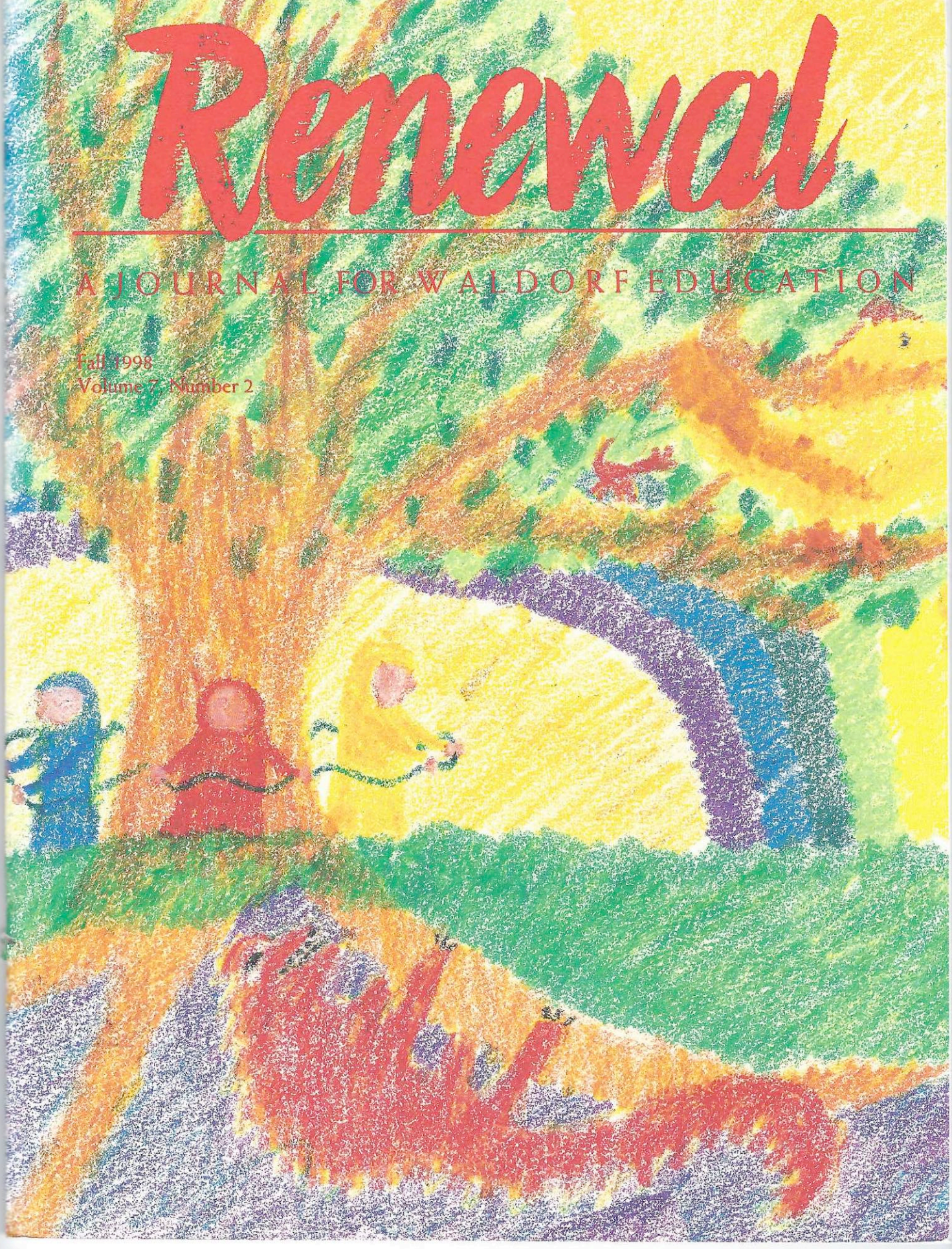
Renewal

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

Fall 1998
Volume 7, Number 2



Faithfulness

Create for yourself a new, indomitable perception of faithfulness.

What is usually called faithfulness passes so quickly. Let this be your faithfulness.

You will experience [special] moments . . . fleeting moments . . with the other person. The human being will appear to you then as if filled, radiant with the archetype of his or her spirit.

And then there may be . . . indeed, will be, other moments, long periods of time, when the other human being is darkened. But you will learn to say to yourself at such times: "The spirit makes me strong. I remember the archetype. I saw it once. No illusion, no deception shall rob me of it."

Always struggle for the image that you saw. This struggle is faithfulness. Striving thus for faithfulness, we shall be close to one another, as if endowed with the protective power of angels.

Rudolf Steiner



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Editor's Column

By Ronald E. Koetzsch



Since its founding in Germany in 1919 until rather recently, Waldorf Education has developed primarily in the nations of western Europe, North America, and the British Commonwealth.

In the past few years, however, Waldorf initiatives have been appearing in more exotic parts of the world. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Waldorf kindergartens, schools, and teacher training centers have sprung up throughout eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union—in Romania, Hungary, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, Croatia, and so on. At the same time, Waldorf initiatives have started in many of the industrially less developed countries of South America, Africa, and Asia. Waldorf kindergartens and fledgling schools exist now in India, the Philippines, Kenya, Thailand, Nepal, Egypt, Brazil, Peru, and many other countries.

This spread is the result of the work and sacrifice of parents and teachers in these countries, sometimes assisted by outside volunteers. These parents and teachers have somehow discovered Waldorf Education (each story is unique and remarkable) and have recognized it as a blessing they want to give to their children and their society. In nearly every case, these pioneers have to deal with remarkable obstacles and difficulties in establishing and maintaining schools. Because of financial, staffing, regulatory, and other problems, survival is often a day-to-day achievement. The school in the black township of Soweto, South Africa, for example, has 185 children in three nursery groups and six grades, and ten teachers, but is in danger of closing because of lack of funds. The Waldorf nursery/kindergarten in Kathmandu operates with virtually no artistic supplies. Every school in Croatia struggles for the bare necessities—a building, desks, chairs, heat—in a country still recovering from a devastating civil war.

In Germany an organization called *Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners* ("Friends of Waldorf Education") is dedicated to helping young schools in all parts of the world. The organization arranges partnerships between schools in first world countries and schools in the second and third world countries. Regular communication and correspondence between the teachers and students of the two schools is established. Where possible, visits and exchanges of teachers and/or students are arranged. The materially more privileged school provides financial aid, supplies, and other forms of assistance to its "sister" school.

Teachers and parents in most Waldorf schools in North America do not have it easy. But our struggles are perhaps not as profound as those of Waldorf teachers and parents in some other parts of the world. Individually and collectively, we enjoy an abundance, ease, and affluence these distant colleagues can only dimly imagine.

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News From AWSNA

By David Alsop, Chairman



This past May, AWSNA, represented by its chairman, had the opportunity to participate in the meeting of the European Council of Steiner Waldorf Schools that took place in Stockholm, Sweden. The ECSWS brings together representatives from nineteen European national Waldorf school associations four times each year at various locations in Europe to hear reports about current activities and to share ideas and resources. Recently, ECSWS has invited associations in North America, South Africa, and Australia to participate as guests, so that networking on a truly international level could occur and that all could deepen their experience and understanding of the diversity of Waldorf Education.

One initiative arising at these meetings will soon enrich the life of the Waldorf community in North America. The decision was made to have the Friends of Waldorf Education—an organization based in Germany that raises funds for Waldorf Education worldwide—publish an English edition of their journal (*Rundbrief*) for distribution in English-speaking countries. This will serve as an international journal for Waldorf Education and will contain articles and stories about schools and initiatives all around the globe. We look forward to this new publication and feel sure that it will be of great interest to Waldorf parents, teachers, and friends everywhere.

Also of great interest is the fact that concurrent with the ECSWS meeting another gathering was taking place—that of the European Federation of Rudolf Steiner Waldorf School Parents. In Europe, each country has a national parents' organization, which brings together representatives of the parent councils and parent organizations of each school in that country. The Federation is a meeting of representatives from each of these national organizations. It was inspiring to see so many parents there, to meet jointly with them, and to share coffee breaks and social events.

One could really experience the love of these parents for their children and their schools. The parents expressed the desire to play a more active role in a number of areas of school life. They know Waldorf Education from a different perspective from that of a teacher or administrator, and they feel they have a contribution to make. They wish, for example, to be asked to speak with the press when questions arise about Waldorf Education. Perhaps we are approaching the moment here in North America when founding a continental parents association would be appropriate.

Travel certainly does broaden one's horizons. I feel sure that our ongoing collaboration and participation with our friends in Europe will give us a perspective that will help us meet the challenges that face Waldorf Education here in North America.

Letters to the Editor

On Childhood Illnesses and Vaccinations

We were dismayed by the misinformation in Dr. Incao's article ("Childhood Illnesses, Vaccination, and Child Health") in the Spring issue of *Renewal*. Dr. Incao argues that immunization against measles, whooping cough, and other childhood illnesses weakens the immune system and can cause serious diseases such as asthma, cancer, diabetes, and inflammatory bowel disease.

The article fails to support any of these sweeping conclusions, except a possible connection between vaccination against measles and asthma, which refers to a 1997 article in *Science* and a 1994 letter in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. There are no references and no recognition of the existence of a huge body of scientific research demonstrating the overall safety of immunizations, which have been used for over four decades (two centuries in the case of smallpox). The two anecdotes Dr. Incao includes also do not support his case. How do we know, for example, that Hans's attack of measles cured his eczema?

A much more complete and unbiased source of information is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Their Web site address for vaccine information is http://www.cdc.gov.nip/vacsafe/vaxsaft.htm.

According to the CDC, a measles epidemic in the United States in 1989-91 killed 120, and "Japan, Great Britain, and Sweden suffered pertussis epidemics following a drop in pertussis vaccine use." The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians recommend immunization against ten serious illnesses to prevent the disabilities as well as deaths they can cause.

On just one of the many topics that Dr. Incao attempts to treat, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), there is a complete discussion (with fifteen references to recent scientific studies) on the CDC's Web site. The conclusions are: "There is no scientific proof that measles vaccine can cause IBD"; "Isolated studies that have suggested an association are weak and have several flaws"; and "There is strong scientific evidence (both epidemiologic and laboratory) to show there is no association between measles vaccine and inflammatory bowel disease."

The idea that we should allow children to be "challenged" by serious illnesses seems to arise from a Darwinian view, that is, that the strong will survive and be strengthened. There is no "rigorous scientific thinking" here, but a set of unproven beliefs, which have apparently not been updated since Rudolf Steiner proposed them seventy-five years ago. Can we, as parents, educators, and physicians, accept the sufferings of the children who are unlucky enough not to survive the challenge?

Barbara K. Timmons, Ph.D.
Robert J. Timmons, Ph.D.

Nashua, New Hampshire

Reply from Dr. Philip Incao

I appreciate and commend the concern for our children expressed in the letter from the Drs. Timmons.

Their assessment of my article, however, as based on a "set of unproven beliefs . . . apparently not . . . updated since Rudolf Steiner proposed them . . ." betrays a serious misunderstanding of my method, and indeed of Steiner's method, which is the same as my own though much more profound and more broadly applied.

This method of research, like all scientific research, is based on observation and thinking, not unfounded belief. The late Nobel laureate Albert Szent-Györgyi defined scientific research as "to see what everyone else has seen and to think what nobody has thought." This is how most scientific progress is made. Some might call "the thought that nobody has thought" an unproven belief. Others, daring to look for truth in unconventional places, might call it a hypothesis worthy of investigation.

Contrary to the Timmonses' assertion, the link between vaccinations and the increase in chronic disease has never been seriously considered by the scientific establishment, never investigated, and therefore never refuted. It is merely denied and rejected out of hand.

When a medical intervention is introduced for mass use, the burden of proof is on those promoting the intervention.

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Profile: Henry Barnes



When you talk to Henry Barnes on the phone you know you are speaking with a person in the prime of life. Henry's voice is clear and strong; his sentences are lucid and grammatically flawless; and his point of view informed, flexible, and looking to the future. He is deeply interested in what others are doing and in the affairs of the world. You might think him to be in his fifties. When you meet Henry in person, you judge him to be a bit older, in his sixties, perhaps. In fact, Henry has just celebrated his eighty-sixth birthday. He is indeed in his prime, but it has been a very long one.

Henry attributes his vital longevity to some sixty-five years of involvement with Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education ("If you keep learning, you always feel young"), to a healthy childhood (he spent summers on a family farm), and to a lifelong love of gardening.

Henry Barnes, one of the principal pioneers and leaders of Waldorf Education in North America, was born in New York City in 1912. His father was a lawyer who worked mainly for disadvantaged and poor clients. His mother was one of the founders of the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children. Henry attended the Lincoln School of Teachers College (Columbia University), a demonstration school based on John Dewey's system of progressive education. In 1929 he entered Harvard College.

When Henry was a junior at Harvard, his close friend from childhood, Peter—who had been his classmate at Lincoln and was his current roommate—committed suicide. This event devastated Henry and spurred him to search both for the meaning of life and for an education that could really meet all the needs and aspirations of the human being. Meanwhile, Peter's mother—who had read one book of Rudolf Steiner (*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*), while pregnant with Peter—had rediscovered, in her own grieved searching, Steiner and Anthroposophy. Soon, she introduced Henry to Anthroposophy and to Waldorf Education.

