Jews, Syrians, and Arabs were Semites; and all other Aryan peoples were Jafites. In other words we have the same ancestors who were connected to God through Noah.

We can discern the same pattern in other peoples. The Babylonians had the same legend of one man who had three sons who became the ancestors to all humanity. In ancient India there was Manu, which means "human," who had three sons Ingo, Isko, and Ermito. The same legend exists in Persia and also with the Slavic people. The Germanic tribes evolved out of one of these groups.

If we look upon the world as it manifests, we will see that secrets are revealed through particular number configurations. It so happens that the number three plays a fundamental role. We encounter the number three when the highest level of perfection has been reached in a culture. Everything has a beginning, middle, and end, or a past, a present, and a future. With these three forms of existence time is fulfilled.

We can recognize the principle of threefolding everywhere. The Middle Ages had three significant orders: the priests, the knights, and the farmers, and three significant habitats: the church, the castle, and the city. We find three forms of society: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy; three forms of poetry: epic, lyric, and dramatic; three basic meters in poetry: iamb, trochee, and dactyl. During the Middle Ages one referred to love, hope and charity, and these three virtues carried the existence of the medieval human being.

We can acknowledge the interesting principle that three forces can work within one. This perspective is difficult to find in modern historical literature. However, in earlier times important research was done in this regard. German historical researcher Lassaux describes in *Neuer Versuch einer Philosophie der Geschichte* how three sons have repeatedly been the foundation for the division of tribes and these tribes, are divided into three, and so on. In the beginning we have the ancestor or god and then three sons, or heroes, or half-gods. For the Germanic people these were the Ermiones, the Iskevones, and the Ingevones. This was not an outer or bureaucratic division, but there was an inner difference among the three groups. They lived in three different areas—one to the east, one to the west, and one in the middle.

In more contemporary times, we saw the French Revolution put the goddess of “common sense” on the throne, but the old threefoldness is repeated in their battle cry, “*Liberté, Égalité, and Fraternité*” (Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood).

We see threefolding in the philosophy of Hegel: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. As to human consciousness, we recognize the three higher soul qualities of imagination, inspiration, and intuition.

The Nordic People

Now, let us take a closer look at the Nordic people. Even during the Middle Ages when the creative mythology was waning, a real piece of history is enacted in Europe. Three men—a youth, a full grown man, and an old man—created the united cantons of Switzerland. And then someone came from the outside—Wilhelm Tell. We often refer to Tell as a legend, but it is also an historical fact. Old sayings refer to the people who settled around the Vierwaldstättersee (Lake Lucerne) in Switzerland as originating from the north, from Sweden. Again three brothers brought these settlers down from the North.

In the oldest documentation, these people from the North worked like an undifferentiated mass that then separated into Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes. Behind these nationalities are not only three differentiated geographic regions, but three different gods were worshipped. Odin was especially revered in Denmark, Frey in Sweden, and Thor in Norway. [Thinking, feeling, and willing are characterizations of these respective gods.]

In other words, it is not an outer trinity, but different gods who ruled over different landmasses, and each country had a different historical destiny. Even so there is a unity to the overall gesture. Just like in Hella where there was a trinity within the whole, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark make a whole with three fundamental nuances. If we reconsider the three main gods, the question can be: What do Odin, Frey, and Thor represent? These gods were not abstractions but powerful icons that shaped the three Nordic people, their history, and their future possibilities. It is an unshakable law in history that the same forces that shape the mythology of the people also form its historical destiny and all its cultural ferment in relationship to humanity as a whole.

Then a level of irresponsibility came about in the world. We can never quite find the man who will stand for a point of view; no one will take full responsibility for one’s thoughts. It was the old ones who were always referred to as the archetype and were responsible for the origin of culture. One used to say, “Here we can see the work of Thor, or Frey, or Odin.”

The forces of thinking are most visible in the Danish cultural life. We can study how it manifests in all its nuances of their spiritual life. With the Swedes

what comes forth is much more connected with the life of feeling, and in Norway the force of will is predominant.

The three Nordic countries create a whole like the Greeks. You cannot study Norwegian literature without studying Danish and Swedish literature as well, because together they constitute a whole. If we can understand this it will throw light on the reality of other peoples' existence.

The Aeolians

We can see this same threefolding in the Greek culture, and we will first examine the Aeolian, the least well known of the three. The Aeolians carried the quality in the Greek world that immediately represents the warm, passionate, feeling life. They have given humanity the lyrical aspects and the qualities that move the human soul, such as hatred, courage, love, hope, trust, joy and sorrow—the forces of passions. All of this was formed in a richness of words, which for the Aeolians were like their ornaments. Their verses were accompanied with lyre music.

The art of song was more encompassing than our poetry today. During antiquity the poet Terpandros for Lesbos enjoyed the same renown as Homer. None of his work has survived; we can only trace the impact of his work. That he was a most creative spirit we can see through his followers, the great Sappho and Alkaios.