Upon graduation from Harvard, Henry was offered the position of assistant to the headmaster at Choate Academy, a prestigious New England preparatory school. Instead he went to Germany to look into Waldorf Education. In 1933-34 he was at the Waldorf school in Stuttgart and became the first American to do a formal full-year Waldorf teacher training. Henry then spent six months working with handicapped children at Sonnenhof, an anthroposophical home in Arlesheim, Switzerland. Henry was for several years a class teacher at Michael Hall, England's first Waldorf school, then still called The New School. Finally, after a stay in Dornach, Switzerland, the center of the anthroposophical movement, he returned to the United States with his wife Christy in 1940.

Except for a three-year stint in the Armed Forces, Henry spent the next thirty-seven years at The Rudolf Steiner School in New York

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Education and the "Four Births" of the Human Being

By Henry Barnes

The following is excerpted from Henry Barnes's book A Life for the Spirit: Rudolf Steiner in the Crosscurrents of Our Time. *The short excerpts on independence in education and on the aim of education, as well as the long section on the "four births" of the human being, are all taken from chapter 8—"The First Waldorf School and the Independence of Education." Printed with permission of the Anthroposophic Press (3390 Route 9, Hudson, NY 12534 (518) 851-2054).*

The foundation of the first Waldorf school [in 1919] grew directly out of the social needs of the time. Rudolf Steiner was not alone in recognizing the need, above all, for initiatives born out of thinking that was inwardly flexible, genuinely practical, and thoroughly human. Such thinking, he knew, arises only when individuals find themselves both inwardly and outwardly free—not only to question and challenge prevailing attitudes and established forms, but also free to develop their full creative human potential. For this to happen, education must be independent of political and economic controls. And this requires a sphere of free cultural life within the social organism as a whole. This would become possible only when economic life and the sphere of political rights find healthy roles in a naturally functioning threefold society.

◆

[According to anthroposophical spiritual science] the search for freedom presupposes the recognition that within every human being there lives an essentially spiritual individuality, independent of gender, race, and nation. And it is the real task of all education to prepare the instruments of body and soul so that they can best serve this individuality when the person comes of age and is ready to take the reins of self-direction. Ideally, therefore, the process of education in childhood and youth is to prepare the ground on which the individual can later walk in freedom and, if he or she wishes, pursue the most important education—self-education as an adult human being.

◆

In his essay "The Education of the Child," Steiner presented the challenging observation that we as human beings are born not *once*, but *four times* on our way to adulthood. Three of the four members of the bodily organism, however, are supersensible in nature and not directly accessible to sense perception. Each member of the total human organism requires a period of about seven years to mature and to fully penetrate the physical body.

During the six or seven years following physical birth, spiritual-scientific observation recognizes a field of living formative forces at work in the organism. Such forces shape the bodily organs and stimulate their life and function according to a creative "blueprint" that governs the living architecture of each individual human body as it matures. One may think of this "field of living formative forces" as an invisible sculptor who works primarily from the head downward into the rest of the organism. It shapes and individualizes the organism, thus transforming the body originally inherited from the parents, adapting it to the needs and special characteristics of the human being for whom it is designed.

Steiner speaks of this "invisible sculptor" as the human *etheric body*. Once these etheric formative forces have penetrated the densest

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***Henry Barnes**, who taught his first class as a Waldorf teacher sixty-five years ago, is the subject of this issue's Profile.*

physical substance and have thus accomplished the major part of their sculptural-architectural task within the organism, a significant portion of this field of force is liberated from its work in the body and becomes available for the use of the child at a new and different level of activity. The physical milestone that marks the liberation, or birth, of the etheric body is the casting out of the first baby teeth and their replacement by the more individual second teeth. The formative forces that have shaped the organs go through a metamorphosis and become available to the child at the level of inner soul activity. They retain, nevertheless, their original image-forming character, and the child discovers in them a living power of *imagination*.

. . . the process of education in childhood and youth is to prepare the ground on which the individual can later walk in freedom, and if he or she wishes, pursue the most important education—self-education as an adult human being.

Just as the infant and the younger child have absorbed their surrounding world through the bodily senses—tasting, touching, seeing, and hearing their environment—and have made it their own by *imitating* it, so the older elementary age child once again "digests" the environment through the intelligence of imagination. Both imitation and imagination can be understood as truly cognitive powers of the human soul. Imitation is the least conscious, but most deeply penetrating and extraordinarily active, expression of human intelligence. Through imitation the child *becomes one with* the surrounding objective world, literally transforming it into the self—into speech, gestures, and creative play. This is archetypal learning through the physical body. In imagination, the deeply unconscious, instinctive activity of imitation is transformed into a more dreamlike intelligence that is, nevertheless, also faithful to reality.

The parent and kindergarten teacher have the greatest challenge: they teach primarily through *who they are*. Their voices and gestures, their lifestyles and loving embraces are learned by the children through imitation. The elementary school teacher is then challenged to translate the world of human experience into the language of imagination. Not imagination in the sense of make-believe, but as the objective, disciplined instrument of knowledge that allows the child to penetrate *through* outer perception into the invisible reality behind and within phenomena—to "hear the story within the story," to "see the picture" that reveals the hidden being within external facts.

The ideal for the teacher of the youngest children is to strive to become worthy of their unquestioning, devoted emulation. For the teacher of the middle years of childhood it is to become, in the truest sense of the word, a beloved authority. To become an authority who "causes to grow," who helps the child to become an "author" in his or her own right, one in whom the world once again "originates."

Steiner goes on to describe the developmental phase that follows the birth of the etheric body—during the years from seven to fourteen—when a second supersensible member of the human organism is at work. If one thinks of the etheric formative forces as an invisible sculptor, then one can think of these new sentient forces as those of an inaudible musician who fine-tunes the organism, individualizing and harmonizing its rhythmic, functional life to conform with the needs of the individual for whom this particular body is to be the instrument. Steiner designates these new supersensible forces as the work of the *astral body*. Again, this developmental phase culminates in physiological events, this time in the sexual changes that accompany puberty. A significant portion of the forces within the organism is then available for the individual's use at a new level of maturity.

The birth of the astral body, liberating its wealth of emotional and sentient forces, its tidal waves of sympathies and antipathies, as well as its nascent intellectual capacity, marks the birth of what we generally think of as the human personality. However, educators proceed at their own peril if they fail to recognize the validity of Steiner's insight that another inwardly very real, though externally imperceptible, member of the human organism is still waiting to be born. This is the human *I*, or *individuality*. Language itself can give us a clue

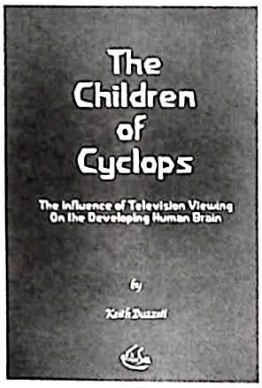
to this distinction. The word *personality*, which derives from the Latin *persona*, or "mask," used by actors, is the manifested character or "role," as in a play. *Individuality*, on the other hand, derives from the Latin *individuus*, or "indivisible"; the I is undivided and indivisible. The individual in each of us is the essential being, who, in the final analysis, we really are.

The I, in Steiner's view, may be thought of as the member of the human being through which self-transformation can occur. Its outer sheaths are the body and soul, and it opens itself to the spirit, at first through the activity of thinking. In this sense, the I in ordinary life is closely connected with the body and with the personality, but it can awaken to a higher consciousness through which it can gain even greater objectivity. Therefore, to spiritual understanding, the elimination or suppression of the I should not be striven for, but its gradual awakening and transformation.

During the adolescent years, the educator's aim is (or should be) to support and strengthen the I, to guide it toward objectivity and firmness within the surging ebb and flow of feelings and newly awakened intelligence We may think of the I as the hidden organizer of experience, as the "knower within the knowing," who finally emerges as the self-aware, potentially self-directing adult, ready and able [it is hoped] to continue to grow through self-education.

After coming of age, the I struggles to find itself in the drama of its own biography, and it can now become the active, transformative force in the years that follow. Steiner characterizes this later process as the I working through its outer sheaths (the astral, etheric, and physical bodies), but now from within. This activity awakens the higher aspects of the soul, which he called the *sentient soul*, the *mind soul*, and the *consciousness soul*. Their successive awakenings roughly correspond to the three seven-year periods between the ages of twenty-one and forty-two. This process, as he points out, can further evolve as the I, working within the soul, opens itself to the objective spirit, creating—at least in seed form—what Steiner calls *spirit self*, *life spirit*, and *spirit body*. In this sense, education becomes a lifetime commitment to the process of becoming a fully human being of body, soul, and spirit. ❄

New from AWSNA Publications



The Children of Cyclops

The Influence of Television Viewing on the Developing Human Brain

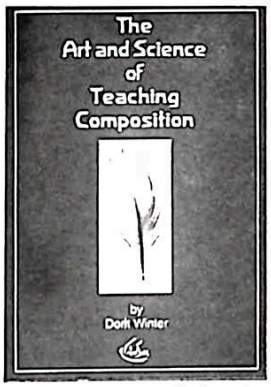
By Keith Buzzell

Educators and parents must consider a serious question. Does the experience of watching television negatively affect the cognitive development of a growing child? This new book documents the most recent brain research and will help parents and teachers make intelligent choices for our children.

soft cover, 129 pages $10.00, shipping additional

The Art and Science of Teaching Composition

By Dorit Winter



Dorit Winter, a longtime Waldorf school teacher, details through a series of exercises the teaching of composition. Although the focus is on the seventh grade block of "Wish, Wonder, and Surprise," the ideas can be used at any grade level from the third grade onward.

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Losing Our Senses

By Thomas Poplawski

When the actor Tony Danza was asked about his view of parenting, he replied:

Hold back the tide. Keep your kids innocent as long as possible. It's like a dike and you've got your fingers and toes in the holes, holding back an unending flood of inappropriate information.

Danza's concern for his two young daughters echoes the sentiments of many parents today. We need to protect our children physically in an increasingly violent world. But we need to protect them emotionally and psychologically also—from the danger of growing up too soon. We need to shield them from developmentally inappropriate materials, from adult language, sexuality, fashion, and the media.

Our children are in danger of prematurely losing their childhood. But there is another, perhaps greater danger. Our children are at risk of losing their very senses of perception.

The Rational Psychology Association (*Gesellschaft für Rationelle Psychologie* or *GRP*) in Munich, Germany, has been conducting research on the processing of stimuli in the brain and the emotions for several decades. Some four thousand subjects are involved in the study. About twenty years ago researchers began to



note a striking phenomenon: the receptivity of the senses of smell and taste was deteriorating significantly. According to psychologist Henner Ertel:

The brain had set a new sensation threshold, so to speak, and refused to recognize sensations below this new limit, sensations that would have been unconditionally accepted before.

This seeming trend was not yet considered remarkable until the 1980s, when deterioration in the other senses began to be evident. Ertel reported with concern:

Suddenly all of the senses were impaired. The brain refused to take any action on a significant proportion of the stimuli. It was getting more and more difficult to stimulate the corresponding centers in the cerebral cortex.

Still the research team at GRP were not alarmed. Apparently, the brain was in a process of transformation. In order to react, it now needed a barrage of stimuli which, prior to 1949, would have put an individual into shock. The brain was no doubt trying to adapt to the pace, stress, and intensity of the technological age.

This trend, however, has continued to accelerate. What finally alarmed the GRP team was the realization that the brain's sensitivity to stimuli is decreasing now at a rate of 1% a year. Subtle and delicate sensations are simply filtered out. Instead, only the "brutal thrills," as the especially strong stimuli are termed, elicit any response.

One series of studies showed that optical information is being processed by this "new brain" without being evaluated. When a group of adults were shown the so-called "Flesher videos," in

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Thomas Poplawski *is a psychotherapist who lives in Northampton, Massachusetts. He and his wife, Valerie—both trained eurythmists—have two young sons, the elder of whom has just begun kindergarten at the Hartsbrook Waldorf School.*



Mindful Parenting includes helpful ideas in this direction.

3. Give your child many and regular experiences of nature.

Find a place for nature in your family life. This means frequent and regular activities in the outdoors for you and your child. Take your infant out in the baby carriage for walks; play outdoors with your toddler, rain or shine, and go hiking, canoeing, and camping with your older child. Bring nature into the home with a seasonal festival table like the one found in the Waldorf classrooms, on which are placed things from nature that reflect the special quality of the season. Use bouquets of flowers, twigs, and grasses to decorate your home. Grow an indoor and/or an outdoor garden. Get a pet.

4. Bring the arts into your home, and do so without the aid of electronics.

Every Waldorf first-grader learns to play the recorder, but parents—even those without musical experience—can also learn to play this lovely instrument. The informal family concerts that can then take place will provide memories cherished for life. Sing every day, but without radio or taped accompaniment. Paint, draw, and do beeswax or clay modeling with your little ones—and with the older ones too. Take art, dance, or even eurythmy classes yourself. Hang artwork on your walls; take the family to classical concerts, dance performances, and museums.

Those who have read any of the recent best-selling books on the life of the soul—books by Thomas Moore, Robert Sardello, and others—may find some of these suggestions familiar. To regain the sanity, equanimity, and sense of wholeness in life—which has been termed "soul"—involves a commitment to creating and protecting a sacred space in our lives. We need to work at "coming to our senses" while we still have them. ❄

For a more in-depth report (in English) on the work of the GRP, see the article "Research into Changes in Brain Formation" by Michael Kneissle in the Waldorf Education Research Institute's *Research Bulletin*, June 1997 (available through AWSNA Publications).

Computers in the Waldorf School

By Eugene Schwartz

The following was written by Eugene Schwartz in answer to a letter from a parent at the Shining Mountain Waldorf School in Boulder, Colorado. The occasion for this exchange was a schoolwide discussion about the "media issue."

You have made many points in your letter, but I want to address only the one that I believe is most important—that the electronic media are "a set of tools to enhance the imagination and to provide new methods for expression and learning" and that Waldorf educators should be more open to "properly applying these tools to daily living."

I should mention at the outset that I am the proud owner of a Pentium desktop PC with multimedia capabilities and a modem, as well as a notebook computer, and that I work quite happily with a variety of Windows-compatible software. I have worked as a film editor and written film criticism, I listen to the radio, and now and then watch TV (my older son has cable). Along with many other colleagues in the Waldorf movement, I have no objection to *adults* immersing themselves in the world of technological wonders.

I remember well that in the early 1950s, when I entered grade school, the "visual aids" approach that utilized a filmstrip projector was going to revolutionize our educational experience. Sometime after that, "Sunrise Semester" debuted on television, as a first step in the "video revolution" that was going to transform education in America. Several years later, I was in one of the first Advanced Placement physics classes in the nation, and *our* education was going to be revolutionized through the utilization of videotaped lectures by great physicists broadcast over closed circuit television. Thus I have already lived through several of these "electronic revolutions," and I've yet to see anything happening in mainstream American education except a steady decline in quality and morale among students and teachers. I have no idea where all the old slide projectors went when they were replaced by closed circuit televisions, or where the televisions went when they were replaced by computers, or where the old 386 PCs will go when they are replaced by multimedia Pentium models—but a lot of corporate marketing departments are undoubtedly very happy about the brisk sales that every new "revolution" brings about.

The tragic loss of human values and conscience among the young in America may be symptomatic of the malaise of a generation raised by, entertained by, and increasingly educated by the nonhuman, conscience-neutral, and bloodless media.

I don't think I'm alone in my concern about the claims that technology will assure good education. In an article titled "The Computer Illusion" in the July 1997 *Atlantic Monthly*, Todd Oppenheimer points out that, in our century, motion pictures, the radio, television, and most recently the computer have each in turn been hailed as the harbinger of a revolution in education.

The substance of these optimistic prophecies was well summed up by H. L. Mencken in 1918:

. . . there is no sure-cure so idiotic that some superintendent of schools will not swallow it. The aim seems to be to reduce the whole teaching process to a sort

of automatic reaction, to discover some master formula that will not only take the place of competence and resourcefulness in the teacher but that will also create an artificial receptivity in the child.

I have taught students from kindergarten to college level, and I served as a consultant for Waldorf and inner-city public schools, and I have yet to see *any* "learning tool" that can replace a human teacher. Please remember that, from kindergarten through grade eight, the Waldorf school doesn't reject only computers as learning tools. Waldorf teachers also do without textbooks, basal readers, ditto sheets, bulletin boards, motivational posters, and *Junior Scholastic* magazine. There are times of day when we even turn off the incandescent lights and illumine the room with a candle; one couldn't go much farther than that in doing without all the modern accoutrements of "educational enhancement."

We have two basic reasons for this approach. Number one, as I noted before, is that we ascribe to a *human-centered* method of education. The teacher's living and warm presence, and the unfolding of content in the immediacy of the moment, are what convey knowledge—and wisdom—most powerfully to the child. Anything that "mediates" between the child and teacher will, in some sense, weaken this living quality. We need only recall the remarkable powers of memory of people who lived in an oral tradition and compare them to the weak memories of those of us who depend upon memos, Filofaxes, and computer PIMs to recognize that something is lost when person-to-person pedagogy disappears. The fact that the *teacher* has worked to study sources, to distill them into a quintessence that is customized for *her* particular class, and is ready to patiently present and, if necessary, to repeat, what she has presented—none of this is lost on the child, for whom the living teacher is a model of the "lifelong learner."

No matter how sophisticated the graphics and how "lifelike" the synthesized voice presented on the CD-ROM, a very impersonal element creeps into the child's educational experience. A subtle sense arises that machines, rather than people, are the "good" teachers. If a living teacher is the child's role model for learning, the child will naturally strive to become more of a human being, if software and the ghostly images of people on television screens are the role models, the child will (through her inherently imitative nature) slowly become ever more "machinelike," impersonal, and "cool." The tragic loss of human values and conscience among the young in America may be symptomatic of the malaise of a generation raised by, entertained by, and increasingly educated by the nonhuman, conscience-neutral, and bloodless media. We need not be surprised by the report in *Wired* magazine (June 1996) that of "the ten most accessed links from the Whole Internet Catalog's GNN Select," seven are sexual in nature.

As Waldorf educator John Gardner has pointed out, intellectual explanations may temporarily satisfy a child's *curiosity*, but it is no less essential for answers to awaken the child's sense of *wonder*. Curiosity is a quality notorious for its insatiability: questions born out of mere curiosity, once answered, lead only to more questions. How many fairy tales commence with the one door that is not to be opened, the one room that is not meant to be entered, and so on, which proves to be the undoing of the curious protagonist? We know that we have evoked wonder in the soul of the child when, instead of questioning us further, the child pauses and breathes deeply; we can sense that the child has been fed and nourished, not just stuffed with mental junk food. Instead of being battered by an endless stream of external sense impressions, the child takes on a mood of "active contemplation."

Scientific explanations of phenomena—for example, the fact that particles, light rays, and water vapor interact to make the sun "appear" to be red—may be perfectly satisfactory to a modern, intellectually educated adult. To the child, however, the random interaction of these chemical and physical entities is *lifeless*. The world becomes a complex collection of passive phenomena, brought about randomly, with no particular plan or goal motivating its action. Such lifeless pictures gradually inculcate passivity in the child's soul. The enthusiasm of public television science specials, the bells and whistles of CD-ROMs and science Web sites, even the impressive effects of "virtual reality" software, cannot revivify a worldview that is, in the eyes of a primary-school child, virtually dead.

In 1992 two researchers—Gary Nabhan and Sara St. Antoine—interviewed 52 eight-to-fourteen-year-olds living in the Sonoran desert in the borderlands between the United States and Mexico. They found that even these children, who live in a relatively wild place and among whom are children from two Indian tribes, had had very little experience of nature. Few had spent more than a half hour in a wild place or had ever collected natural treasures such as feathers or rocks. Almost all of their experience of wildlife had come from television.



Children in a Waldorf school kindergarten tending their garden.

Given the prevalence of such separation from direct experience of nature among today's elementary-school children, their widespread passivity in the face of environmental problems should not be a surprise. Yet the most recent efforts made to rectify this distressing situation may only serve to exacerbate it. An article in the September 1996 *Internet World* relates the following:

Fourth- and fifth-grade students and teachers at Murphy Elementary in Haslett, Michigan, are not in the classroom today. They are tiptoeing around in rubber boots in a bog near the school. Their aim is to investigate the fragile wetlands that abound in Meridian Township but that are increasingly at risk because of the rapid commercial development in their area.

It sounds promising—here are students who *are* being given the chance to encounter the natural world in an unmediated way. But read on.

The students are laden with notebooks, pens, pencils, a tape recorder, video recorder, and a pocket camera. They are "multimedia detectives," part of an ongoing program in Okemos, Haslett, and East Lansing schools. The program, now almost two years old, enables teachers in the three school districts to explore ways in which multimedia and telecommunications technology can help their students learn how to engage in publishing.

Only two paragraphs before, the students' aim was to "investigate the fragile wetlands," but now we learn that behind this charade is a more important goal—getting the children engaged in desktop publishing, for which they will certainly need to purchase more hardware and software than for their innocent jaunts in the bogs. One paragraph later, and the children's separation from their immediate natural surroundings is made clearer still:

To help the students become more competent as Web explorers, we use two-way cable TV as a control and viewing mechanism. . . . TCI Cable and Michigan State University have installed a high-speed ChannelWorks cable modem at the Multi-Media Classrooms site. The modem, made by Digital Equipment Corp., is the size of a small VCR. The ChannelWorks box is attached to an IBM PC via an internal LANtastic Ethernet card and a standard Ethernet cable. A second connection on the back of the box is attached to a normal coaxial cable just like the kind on the back of a TV or VCR.

The pretense that this has anything to do

with exploring nature is dropped; it is clear that the hidden agenda here is "exploring the Web," pulling children away from the immediacy of their experience of nature and into a forest of corporate logos and high-tech wiring.

Where, in all of this, is anything asked of the imaginative capacities of the young person as she apprehends nature? Where is the possibility for a meaningful encounter between the developing sensibility of the child and the wonders of life and growth? It is not surprising that such an insensitive *replacement* of active life experience with passive transmission of information leads even computer specialists to urge educators to exercise caution. As Sherry Turkle, a professor of the sociology of science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a longtime observer of children's use of computers, told Todd Oppenheimer:

The possibilities of using this thing [the computer] poorly so outweigh the chance of using it well, it makes people like us, who are fundamentally optomistic about computers, very reticent.

The second reason Waldorf teachers eschew computers and other electronic media as teaching tools is based on our conviction that children are not "little adults," who in essence perceive the world and think about it much the way adults do. We believe that the consciousness of the child is radically different from that of the adult. Rather than impose all of the technological wonders of today's world upon the child—much as the zealous missionaries of the nineteenth century set about imposing the "advantages" of modern life upon the "deprived" South Sea islanders (and thereby decimated the indigenous population in the course of a generation)—we should be learning more about the world of childhood and creating a space in which that world can manifest.

It is obvious, for example, that a five-year-old has no business sitting behind the wheel of an automobile. The power and weight of the vehicle and the complex judgments that must be made at any moment would overwhelm the physically weak and mentally dreamy child; the situation could be fatal. Yet children of that age, or younger, are let loose on the "Information Superhighway" with hardly a driving lesson. I would contend that a television set, a VCR, or a computer are no less overwhelming (and no less inappropriate) to a child than is a car. Only because the child is sitting in one place do we fail to see the deleterious consequences of the technological assault of the media on our child's senses and psyche. As a recent observer notes in *Caught in the Web* (January 1997):

Currently more than a million youngsters under the age of eighteen go on line regularly, and the number is expected to climb to 15 million by the end of the century. Advertisers are now using cyberspace to leverage [youngsters' huge] buying power, because they know that the medium has a mesmerizing effect on children, who are usually not accompanied online by adults



A Waldorf lower school orchestra in rehearsal.

There are far too many children who are "mesmerized" by electronic media, whose only experience of nature comes from television shows, whose only experience of the legacy of storytelling comes from software. Will such youngsters have any

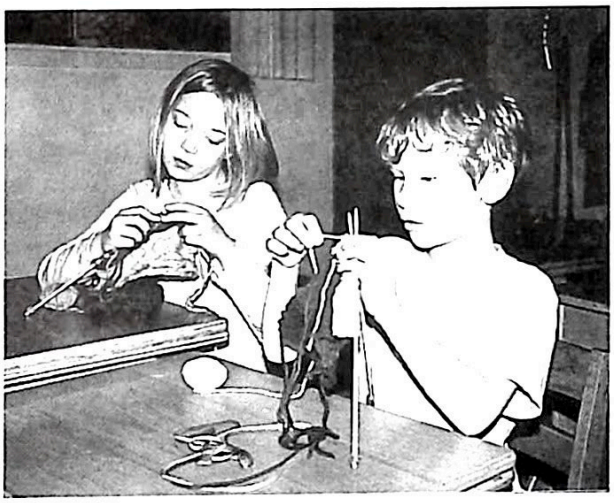
basis by which to judge what is "real" and what is semblance, what is true and what is false?

Waldorf teachers believe that it takes a number of years for a child to *become* a truly "modern person," and that in the course of those years the child needs to be surrounded with an environment that is not completely "modern" and certainly not "technological." Indeed, a child who can live in an unmediated connection with nature, and then in an unmediated connection with the world of stories (told by parents, and then by teachers), who is allowed to actually hold a paintbrush or a crayon, or to model in beeswax and to sing and play a real instrument—a child who has had real experiences of life rather than animated and digitized substitutes for them offered by software—such a child will have the healthiest foundation for valuing technology in later life.

It is important for us all to realize that, in spite of the widely advertised advantages that computer-literate students are said to have over students learning in the old ways, there is as yet *no* conclusive evidence that this is so. The hoopla with which politicians and corporations have surrounded the computer issue serves as a smokescreen for the lack of substantive research that has actually been done concerning technology in the classroom. As Todd Oppenheimer writes (in the previously cited *Atlantic Monthly* article):

Unfortunately, many of these studies [concerning computers in the classroom] are more anecdotal than conclusive. Some, including a giant, oft-cited meta-analysis of 254 studies, lack the necessary scientific controls to make solid conclusions possible. The circumstances are artificial and not easily repeated, results aren't statistically reliable, or, most frequently, the studies did not control for other influences, such as differences between teaching methods. This last factor is critical, because computerized learning inevitably forces teachers to adjust their style—only sometimes for the better. Some studies were industry-funded, and thus tended to publicize mostly positive findings. "The research is set up in a way to find benefits that aren't really there," Edward Miller, a former editor of the Harvard Education Letter, *says. "Most knowledgeable people agree that most of the research isn't valid. It's so flawed it shouldn't even be called research. Essentially, it's just worthless." Once the faulty studies are weeded out, Miller says, the ones that remain "are inconclusive"—that is, they show no significant change in either direction. Even Esther Dyson admits the studies are undependable. "I don't think those studies amount to much either way," she says. "In this area there is little proof."*

Another computer expert, David J. Gelernter, professor of computer science at Yale University, shares these concerns. As quoted in a November 30, 1997, article in the *New York Times*, he says that:



Waldorf school first graders knitting in handwork class.



High school students practice calligraphy.