Our language today has rhythm, but Latin and Greek have an additional musical quality. The translation of a Greek verse is therefore really impossible. If one were to recite a poem by Sappho in the original Aeolian language, one could hear how the sound is shaped like sound ornaments.

Everywhere we meet the creative Greek spirit we might have the same feeling we get when we stand before nature. We encounter something that is complete and perfect in itself. We meet the human spirit's creative capacity in a higher state. In the poetry of Sappho, one of the few known female writers in antiquity, it is as if the human soul encounter with nature is transformed into sound; however, this cannot be translated or recreated. The Aeolians traveled around with sword and harp, and their poetry was filled with the sounds of the clashing sword and the sweetness of the harp.

We encounter in the Aeolians the great poets who wandered the earth and settled in outposts where they shared these riches of their soul. Even the heavy insular Spartans were affected by them and something became loosened in the Spartan's soul.

The Ionians

In contrast to the Aeolian qualities stands the Ionic element. The Athenians were Ionians *par excellence*. Many more words are required to describe the Ionians. They possessed openness towards the whole world. They experienced everything with intensity and with strong sensory enjoyment. They were awake, alert, and even nervous. They had a good sense for reality, they observed detail, and also had a clear sense for the whole. Other qualities they shared were a critical sense, a spiritual courage, a biting sense of humor, and a capacity for the fullness and beauty of life.

Homer was born into this world in which everything was alive: the starry world was the skin of the goddess. The Ionian spirit was relentlessly seeking truth, had a need for investigation, and possessed an immediate joy over the multiplicity in life. Ionians could extend themselves beyond their own sphere and connect with foreign impulses. They lived their lives outside of necessity. Life took its course like nature, like the wind.

Henrik Ibsen said, “We talk about freedom, but mean freedoms.” What the element of freedom was for the Hellenic people becomes visible in the destiny of Achilles. His mother was a goddess and his father was a hero. His mother predicted his destiny, “If you stay at home you will have a long and happy life—if you go to Troy you will die early but will win immortal fame.” Achilles chose the latter. The same holds for his opponent Hector who, in freedom, carries out his predetermined destiny. When Greeks used the word freedom, they did not refer to banalities, but to the fact that “in freedom” they chose their tragic destinies. The Ionians were, therefore, the only Greeks who could tolerate being under foreign occupation. They were subjects of the Persian king but were still able to maintain a sense of themselves.

The Ionians were immensely gifted with the power of ideas and at the same time possessed refined and sensitive qualities. They did not stand still—in a certain sense they even vibrated! They expressed themselves in all directions and all dimensions. They loved glory, greatness, and splendor. They had a capacity to enjoy life, but also a tendency toward hubris. We see in them that the human being can forget his limitations, burst from his own boundaries, and be like a god. “He is like a god,” was the highest compliment one could say about an Ionian. This trait, of course, could also lead to anarchy and social conflict. They were excellent seafarers and even traveled through the Straits of Gibraltar. The city of Marseilles, for instance, was an Ionian city from 600 BC. With their almost incomprehensible courage, they were willing to bet everything when it was required.

In the arts it is no longer the lyric which is dominant but the epic. Herodotus tells us about the entire world. He has seen everything, all the details, and

Homer's work will follow humanity for all times.

Historian Jacob Burkhardt wrote, "The Greeks wanted to observe the world—to deeply behold it." The Ionians were the first to record history accurately and became the founders of this as an objective discipline. History could come to birth when someone could ask, "How did this happen?" It was then precisely described without pretext. The Ionians also produced the natural philosophers Thales and Anaximander. The Ionian quality appeared again in Europe with Goethe; he was related to the Greek spirit in a very profound way.

The Dorians

Finally, some words about the Dorians: everything was connected with the tribe. The ownership of land was the foundation—one was both a farmer and a warrior. We do not meet many personal aspects in the Dorians, but rather a sense of a collective life and manhood as a way of being. There was a certain heaviness, uprightness, and seriousness about them. They abided no luxuries or art but had a strong morality. For them the god-given laws stood above everything. In the arts they created the chorus, which corresponds to the Doric building style in which the impressive qualities also had a carrying force. The Dorians imported the art created by the Aeolians and the Ionians. In Attica the poetry was written in Doric, which was a dialect quite different from the Ionians. It was similar to the difference between the Swedish language and the Danish, but more extreme.

The greatest national poet among the Dorians was the crippled teacher and general Turtaios who was born an Athenian. He composed all his war songs in Doric. The famous postscript about the three hundred Spartans who fell at the battle of Thermopylae is composed in Doric by an Ionian. The Spartans did not contribute in the realms of art or science, but they did create one art piece—the Spartan society.

With the Ionians and the Aeoloians, we are always meeting something new and individuated. But when we talk about a Dorian, we know all of them.^o

Conclusion

The number three represents perfection: the Trinity is the highest Christian symbol. Three Kings came to greet the Christ child, each with his own gift: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We can recognize three stages of life: youth, middle age, and old age. Wherever a group of people manifests a trinity, the highest level of development has been reached for that people. The Hellenic culture shows what the characteristics of such a culture can bring forth.