Computers themselves are fine. But we are in the middle of an education catastrophe. Children are not being taught to read, write, know arithmetic and history. In those circumstances, to bring a glitzy toy into the classroom seems to me to be a disaster. It reinforces our worst tendencies. The idea that children are in educational trouble because they don't have access to enough glitz and what they really need is a bigger database is staggeringly ludicrous. They need practice in the basics.

A dogma is a truth that a person holds without understanding the reasons behind it. The view that Waldorf teachers hold concerning computers and other electronic teaching aids is not dogma. I think that most Waldorf teachers understand perfectly well why television and other media are antithetical to the Waldorf approach to education. I believe that a strong and assertive media policy would provide a foundation for a healthy Waldorf school. What the child receives in a Waldorf classroom in the early grades is delicate, as matters of the imagination always are; exposure to the powerful and usually ugly images of the mass media can easily overpower what is living in a germinal state in the child's soul. Given time and opportunity, these seeds of imagination will ripen, and the child will be able to face the modern world well-armed and armored. I hope that every Waldorf student will become an adult who can use a computer or a television (or their future equivalents) and value them for what they are and *not* be enslaved to them, or idolize them as an expression of superhuman intelligence.

It is not unusual for Waldorf high schools to use videotapes on occasion in classes (I used them in my high school "Media" course, which your son attended). In most Waldorf high schools, students work with computers in the eleventh grade, *after* they have learned about the mathematical, scientific, and historical bases upon which the computer is formulated. It is not a matter of rejecting the media, but recognizing *when* a given medium is appropriate, and under what circumstances.

The foundation for understanding the approach of the Waldorf schools to this matter lies in an understanding of the nature of the changes that occur in our consciousness throughout human life, and especially in childhood. If you are interested in pursuing this matter further, I would suggest a short book by Rudolf Steiner entitled *The Education of the Child* or a book that I have written entitled *Rhythms and Turning Points in the Life of the Child*. Other books that parents have found helpful, written by authors not involved with the Waldorf school movement, include: *Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It* by Jane Healy; *A is for Ox: Violence, Electronic Media, and the Silencing of the Written Word* by Barry Sanders; *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* by Jerry Mander; and *Evolution's End* by Joseph Chilton Pearce.

And let me conclude, not with my own words, but with excerpts from an interview with Apple founder Steve Jobs in the cutting-edge computer magazine *Wired* (February 1996):

I used to think that technology could help education. I've probably spearheaded giving away more computer equipment than anybody else on the planet. But I've had to come to the inevitable conclusion that the problem is not one that technology can hope to solve. . . . Historical precedent shows that we can turn out amazing human beings without technology. Precedent also shows that we can turn out very uninteresting human beings with technology.

I hope that this is of some help. I appreciate your concerns, and I thank you for your letter. ❄

***Eugene Schwartz** is director of teacher training at Sunbridge College in Chestnut Ridge, New York. The recipient of a Teaching Fellowship from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, he is the author of numerous books on education including* Why the Setting Sun Turns Red *(AWSNA Publications) and the upcoming* Millennial Child *(Anthroposophic Press). Eugene has served as a consultant to over eighty schools in North America and has lectured in settings as diverse as Harvard University and the University of Tennessee Medical Center. He is the father of four and lives with his wife, Susan, in Spring Valley, New York.*

A 432

By Harry Kretz

This is an account by master teacher Harry Kretz of a class he taught in the Teacher Education Program of Rudolf Steiner College early in 1998.

It was a physics class: acoustics, the study of sound.The problem was to determine the frequency—vibrations per second—of the note A, second space, treble clef, as played on an alto recorder. The recorder used was tuned to natural pitch, so A was not 440 vibrations per second. Equipment for this assignment consisted of a bicycle and a library card.

Since it was not immediately obvious how to proceed, I gave the students some hints:

Turn the bicycle upside down on its seat and handlebars. Turn the pedal. Hold the library card against the spinning rear tire.

The low rattling sound soon developed into a high-pitched whine as the pedal was turned faster. The students began to get the idea. The siren-like whine of the card against the tire had to be steadied to match the note on the recorder while someone counted how often the tire went round in, say, ten seconds.

How many bumps are there on the tire? Someone counted 180. We needed this number, and the number of turns in ten seconds. There was a reflector on one of the spokes, which helped. By counting how many times the reflector passed the rear wheel fork we would know the number of times the wheel had turned.

The students organized themselves. One held the bicycle steady. Another turned the pedal. A third held the library card against the rear tire. A fourth, holding a wristwatch with a second hand, stood ready to say "GO" as soon as the whine of the card steadied, and matched the recorder A. A fifth student was needed to count the number of times the reflector passed the fork until, after ten seconds, the timekeeper said "STOP." Because the whine of the library card was so loud that the pedal turner couldn't properly hear the recorder A played by the sixth student, a seventh student was needed to signal to the pedal turner to turn faster or slower.

All appeared to go well, and after hearing "STOP" from the timekeeper the pedal turner braked. The person counting wheel revolutions was asked: "How many times did the wheel go around?"

"I couldn't tell," she said, "because it was so fast; it was all a blur."

Now what? Someone suggested we tune the library card an octave lower and then just double, because the frequency of a note doubles at the octave. Good idea. Start again. This time it was successful. The number of times the reflector passed the rear wheel fork was twelve. Someone put the statistics on the chalkboard:

Number of bumps on the tire: 180

Number of wheel turns: 12

Number of seconds: 10

Number of vibrations in 10 seconds:
$12 \times 180 = 2160$

Number of vibrations in 1 second: (dividing 2160 by 10) = 216.

But that was an octave lower than the recorder. Remember? So the following was added:

Double to find the recorder pitch:
$2 \times 216 = 432.$

Conclusion: According to our experiment, the frequency of A, second space, treble clef, natural pitch, is 432 vibrations per second.

I asked the recorder player to tell us what was stamped into the wood on the recorder. At first she couldn't find anything, but soon declared, "A 432."

Some physics lessons are more successful than others. ❄

***Harry Kretz**, for many years a Waldorf teacher, first at The Rudolf Steiner School in New York City and then at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, is now "retired." In fact, Harry is very busy teaching mathematics, projective geometry, and physics at various Waldorf high schools and teacher education programs around the country.*

"Partial Vision" in Alternative Education

By Ron Miller

Our oldest son, Justin, recently started Waldorf school. It is alively school, with a wonderful sense of community among the families, and when Justin first visited the class he quickly felt welcomed by the warm, gentle teacher and friendly, supportive children. He seems to really like it and will probably thrive there. However, I happen to be unusually fussy when it comes to education, and I have some philosophical reservations about several aspects of Waldorf Education. How do I reconcile these with my own son's positive experiences?

For the past fifteen years, I have been involved in alternative education as a Montessori teacher, as a doctoral student in the history and philosophy of education, as the founding editor of the journal *Holistic Education Review* and the book review publication *Great Ideas in Education*, and as author or editor of four books. Throughout this time I've maintained contacts with alternative educators of every stripe—Montessori and Waldorf educators, freeschoolers, homeschoolers, progressives, anarchists, ecologists, constructivists, reconstructionists, deconstructionists, and many others. From this uncommonly broad exposure I have concluded that there is no one best model or method of education. No single approach is ideal for all young people, all families, all communities, all social and historical conditions. In my view, good education—what I have been calling "holistic" education—is not a single definable technique or method but an attitude of openness, responsiveness, and caring that adapts to the complex needs of a given time and place.

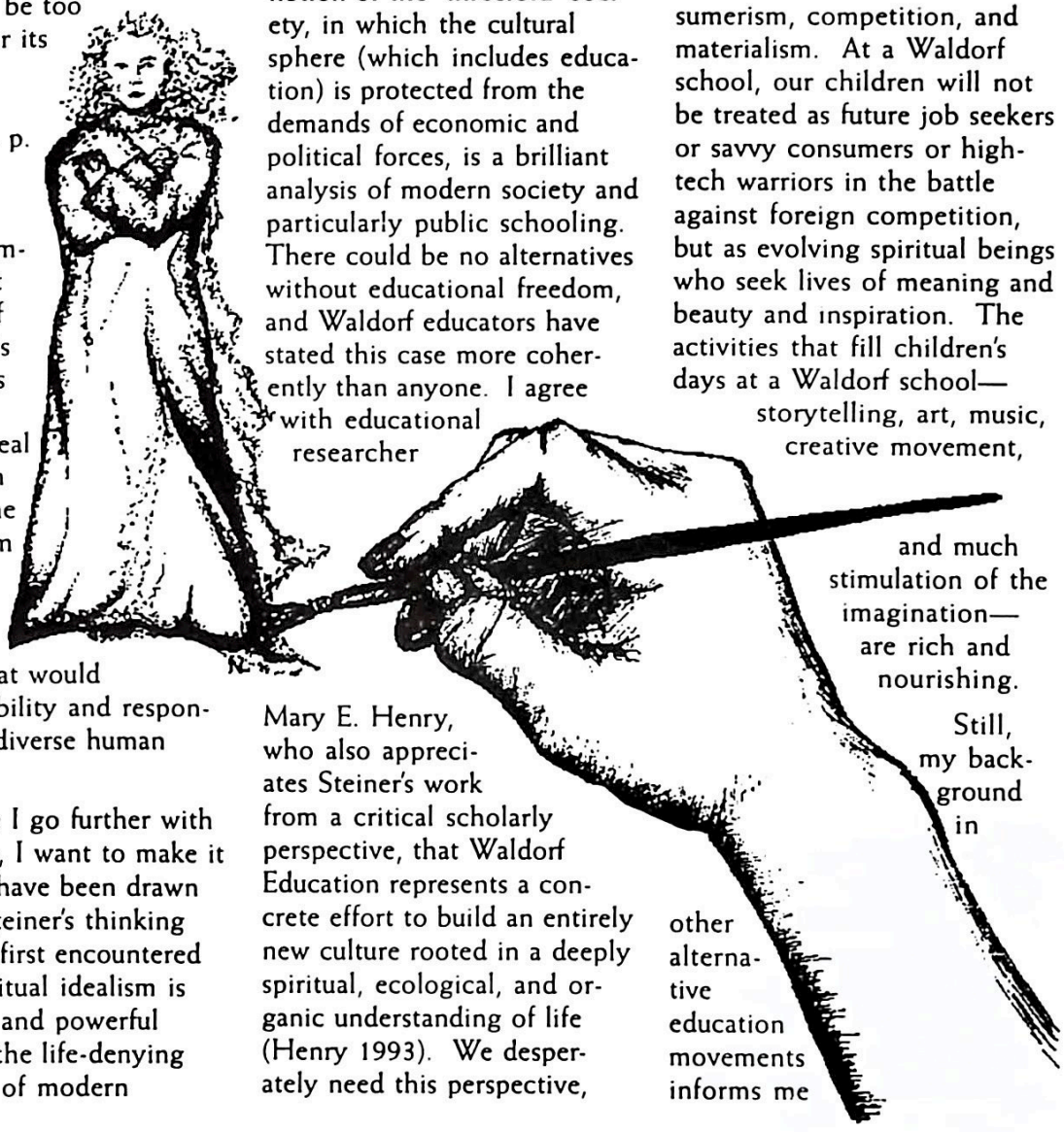
I do not believe that any one perspective can encompass all possibilities of human growth or cultural renewal, because human existence is an unfolding adventure involving many layers of reality and meaning (biological, ecological, psychological, social, historical, mythological, and spiritual). Any educational vision that claims to be a complete, perfected, or final answer to the mysteries of human existence is neglecting, if not actively repressing, legitimate avenues of development. Australian educational theorist Bernie Neville expressed this point poetically through the metaphors of Greek mythology, describing the various archetypal energies (such as the authoritarian Senex, the orderly Apollo, the freedom-loving Eros) that make up the psyche. He warned that honoring any one of these forces to the exclusion of others results in a "partial vision" that is blind "to much that is significant in human living" and that conceives education "in a way that impoverishes children rather than enriches them" (1989, p. 132).

In my view, the Waldorf approach is such a "partial vision" because it is based religiously on the teachings of one man—Rudolf Steiner—who, despite being a gifted mystic and a brilliant thinker, was clearly influenced and limited by his cultural and historical context—as he himself seemed to recognize at times. In its pervasive emphasis on Spirit and Beauty and Form and similar archetypes, Waldorf Education faithfully expresses the worldview of

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nineteenth-century German Idealism and neglects other energies of the psyche that find more room for expression in other worldviews. Surely Waldorf does not "impoverish" children, because its spirituality is deeply nourishing in many ways. But its idealism does close off other avenues of human development. As the Unitarian leader William Ellery Channing, a deeply spiritual man himself, told the Transcendentalist educator Bronson Alcott, "the strong passion of the young for the outward is an indication of Nature to be respected. Spirituality may be too exclusive for its own good" (quoted in Tyler 1944, p. 248).



My primary complaint about the Waldorf movement is that it offers itself as the universal ideal of education and lacks the self-criticism and openness to other perspectives that would permit flexibility and responsiveness to diverse human situations.

Before I go further with this critique, I want to make it clear that I have been drawn to Rudolf Steiner's thinking ever since I first encountered it. His spiritual idealism is such a vital and powerful antidote to the life-denying materialism of modern Western culture that in my historical study of alternative education (Miller 1990), I proposed that Waldorf Education "is probably the most radically holistic approach ever attempted." If I am now, on further reflection, calling it a "partial vision," I still acknowledge that it supplies a tremendously important part that is missing, not only from mainstream public schooling, but from many alternative approaches as well. Holistic education is not whole without a spiritual foundation.

In addition, Steiner's notion of the "threefold" society, in which the cultural sphere (which includes education) is protected from the demands of economic and political forces, is a brilliant analysis of modern society and particularly public schooling. There could be no alternatives without educational freedom, and Waldorf educators have stated this case more coherently than anyone. I agree with educational researcher Mary E. Henry, who also appreciates Steiner's work from a critical scholarly perspective, that Waldorf Education represents a concrete effort to build an entirely new culture rooted in a deeply spiritual, ecological, and organic understanding of life (Henry 1993). We desperately need this perspective, which is often absent—or only obscurely implicit—in alternative school movements that speak only of democracy or children's freedom (see Miller 1995). Libertarian ideology is a partial vision, too.

As parents, this is what attracts us most to the Waldorf school. Even though the public school in our small Vermont town is extremely good by conventional standards and seems highly responsive to parents and students, we know that in most ways public education represents and reinforces the culture of consumerism, competition, and materialism. At a Waldorf school, our children will not be treated as future job seekers or savvy consumers or high-tech warriors in the battle against foreign competition, but as evolving spiritual beings who seek lives of meaning and beauty and inspiration. The activities that fill children's days at a Waldorf school—storytelling, art, music, creative movement, and much stimulation of the imagination—are rich and nourishing.

Still, my background in other alternative education movements informs me

that the Waldorf methodology is not the only or necessarily the best expression of educational and social renewal. Alternative educational visions all reject the dominant modern conception of schooling that seeks to harness human energies to the mechanical requirements of the economic system and the state. All alternative visions are grounded in a genuine desire to support children's natural ways of learning and growth; the differences between these visions reflect their different perspectives on the complex mystery of human development. For example, Maria Montessori was, like Steiner, sensitively attuned to the different cognitive and emotional stages of children's growth, and, like Steiner, she perceived that spiritual forces, not to be tampered with by modern ideologies, were at work in the unfolding of these stages. Yet her educational system reflected her cultural milieu and the circumstances of the children she worked with, and a Montessori classroom is consequently a very different environment.

Dee Joy Coulter, an educational psychologist who has worked closely with both Montessori and Waldorf educators in Boulder, Colorado, once wrote a brief but important essay comparing the two approaches (1991). Emphasizing that Montessori and Steiner had indeed developed their methods in response to specific cultural needs, she asserted that their pedagogics are not so much in opposition but complementary, expressing symmetrical dimensions of human life. Coulter suggested that educators today should attend to the "seed qualities" within these visions rather than simply mimic the historically and culturally conditioned forms they took. In other words, we can appreciate an educational method as an insightful response to a particular facet of human experience, without venerating it as complete, perfect, universal, or final.

Probably the most obvious and irreconcilable difference between alternative educational visions is in their conflicting attitudes toward freedom and structure. Educators such as Francisco Ferrer, Caroline Pratt, John Holt, A. S. Neill, and George Dennison and psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow have argued that, if we truly trust human nature, we will allow it to find expression in a free and supportive atmosphere. Whatever the source of human dreams, desires, and impulses (these theorists have tended *not* to invoke transcendent, spiritual sources), children can demonstrate genuine responsibility, initiative, compassion, and even wisdom when their personal selfhood is allowed to emerge and proclaim itself. According to this point of view, educational techniques are artificial, and are usually barriers to meaningful growth. Thousands of homeschoolers and the "democratic" schools such as Sudbury Valley have proven that there is value in this libertarian vision.

Waldorf educators, however, insist that this sort of freedom is premature and actually hinders the development of genuine personal autonomy. In a Waldorf classroom, the teacher is solidly in command of students' attention, moment after moment after moment; children have little opportunity to engage in independent activities or conversations; younger children, in particular, are not encouraged to question the teacher but to imitate what he or she models.

Steiner insisted that he did not advocate such discipline for the sheer sake of adult authority but because he truly believed, on the basis of his intuitive perception, that the natural development of the child's spiritual being requires strong adult guidance. As John F. Gardner has explained this perspective (1995), the "organism" (the material, animal aspect of human life) needs to be "cancelled" through the strengthening of "universal reason"; the spiritual realm of Mind transcends the individual ego, and the task of education is to cultivate the infusion of true spiritual knowledge into the child's receptive soul.

Obviously, this is the voice of German Idealism. I do not say that it is incorrect: Steiner certainly was tapping into some profound layer of reality, and the fact is that most graduates of Waldorf schools do appear to be highly creative, self-confident, autonomous, and happy people. Something in their souls has most definitely been nurtured. However, given my experience with other forms of alternative education and my understanding of the social and political challenges of our culture at

this time, the lockstep classroom is the aspect of Waldorf Education that I find most difficult to accept. If Steiner's intuition were universally valid, then all graduates of free schools, progressive schools, and even Montessori schools would end up as rather dysfunctional individuals, and yet this is most certainly not the case (Gardner claims that it is, but he provides no evidence). These children's souls have also been nurtured, although in less explicit and perhaps less deeply "spiritual" ways. As I said above, Steiner's insights into the inherent spirituality of the unfolding human being are as rare as they are valuable, but I still cannot believe that the Waldorf pedagogy so uniquely transcends all cultural/historical influence that it is the only possible way of nourishing genuinely spiritual experience.

Holistic educators such as Rachael Kessler, John P. Miller, and Parker Palmer have written about the central importance of the relationship between teachers and students; it is not the method, not the degree of freedom or structure provided, but the qualities of openness, respect, integrity, and caring that make education real and meaningful. A former Waldorf educator, Diana Cohn, expressed this view precisely in a conversation with Montessorians that I facilitated several years ago. She observed that students in alternative schools "have very loving adults working with them. The methods are very different, but the bottom line is that you have these very interested adults working with the children, and they feel that. They feel enlivened by the fact that there are these caring adults in their lives" (Cohn et. al. 1990).

So I don't think it is a mistake to send my son to a Waldorf school, where he will be taught by caring adults who are fully dedicated to nourishing his unfolding personality. But I wonder whether they could nourish him even more fully by not choreographing his every move and expecting quite so much imitation and recitation; I think they would nourish even more facets of his archetypal energies by allowing some initiative, some freedom of expression, some exploration of his own peculiar ideas and interests. If a Waldorf approach could incorporate these "seed qualities" from other alternatives without sacrificing its own, it would be even more radically holistic than I already find it to be. Most Waldorf educators, I am sure, would view the result as merely a watered-down and greatly diminished version of their pedagogy—just as libertarian educators would scoff at the idea of introducing guided activities for cultivating imagination. It is just this conflict of partial visions that holistic education seeks to reconcile. ❄

This article was originally published in *SKOLE, The Journal of Alternative Education* XIV, no. 3 (Summer), 1997.

EDITOR'S NOTE:
Renewal would like to encourage discussion of the issues Ron Miller raises in this article. Readers are invited to send their comments about the piece to the editor for possible publication in our next issue.

For a clear explanation of the Waldorf approach to the question of freedom and authority in education, please see Henry Barnes's "Education and the 'Four Births' of the Human Being," beginning on page 6 of this issue.

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Art, Artists, and Waldorf Communities

By Patricia Blond and Charles Andrade

When Rudolf Steiner founded the Waldorf school movement in 1919, he saw the Waldorf school as a center for cultural renewal. While the aim of Waldorf Education certainly is to engender the healthy development of the children's physical, psychological, and spiritual faculties, Steiner also intended for Waldorf schools to serve the cultural life of the larger community.

The Washington Waldorf School has for many years been offering numerous adult education classes, workshops, and lectures in the arts, Waldorf Education, and Anthroposophy. It has also had a rich performing arts program that includes eurythmy performances and choral, chamber music, and orchestral concerts.

Painting and the visual arts has been an area of particular interest. For years Lois Schroff, through the Chalice Center for the Arts, taught classes in painting and drawing. Her approach is based on the suggestions of Rudolf Steiner for the renewal of these art forms (based in turn on Goethe's color theory) and on the work of Liane Collot d'Herbois—artist, art therapist, and color theorist—who has developed Steiner's approach.

Seven years ago, the school—hoping to enrich the artistic life of the community and also to help support artists working according to Steiner's artistic indications—staged what we named the "Michaelmas Art Exhibit." The school wanted to show to the public the various styles and techniques developed during decades of serious applied research by artists inspired by the approach of Steiner and Goethe. The first exhibit of forty-nine paintings included works by Liane Collot d'Herbois, Gerard Wagner, Leszek Forczek, Erwin Thomalla, and others. An opening talk entitled "The Michaelic Impulse in the Arts" was given by Michael Howard—artist, sculptor, and Sunbridge College faculty member. While only a few of the paintings were for sale, some of these were sold. The exhibit was so warmly received that the school decided to make it an annual event.



"Plant within Elements" by Van James

The exhibit, now in its seventh year, features a visiting guest artist. This artist gives talks and conducts a weekend painting workshop. The workshops are held in the school auditorium with the work of the guest artist displayed on the walls. They are well attended and give members of the school and of the broader community an opportunity to participate actively in the artistic creative process. Guest artists have included Leszek Forczek, Charles Andrade, Jennifer Thomson, Leo Klein, and (this year) Van James. More than thirty other artists from around the country and around the world have had their work shown at the exhibition.

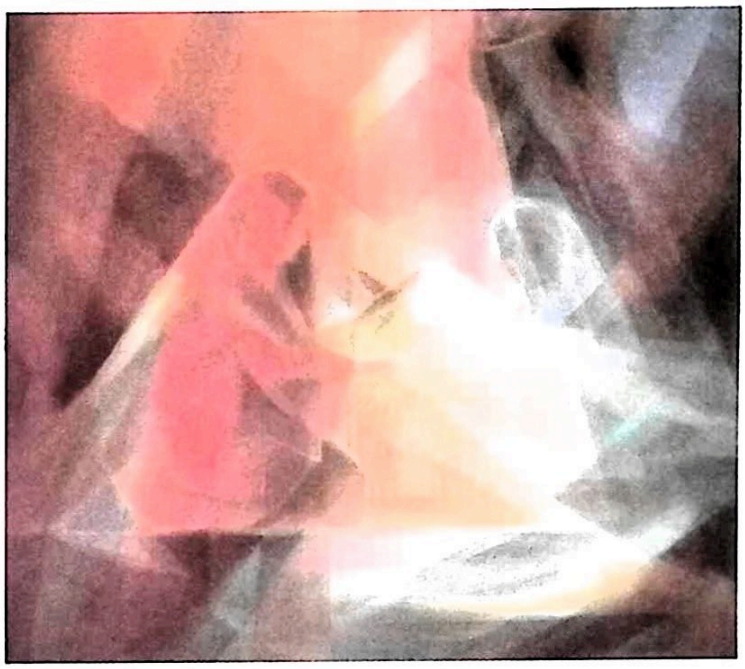
Each year when school opens, students, teachers, and parents are welcomed by halls filled with paintings, by an inspiring, joyful, and beautiful bouquet of colorful intention. The month-long show is open to the general public on weekends and is widely publicized. The school sends out two thousand large, color postcards with an announcement of the exhibit on one side and a reproduction of a painting of the guest artist on the other. The exhibit culminates in the "Michaelmas Festival." This event, which varies in content every year, usually includes poetry, music, eurythmy, and art and is followed by a reception at which the public can meet the artists.

The annual exhibit is a meaningful opportunity for both artist and community. While artists need communities to support them in their solitary explorations in forming vital visual images for our times, communities need artists to deepen their soul experiences and help them discover new ways of seeing themselves and the world. The show provides a venue for artists to show their most recent work and encourages them to grow artistically.

One artist recently was inspired to create a whole new series of pastel paintings for the exhibit. Four works were on display, and three were sold. Another artist, who is also a Waldorf teacher, had a year's sabbatical enabling her to concentrate on painting—she submitted four works of art, and all were sold. In recent years, the show has included works by artists from both South America and Europe.

The Michaelmas Art Exhibit and sale is an important part of the life of the Washington Waldorf School. It benefits the school community, the artists who display their work, and the larger community. It clearly shows that there is strong interest and growing support for artists working out of anthroposophical insights.

Every Waldorf school community includes artists—not only painters but sculptors, craftspersons, musicians, and speech artists. Perhaps the Washington exhibit can serve as an inspiration and model to other Waldorf schools to inaugurate their own art exhibits, sales, and arts festivals. Those wishing advice or encouragement are welcome to contact Patricia Blond at the Washington school at (301) 229-6107. ❄



"Bird Vendors" by Dorothea Sunier-Pierce

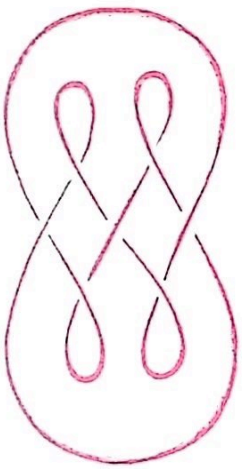
Patricia Fortino Blond *was formerly head of children's programs at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. Now, in addition to being co-organizer of the annual Michaelmas Art Exhibit at the Washington Waldorf School, she is director of that school's capital campaign.*

Charles Andrade *is an artist, art teacher, and graphic designer, and the manager of a company called Lazure Custom Wall Designs. He is also co-organizer of the Washington Waldorf School's annual Michaelmas Exhibit.*

Form Drawing

By Thomas Poplawski

Waldorf parents are often delighted when their child comes home from school with a main lesson book, filled with the child's own drawings and writings, many of its pages framed by lovely running patterns drawn free-hand. These continuous rhythmical patterns are one product of "form drawing," a subject taught in Waldorf schools from the first to the fifth grade. More than just the making of pretty designs, form drawing is an important subject unique to Waldorf Education, and a subject that is perhaps under-appreciated for its role in the children's development.



On the very first day of first grade, the Waldorf teacher asks each child to come to the blackboard and draw a straight line and a curved line. This is an archetypal moment for the child—standing alone before the new teacher and the new class and creating and experiencing first the straight line and then the curved. The two are polar opposites. The first one requires of the child a thoughtful concentration, so that she or he can get it indeed "straight," while the other asks for a will to let the chalk move freely in an arc. During the next years, the child will continue to explore this polarity between thoughtful consideration and active volition, between thinking and doing, and will develop, it is hoped, some flexibility in moving sensitively between the two.

Form drawing is one element in the Waldorf curriculum that seeks to develop this capacity both to think and to do. This is, however, only one reason why Rudolf Steiner included this new subject in the curriculum.

One can very narrowly understand the purpose of form drawing as helping the child to gain better physical control of the hand movements, to develop fine motor coordination. This makes it an ideal means for aiding "writing readiness." However, form drawing does more than promote good penmanship. It helps the child in the development of what Steiner termed the "lower" or "supplemental" senses.

Rudolf Steiner held that, in addition to the five commonly recognized senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, there are other important human senses. These include the sense of balance; the sense by which we experience our bodies in movement; as well as the sense by which we discern if something we encounter in our environment has life, flexibility, and energy. These senses should all develop naturally through the child's interaction with and activity in the environment. Already in Steiner's time, early in this century, though, this natural development did not always occur. And today our sedentary way of life and the hyperstimulation of the senses in our culture cramp or inhibit the unfolding of these capacities. The supplemental senses relate to our feeling alive and comfortable in our bodies and in all our physical activities—running, drawing, throwing a ball, dancing, and so on. But for many children, this feeling—which also contributes to a feeling of self-confidence and inner comfort—does not exist. An impairment in the healthy unfolding of these senses may be a major contributing factor in the burgeoning problem of learning disabilities.

Even a few sessions of form drawing can

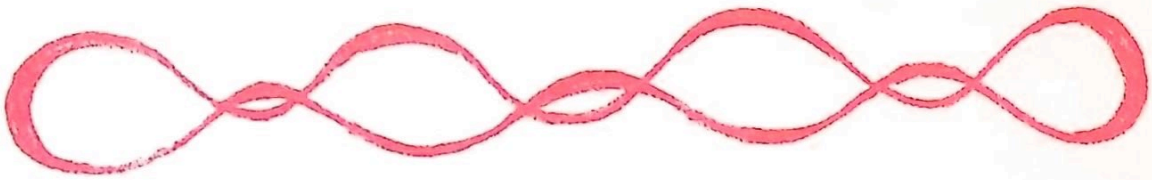
demonstrate how important this activity can be to the enhancement of the supplemental senses. Take a crayon and a large piece of paper (chalk and blackboard also will do) and try to render freehand the form drawing on page 26. As you draw the pattern, be aware of what is going on inside you. Very likely you will experience a cramping anxiety, a feeling of inadequacy, perhaps, and the thought—"This is more difficult than it looks." But if you persist and take up the exercise at another time, you will eventually learn to balance the composition, to sense the flow in your own movement and to adjust it as needed; to feel the inhaling and exhaling flow of life in the running line; to draw at the right speed, not too lively and not slow; and to sense the pressure with which you need to press the crayon to the paper. With even a simple exercise, we can activate a variety of subtle sensitivities and become more aware of ourselves, our movement, and how we interact with things in the environment.

Integrating head and hand

When the young child renders a flowing line in a form drawing he or she is working with his or her will in a skillful and sensitive way. This happens in other subjects in the Waldorf curriculum—in eurythmy, when the children move along the lines of symmetrical patterns, and in handwork, when they manipulate yarn or thread in knitting, crocheting, and weaving.

This "will-work" in the elementary-school years is one of Waldorf Education's most significant contributions to educational theory and one found in few, if any, other approaches. Perhaps in no other form of education is there such an integration of "doing" subjects with "thinking" subjects. While the children are studying mathematics in main lesson, they are also in their eurythmy class experiencing numbers physically by walking and/or clapping musical and spoken rhythms and by tossing copper rods to intricate rhythmic patterns. Handwork class requires counting stitches both in the design patterns and in the actual work and working rhythmically with fingers, hands, and arms. Form drawing involves another kind of rhythmical working that causes mathematical principles to be experienced truths and not merely abstractions that need be memorized.

Form drawing is especially helpful in awakening an enthusiasm for geometry. In the early grades, the drawing involves running-line patterns, but later closed patterns and forms are introduced, including mirror images in two and four parts. By the time geometry is introduced in main lesson as a distinct subject, the sense of space that the child has developed through the form drawing unites in a harmonious synthesis with the mathematical laws and formulae. The child is able to grasp the lessons' content intellectually, but also emotionally and even artistically, with each mode of comprehension enhancing the others.



Form drawing also makes an important contribution to the child's study of history. In a Waldorf school the children study the great civilizations of the world and listen to stories told by the teacher about these cultures. Many of the cultures of the world have used and still do use repeated images and patterns—some variant of the wave, spiral, circle, or other archetypal form—to ornament jewelry, pottery, clothing, and buildings. These forms usually have religious or spiritual meaning. The children's experience in form drawing of the Greek "key" pattern, the Indian mandala, and the Celtic and Scandinavian knotwork patterns deepens their experience of these cultures.

There is another level, though, on which the "will subjects" have an effect on the child. In particular, the psychological effects of form drawing are important to note.

Form Drawing and the Soul

A perceptive and intuitive handwriting analyst can, using only a handwriting sample, describe a person's essential personal qualities. Also, it is possible to therapeutically influence an undesirable quality in a person's character by altering the way in which he or she writes. Habitual patterns in a person's handwriting are connected with emotional habits, and, by changing the one, the other can—though not without difficulty—also be made to change. This so-called "handwriting therapy" is well-known and widely practiced in Europe.

The way one does form drawing also expresses one's inner state. Often when an adult takes up form drawing, the very unsettling feeling arises that the reason the drawing is not going well is connected to deep, personal issues. Form drawing likewise can be used therapeutically. It can address intimate, core issues and, in a direct manner, bring light, movement, and life to areas of the soul that have become dark, hardened, and lifeless.

In the case of children, undesirable tendencies and habits are not yet as firmly fixed. Form drawing can change or remove undesirable habits that are exaggerated manifestations of temperament—such as a choleric child's temper tantrums or a melancholic child's pronounced social withdrawal. In the first training for Waldorf teachers (recorded in *The Practical Course for Teachers*), Rudolf Steiner demonstrated the use of colors and forms to help specific children balance exaggerated qualities that are due to their inherent temperaments. He gave examples of how a child can benefit from a particular form drawing exercise. While choosing general patterns to be learned by the entire class, the teacher can thus approach individual students with special assignments to help them work through personality blocks that are hampering their progress. Such an approach to addressing a child's special needs can be quite effective in heading off certain tendencies before they become too extreme and too fixed.

In form drawing we see another example of how the Waldorf school educates the whole child—the head (or intellect), the hand (or will), and the heart (the mediating artistic and feeling life). Form drawing offers important influences for the development of every child, and therefore can be applied beyond the province of the Waldorf school. As already mentioned, it can be used therapeutically in the case of the child with special needs. Further, form drawing could easily be used in a traditional public school or homeschooling curriculum and prove to be a benefit. ❄

***Thomas Poplawski** has been a student of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education for over twenty years. Thomas's article "Losing Our Senses" also appears in this issue.*

Creating a Safe School Environment:

An Issue of Student and Teacher Health

By Amy Marsh



What do you get when you mix perfume, car exhaust, household bleach, air fresheners, pesticides and herbicides, hand lotions, shampoo, laundry detergents and fabric softeners, latex paints, household cleaning products, nail polish remover, and the chemicals used in soft plastic toys, synthetic carpeting, and scented candles?

No one knows exactly. But we do know that this "chemical soup"—in which most of us live—affects the health of human beings and is having a devastating effect on more and more people around the world. Children are among the most vulnerable.

In the last fifty years, over 90,000 new chemicals have been developed. About 75,000 are considered toxic by the Environmental Protection Agency. Some 63,000 of these are on a publicly accessible list, and about 12,000 are confidential "'trade secrets." Four to five hundred new toxins are created every year.

These harmful chemicals are used in products that are everywhere—in the buildings where we work, study, and live, and outdoors, in parks, playgrounds, and so on. Studies indicate that the air in the average American home is more polluted than that near factories and toxic waste dumps (*Scientific American*, February 1998). We unsuspecting consumers are exposed daily to chemical compounds that are not adequately tested and which are, in most cases, only "presumed" to be safe. Our bodies must cope with the cumulative load of an incalculable number and variety of toxins taken in over the course of our lives. Many people today have a history of chemical exposure that began *in utero*.

More and more people are negatively affected and even disabled by this chemical load. According to a study conducted by the

Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology of the National Research Council (the research branch of the National Academy of Sciences), "15% of the population experiences hypersensitivity to chemicals found in common household products."

The National Institute of Health states that "allergic reactions and hypersensitivity diseases . . . are among the most costly of U.S. health problems, afflicting at least 35,000,000 Americans." In the last few decades environmental illness and multiple chemical sensitivities (EI/MCS) and diseases linked to environmental factors—including cancer, asthma, and endocrine system dysfunction—have increased dramatically.

This problem is so new and complex that it cannot be adequately investigated with traditional research methods. Therefore we know less than we should. Kenneth Olden, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, spoke at the 1997 First National Children's Environmental Health Conference:

Investigation of the mechanisms and health effects of mixtures is (an) area where lack of information is a serious problem. Our inability to say whether agents act in an additive, synergistic, or antagonistic fashion creates real problems in health risk assessment.

Chemical Exposures Can Cause Both Physical and Behavioral Problems

To meet charges of psychosomatic illness or malingering, some EI/MCS patients have submitted to brain scans after chemical challenge tests, including exposure to "designer" fragrances. (All perfumes and aftershaves contain toxic petrochemical solvents.) The results show changes in brain structure, often including diminished cerebral blood flow. One physician says, "The brain is the primary target organ in chemical reactions. Chemicals are deposited in fat cells, and the brain has a very high fat content."

That the brain is a target organ partially explains the range of symptoms and types of behavior that have been observed in children (and adults) after exposure to chemicals, dust, molds, and other allergens.

Dr. Doris Rapp, founder of the Practical Allergy Research Foundation, writes in her book *Is This Your Child's World?*:

Our environment can trigger serious physical, neurological, and psychological problems. . . . The symptoms of allergic and chemically induced sickness extend far beyond those typical of asthma, hay fever, intestinal, and skin problems. Increased fatigue, moodiness, depression, irritability, hyperactivity, aggression, and an inability to focus and remember can all be part of the big, perplexing picture.

According to Dr. Rapp, physical symptoms can include: asthma; throat-clearing coughs; facial tics; red earlobes or cheeks; a "spacey"or "glassy-eyed" appearance; dark eye circles; eye wrinkles; puffy eyes; rubbing the nose upward; skin-scratching; wiggly legs, hives and eczema; headaches; abdominal pain or bloated abdomen; yeasty or discolored tongue; halitosis; and angry facial expressions. Behavioral symptoms can include: excitability and fidgeting; excessive talking; clucking and throat-clearing; sudden unprovoked aggression or vulgarity; sleepiness; withdrawal; inability to tolerate touch, light, or sound; "fogginess" and lack of mental alertness; inability to concentrate; decreased ability to do schoolwork; and pronounced changes in handwriting and drawing.

Many environmental physicians and allergists, including Dr. Rapp, claim that observant parents and teachers often find dramatic improvement in the child's behavior, health, and ability to learn after the identification and removal of the offending substance or substances.

As the proliferation of potentially toxic chemicals continues unchecked, illness that is environmentally caused or exacerbated will soon be so common that every family, school, business, health care organization, and government agency in the country will be affected. That is the bad news. The good news is that the impact of chemical exposures can be reduced or eliminated through practical changes in how we live, think, purchase, socialize, work, and care for our children and care for our environment. Waldorf schools can and should be involved in these changes.

Waldorf Education is concemed with the health of the child in all its aspects and has an

appreciation of the importance of nature in the life of the child. Waldorf Education is permeated with a profound understanding of the spiritual, emotional, creative, and physical needs of the developing human being. It promotes wholesome classroom environments and the use of simple, natural materials. Unfortunately, in many, perhaps most, Waldorf schools, sources of indoor air pollution and hence causes of illness—such as cleaning products and scented cosmetics used by teachers, parents, and students—are often overlooked. Issues of environmental health are seldom addressed.

Now is the time for each Waldorf school to formulate and implement policies regarding environmental health and to create a safe school environment. By consciously deciding what chemicals may be used within or brought into the school environment, the school can create a safe haven for learning and working. Such policies can be simple and inexpensive to formulate and to implement.

In making policies now, Waldorf schools will be anticipating and doing freely what soon will be required. Through the Americans with Disabilities Act, workers' compensation, building codes, the Fair Housing Amendments Act, and other regulatory and legal channels, people with EI/MCS have begun to achieve accommodation and/or compensation for their condition. In one case, a high school biology teacher had been sensitized to fragrances by a classroom formaldehyde spill. Students who disliked her restrictions on perfumes in the classroom carried out over ninety "fragrance assaults." In December 1997 binding arbitration awarded this teacher accommodation and protection.

Most Waldorf schools will eventually face the issue of accommodation and equal access as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. As cases of workplace exposure and disability increase, workers' compensation insurance carriers and government agencies may begin to require private and public employers to provide evidence of preventive policies and actions regarding chemical use. At Waldorf schools, prudent board members and core faculty must begin to consider the legal and financial implications of this issue.

Formulating and implementing an environmental health policy and thereby establishing a safe school environment will benefit everyone, both in the short and in the long term. It will protect the health of all members of the school community—students, teachers, staff, and parents. Toxic chemicals in the environment can cause symptoms and problems to develop in healthy persons. They can exacerbate conditions such as asthma, allergies, reactive airway disease, chronic fatigue, cystic fibrosis, and chemical sensitivity.

Also, a nontoxic school environment will allow all members of the community to participate fully in school life. Many Waldorf schools probably already have faculty members, parents, and children who experience adverse reactions to chemicals. These people, who tend to absent themselves from events or suffer in silence, have a right to participate fully in the life of the school, attending classes, parent meetings, festivals, and assemblies without fear of harmful chemical exposures that will worsen their condition.

A school environmental health policy might include:

- an on-campus ban on scented cosmetics and smoking
- use of "green," safe, fragrance-free, and low-odor cleaning products and laundry detergents. Borax, white vinegar, and baking soda are excellent substitutes for many toxic products
- use of baking soda or other natural air fresheners rather than chemical air fresheners
- acquisition of wood furniture rather than furniture made with particleboard
- acquisition of untreated wool carpets rather than synthetic carpets
- sealing of already-owned synthetic carpets and particleboard furniture to reduce outgassing of formaldehyde and other toxins
- use of untreated wood rather than pressure-treated wood (wood that has been impregnated with chemicals) in construction
- use of paints with low VOC (volatile organic compounds) ratings
- use of integrated pest management (IPM) techniques and an on-campus ban on herbicides and pesticides

- reminders to all members of the school community to keep meetings and events fragrance- and chemical-free
- reminders to check off-campus facilities (parks, auditoriums, pools, and the like) for recent use of pesticides or other chemicals prior to scheduling events or outings
- scheduling of school renovation projects early in the summer

Perhaps the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America could research this issue and develop sample policies and guidelines for individual school use. These policies must address accommodation for those already ill or disabled as well as mandate preventive measures for those who are healthy.

Awareness of chemical safety issues could be incorporated into the curriculum. Students should receive information about safe and unsafe art supplies and safety rules for use of more hazardous art materials. High school students could be given a series of classes on industrial hygiene and workplace safety issues prior to entering into internships with local businesses or craftspeople. Teacher training programs and early childhood workshops also should incorporate this issue.

A school's attention to environmental safety can also serve as an attractive feature for prospective families. Chemical safety policies can be announced through press releases and can be shared with other schools to be used as models.

Such policies are a gift to the children, the community, the earth, and its creatures. Attention to this issue is a formidable challenge, yet it is a task well suited to the Waldorf community. ❄

Helpful Resources

MCS Referral and Resources, Inc.
508 Westgate Rd., Baltimore, MD 21229-2343
Albert Donnay (410) 448-3319
Patient support and professional outreach; publications.

The Human Ecology Action League, Inc. (HEAL)
P.O. Box 29629, Atlanta, GA 30359-1126
Publishes *The Human Ecologist*.

The Environmental Health Network (EHN)
P.O. Box 1155, Larkspur, CA 94977
(415) 541-5075
Publishes *The New Reactor* and has an extensive Web site on the Internet: http://users.lanminds.com/~wilworks/ehnindex.htm

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides
701 E Street, S.E., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20003
(202) 543-5450
To join a school integrated pest management (IPN) network.

Practical Allergy Research Foundation (PARF)
P.O. Box 60, Buffalo, NY 14223
(800) 787-8780
Books, videotapes, and other information, non-toxic products. Dr. Rapp's books contain much practical advice for parents, teachers, and administrators.

American Academy of Environmental Medicine
4510 West 89th Street, Prairie Village, KS 66207
(913) 642-6062
Physician referral and speakers.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
P.O. Box 6122, Morgantown, WV 26506
(800) 526-7234
Accommodation hotline.

National Center for Environmental Health Strategies
1100 Rural Avenue, Voorhees, NJ 08043
Mary Lamielle (609) 429-535
Information about environmental illness.

Amy Marsh *is a parent at the San Francisco Waldorf School. She is president of the Environmental Health Network. Amy is happy to provide a detailed list of sources of information upon receipt of a SASE mailed to P.O. Box 460461, San Francisco, CA 94146-0461.*

Celebrating Childhood, Community, and Colleagueship:

Pine Hill Waldorf School's 25th Birthday

By Arthur Auer



One of the first classrooms at Pine Hill.

Last year the Pine Hill Waldorf School in Wilton, New Hampshire, celebrated twenty-five years of educating children. What does it mean for a Waldorf school to serve wonderful waves of children for a quarter-century? What does it feel like to those involved in this process in which so many students, teachers, and parents have come and gone?

Fortunately, the Pine Hill community has a person who can speak to such questions. Ann Pratt, the founder of Pine Hill, has been in and around the school in various capacities since its inception—as class teacher, kindergarten teacher, eurythmist, and teacher trainer. When asked to reflect on this "young adult" of an institution, which she helped bring to life twenty-five years ago, she noted that key to the entire educational and school-building process was the element of sacrifice. In her words,

The many hands that reached out right from the beginning [are] characteristic. Sacrifice played its important role every stage of the way. In the first year, after learning that renovation costs for the first kindergarten building would go far over budget, we cut salaries from a hoped-for $4,000 down to $2,000. Endowments in human terms always outweighed those of a material nature, yet the school was healthy and flourished. Our [several] homes—an old New England schoolhouse, a Victorian farmhouse that went up in smoke [in 1983]; and our beloved new building, both its first incarnation [which burned down in 1988 just as it was being completed] and its second [present] incarnation—all seem to hold the mystery of sacrifice, sometimes leading us into the depths of despair, but also to the heights of joy.

The story of how Waldorf Education first came to a New Hampshire hilltop is an

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***Arthur Auer** is a native of Hartford, Connecticut, and a graduate of Bowdoin College, class of 1971. For five years after college Arthur worked with handicapped children, first at Camphill, Beaver Run, in Pennsylvania, and then in a group home in Colorado. He completed his Waldorf teacher training at Emerson College in England and has been a class teacher at Pine Hill Waldorf School since 1977. He has graduated two eighth grades, and his present class is in the fourth grade. Arthur and his wife Elizabeth—manual arts teacher at Pine Hill—have two daughters, both of whom have had thirteen years of Waldorf schooling.*

unusual one. In 1942 a devoted Anthroposophist and teacher, Beulah Emmet, turned her family farm into a Waldorf boarding high school called High Mowing. Thirty years later, in 1972, a graduate of that school, Ann Pratt, founded a separate and autonomous elementary school called Pine Hill.

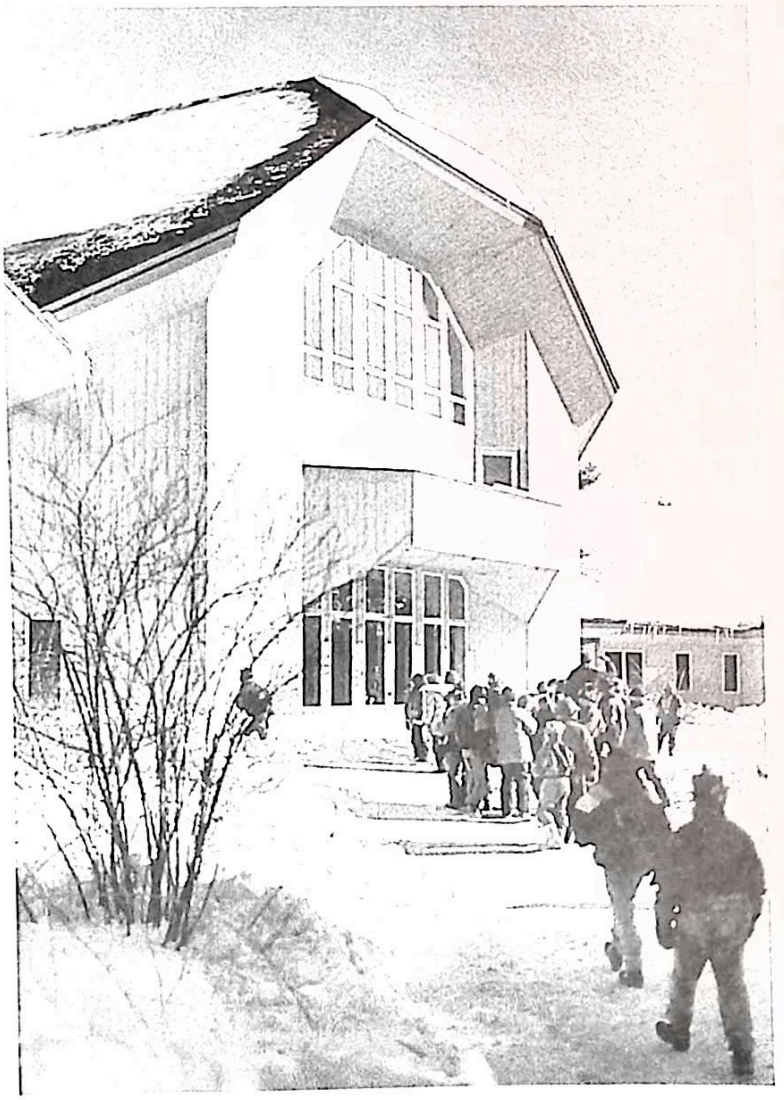
"What attracted me to do this deed," she says, "was Mrs. Emmet's devotion to Waldorf Education and her wish to have a twelve-grade Waldorf experience for children in this area." Within five years of its inception, the younger endeavor had grown phenomenally and was "feeding into" the older; twelve grades had become a reality.

Pine Hill opened on September 6, 1972, as a kindergarten with nineteen children. One of its first teachers, Sherry Jennings, is still there and recalls with humor:

The whole Thanksgiving assembly was held in one classroom. Recess duty included protecting children from "Jupiter," the school ram, who escaped periodically Being a first-year teacher might mean you would be asked to be chairman of the finance committee. Classrooms had to be repainted every year to fit the grade. There was the joy of being in touch with every aspect of the beginning.

As the school expanded beyond a preschool, other vital "pioneers" were called to Pine Hill to help establish it on a strong footing. To become the first-grade teacher at Pine Hill, David Mitchell moved from Copake, New York, where he had just finished teaching another first grade (one which was to become the "seed" class of our "sister" school—Hawthorne Valley!). David was to devote two decades of enthusiasm, willpower, and "Yankee ingenuity" to Waldorf Education in Wilton. He took a class through eight grades and then taught them at High Mowing as well. It was a twelve-year experience for teacher, students, and parents. David came to Pine Hill because of his tremendous love of children and of teaching but also, as he recollects,

for the opportunity to work in collaboration with other people to form a "New Community" that could be an island of culture for my own family, for the families of the school, and for the people who visited the school. . . . Pine Hill was the first of a new breed of Waldorf schools in North America dedicated to a full experience of family. There were new approaches to celebrating the festivals. Fresh activities in finance developed. Individuals helped each other to build homes, grow food, raise animals, gather wood for winter fuel, as well as to study and grow Pine Hill was a



The new building in wintertime



Ann Pratt, the founder of Pine Hill, with her kindergarten class in 1972.

Camelot of individuals looking to create new meaning in life.

Many were "back-to-the-landers" coming with good educations and unafraid of hard work. Personal friendships were not always easy, but there developed a bond between people when things in the outer world became hard. One could always trust in this.

Joining the new venture as another "jack-of-all-trades" was Danilla Rettig. She had trained at The Rudolf Steiner School in Manhattan and brought to this new endeavor an array of talents: as a eurythmist, class teacher, singing teacher, artist, and educator of teachers. Pine Hill was thus blessed with having two of its first faculty trained and experienced in both eurythmy and teaching.

The next class was taken on by Mark Birdsall—a former Waldorf pupil, a helicopter pilot, and amateur wrestler—now at the Urban Waldorf School in Milwaukee. Like David Mitchell, he was to spend two decades helping to build up the school and was the first to take two classes through eight grades. For him,

Pine Hill's early years were striking in the depth of colleagueship that existed from the very start. The working together was profound and indicated karmic connections of a strong kind between the faculty. This brought a depth and strength to the school that allowed it to survive two fires. This relationship was true right from the beginning. Many schools have a dominant pioneering figure for the first phase of their growth, but Pine Hill was a group effort. Ann Pratt, Danilla Rettig, Serenella Warnock, the Mitchells, the Birdsalls, the Jennings, Virginia Patti, Arthur Auer, Sue Pellen (Demanett) [all were important]. There were a lot of very strong people there. I won't say that there weren't clashes. There were, and sometimes they were intense. But we always kept the "whole before the parts." We were building something important, and sensed it, and did not let the things we had to work out between us get in the way of that to any degree.

The right people or groups of people always showed up. It's because Pine Hill was real—doing what needed to be done, just because it was needed in the world. And because of this, I think the children got a wonderful education—inside and outside the classroom. When you're educated in that setting, you get an education, *regardless of the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers.*

The first five pioneering years were Pine Hill's most crucial and formative ones. Already, in only the school's second year, Francis Edmunds—eminent Waldorf educator from England—helped the faculty establish the College of Teachers. That group has been at the heart of the school's work up to the present. Several other experienced and inspiring teachers and mentors, among them Alan Howard, Georg Locher, and Christopher Schaefer, visited and offered their advice and wisdom.

In 1977 there came a wave of new teachers, some trained at Emerson College in England and some at the Waldorf teacher training program at Adelphi University in New York. This influx marked a second phase in the growth of the school. A new pattern of colleague relationship and collaboration developed, one

that lasted for fifteen years and helped bring many remarkable changes. In that time Pine Hill grew from a school of 176 children in an overcrowded farmhouse five miles from High Mowing to one of over 220 students in a newly designed building close to the high school.

Pine Hill's two major fires proved to be tests of the school's intentions, colleagueship, and community. Those two events also proved that the school's real community is in fact the international Waldorf movement. Support poured in from all over the world to rebuild Pine Hill once and then once again.

Like two huge fevers, these fires were also catalysts affecting the other important and related endeavors and areas of growth. The Rudolf Steiner Foundation (an anthroposophical funding organization) courageously chose Pine Hill as its first major project—a gesture for which we are eternally grateful—and thereby launched itself successfully as a major force in the anthroposophical movement. Furthermore, the newly configured school experienced at this time the development of a new teacher training center. Early pioneers of Pine Hill—Danilla Rettig, Ann Pratt, David Mitchell, and Francis Edmunds, along with Olive Whicher and Mary and Alan Howard, were founding teachers of the Antioch New England Master's Degree Program in Waldorf Education, itself now fifteen years old.

Crucial throughout Pine Hill's history have been its parents, working tirelessly in many ways to keep the school going. It has not always been easy for parents to define their role in a school founded and run by teachers, but their heartfelt, sincere efforts are appreciated by the faculty with immense gratitude. For Cindy and Dominic DiSalvo, two of Pine Hill's devoted "alumni parents," a turning point in their relationship to the school came when the faculty collaborated with Alan and Mary Howard in an eight-week course on Waldorf Education. In the words of the DiSalvos,

The knowledge and understanding that was shared gave a picture of an education that is based on the development of the human being and the unfolding of our human gifts for meeting whatever the world brings to us. It presented a philosophy of education, not just alternative methods of instruction. There truly is something for the world here. Once such an understanding is taken into the mind and the heart, the decision to support comes naturally. You want this to be available for all children, not just for your child. Your thoughts are for the needs of the school, not just for your own child's needs.

When Pine Hill had its fire, the group of parents that had taken the time to gain a deep understanding were the strongest in stepping forward to rebuild because the education is so very much needed. All could have gone elsewhere and avoided the hard work and inconvenience, but . . . it becomes easy to work hard for something you understand and believe in. When the second fire seemed more than many people, including some teachers, thought they could rebound from, the remaining parents from the Alan Howard study were right there, unwilling to let the education be lost.

Pine Hill is thankful, above all, for the wonderful stream of children that parents have brought—children who have laughed and learned, stomped and recited, shouted, and carried out all manner of activities here for so long. It is heartwarming to hear from alumni, now in their twenties, who reflect back on their early education. In the words of Ananda Kantner, Class of 1991, and a student at Brown University,

The Waldorf School was a journey of magic and wonder! I learned to look closely at the world around me, and I learned to dream beyond the limits of the universe. At the same time, I gained a solid base of knowledge and skills which allowed me to set sail into the world with confidence.

During the 1997-98 school year, the Pine Hill Community celebrated its primary accomplishment of having served children for twenty-five years. Under the theme "Celebrating Childhood," we marked our birthday in September with a special Rose Ceremony, had an Alumni Weekend in October, a Birthday Circus in February, and a Music Fest and concert in May. We heartily extend an invitation to all our friends throughout the world to visit the school to help us continue to celebrate the gift of Waldorf Education to children and to us all. ❄

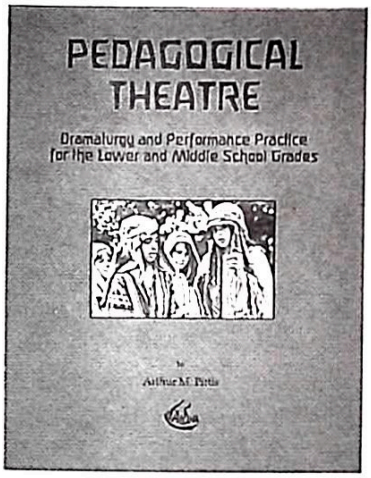
Book Review

Pedagogical Theater:

Dramaturgy and Performance Practice in the Lower and Middle Grades

By Arthur Pittis
AWSNA Publications (Fair Oaks, Calif.), 1997
173 pp. $15.00

Reviewed by Arthur Auer



Arthur Pittis's *Pedagogical Theater* is a much needed and substantial treatment of "age-appropriate" theater. While based in Waldorf philosophy and practice, the book is relevant to all children's theater. The introduction and part one deal with the theory of writing and staging plays. Part two presents eleven wonderful plays written by Arthur Pittis as a class teacher for his students as they went up through the grades. Theory and practice are thus organically balanced in this one volume born of years of working with children.

For Waldorf schools *Pedagogical Theater* performs a significant service by dealing definitively with an important element in our developing curriculum. As its author points out,

In Waldorf circles there is a great deal of orally transmitted thinking on the subject as well as some short articles . . . but no fundamental pedagogical research done in English on dramaturgical and performance practices in an age-appropriate manner.

In his introduction, Arthur Pittis points to the real value of drama in pedagogy. "Theater," he writes, "provides us with living imaginations of what it means to be human." From this starting point, he clearly and beautifully describes the transformation of the imaginative play instinct of early childhood into the enactment of stories, and finally to more formal drama in the middle school.

Arthur Pittis calls upon teachers to carefully examine their pedagogical intentions with each play and make sure that the drama is appropriate for the children. He stresses that "everything . . . plot, words, appearance—and its sound—must be appropriately sized." The manner in which the author clearly delineates pedagogical theater's main elements inspires teachers with a sense that the arts of dramaturgy and performance-practice are accessible and can be studied and learned. His section on choice of language in playwriting has many instructive examples and can be used to understand how he wrote the masterful plays collected in part two. "Well-formed speech," he emphasizes, "is at the heart of the class play."

Section after section follows with further valuable tips and examples of how to stage, rehearse, and integrate music and eurythmy into plays. Part one concludes with a substantial treatment of middle-school drama, characterization, genres—tragedy, comedy, melodrama—and of working with Shakespearean plays and other established texts.

At the end of part one, the author describes the transformative role of imagination in the inner life of both teachers and students. He brings us back full circle to the ultimate intent of pedagogical theater:

It creates moments of artistic communion that lead us to clearer understandings of what it means to be a becoming human being, both individually and in community. ❄

***Arthur Auer**, a class teacher at Pine Hill Waldorf School, is a veteran of many class plays. Arthur also wrote the article in this issue on Pine Hill Waldorf School's 25th anniversary.*

Book Review

Waldorf Education for America

By Hermann von Baravalle
Edited by David Booth
Parker Courtney Press (Chestnut Ridge, N.Y.), 1998
192 pp. $16.75

Reviewed by David Sloan

Ask a group of young Waldorf teachers today who Hermann von Baravalle was, and few will have even a vague idea. More seasoned teachers might remember Baravalle as the author of several helpful booklets, published over thirty years ago, on the teaching of arithmetic, geometric drawing, and physics. It is doubtful that any Waldorf teacher would identify Baravalle as one of the prominent figures in the development of Waldorf Education in America. Now, a quarter-century after his death in 1973, with the publication of *Waldorf Education for America*, a collection of articles and lectures of Baravalle, edited by David Booth, Baravalle's pioneering efforts in this country may finally receive a greater measure of appreciation.

Baravalle found his way to Rudolf Steiner's work through Walter Johannes Stein, when both were serving in the Austrian army in World War I. Both became faculty members of the original Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, but Baravalle's destiny was to eventually lead him to America. It was Baravalle who undertook much of the instruction for two visiting American women—Irene Foltz and Virginia Birdsall—when they spent a year in Stuttgart before returning to start the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City in 1928, the first Waldorf school in this country. In the late 1930s, Baravalle moved to the East Coast of the United States and began the work that would lead one educator to call him the "Johnny Appleseed of Waldorf Education." A number of the oldest Waldorf schools in America, including the Garden City Waldorf School in New York and the Kimberton Waldorf School in Pennsylvania, owe their inspiration, if not their actual founding, to Baravalle.

Hermann von Baravalle was uniquely qualified to represent Waldorf Education, both because of his standing in the academic world and because of his insight into Anthroposophy. Chairman of the Mathematics Department at Adelphi University and a member of the teaching faculty at Yeshiva University, Baravalle was nationally recognized for his work in mathematics. As early as 1920, Rudolf Steiner had asked Baravalle—then only 22 years old!— to speak at the opening of the first Goetheanum. Later, as David Booth points out in his illuminating introduction, Steiner selected Baravalle as one of seventeen people personally authorized to represent Steiner's work to the public. During the forties, fifties, and sixties, Baravalle crisscrossed America many times, speaking to audiences about Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education, and, particularly, science and math teaching.

Waldorf Education for America includes examples of Baravalle's expertise in each of these three areas. The first selections are lectures he gave to audiences in Spring Valley, New York, over three decades. These introductory talks on Anthroposophy are noteworthy for their clarity and accessibility. Baravalle used little of the unfamiliar, esoteric language that the general public might find difficult to understand. In "Rudolf Steiner's Conception of the World," Baravalle gently but persuasively leads his listeners to a consideration of the spirit's existence independent of the body and of reincarnation as a reasonable extension of that thought. As a teacher, he then goes one profound step further, maintaining that, if reincarnation is a reality, "then the study of history is the study of ourselves" (p. 20), not figuratively, but literally.

In this talk and in another lecture entitled "Toward the Cultural Needs of the Future," Baravalle also addresses one of Steiner's central ideas—the evolution of consciousness. He explains how humanity has moved from a connection with the spiritual realm to an increasingly materialistic experience of the earth. "Why," asks Baravalle, "did we lose the awareness of the spirit? For one prize only . . . freedom. To be alone in your own world, to be a sole wanderer who has to find your path, apart

from a group, apart from necessity . . . to struggle through, all suggest what a wonderful event it is to be an individual" (p. 25).

Baravalle's obvious appreciation of individual initiative shines through all his work, but never more powerfully than in his talks on education. In "Vitalizing Education," he repeatedly declares that if the source of all inspiration and creativity comes from the teacher, then we must create conditions in our schools to foster that vitality. Many Waldorf schools today are no less guilty of sapping the forces of their teachers than are public schools. On the one hand, the ever increasing burden of administrative tasks can disperse teachers' energies. On the other hand, the danger of a fixed, uniform Waldorf methodology threatens to undermine the original intention of the education. Baravalle points out that:

Rudolf Steiner often said that in a sense Waldorf schools do not want to be a system with another set of rules and regulations for people to take up. It has been created under the auspices of freeing these energies within the teacher's personality (p. 32).

However, Baravalle also cautions that such autonomy might lead to chaotic conditions within the schools, with one teacher working at odds with another. How can real collegial cooperation be cultivated? Only if teachers are guided by a picture of the needs of the developing child.

Describe objectively the processes of growth in the inner consciousness of the child and you describe the plan of the school (p. 34).

Baravalle argues for Waldorf schools that leave teachers free to follow their own initiatives, but only within the framework of a true understanding of the unfolding child.

He even has a word of advice for those people inspired to start their own school. "You cannot just make a slogan and have millions come. It has to come from person to person" (p. 72). He stresses that there is no formula for starting or for sustaining a Waldorf school. It must arise out of the shared vision living in the particular community of people. It would be folly to attempt to recreate the curriculum of the original Stuttgart school. Such is Baravalle's flexibility of thinking that he sees the curriculum for a healthy school shaped by the individuals who are drawn to it.

The final chapters of the book offer several challenging but illuminating examples of Baravalle's approach to teaching science and math in the Waldorf schools. Each selection introducing astronomy, physics, biology, and geometry is followed by brief, thoughtful reflections by veteran Waldorf teachers—Norman Davidson, Michael D'Aleo, James Henderson, and David Booth. Each commentary underscores Baravalle's unwavering determination to see the world in a Goethean way, i.e., phenomenologically instead of abstractly, practically instead of theoretically. Baravalle demonstrates in each of these disciplines that nature is not arbitrary. Whether he is speaking of predictable movement of heavenly bodies, or the refraction of light in water, or the many manifestations of the golden section, he shows that nature's laws can become transparent to the attentive observer. Ever the teacher, Baravalle extends this idea to children growing up in a world fraught with uncertainty.

We want to bring students into a world where they can really live, and know that there is meaning in life, to know that there are goals, human values, something in us that has a precious mission. You see, young people can grow up with a completely different attitude to life, with an inner assurance (p. 141).

As with many of Baravalle's thoughts, these words seem more pertinent today than when they were originally spoken. *Waldorf Education for America* returns Hermann von Baravalle to his rightful place in the forefront of the Waldorf movement in America. His refreshing lack of dogmatism, his rigorous scientific thinking combined with his warmth of soul, his enthusiasm for sharing the very heart of Waldorf Education, may now provide inspiration for a new generation of students, teachers, and parents. ❄

***David Sloan**, a graduate of Harvard College, has been teaching in the high school of the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Spring Valley, New York, for almost twenty years.*

Dr. Incao replies

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They must demonstrate to the public that the benefits of the intervention outweigh its risks. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has stated (though not on their public Web site) that millions of children are vaccinated every year "on the *presumption* [emphasis mine] that the benefits far outweigh the risks."[1]

In premarketing vaccine trials vaccine recipients are observed for adverse effects for only fifteen days. Any possible adverse effects appearing after fifteen days are never acknowledged.

In 1991 and 1994 a special committee of The Institute of Medicine published comprehensive reviews of vaccine safety, which had been commissioned by Federal law. Of nineteen possible adverse effects of the DPT vaccine that the committee investigated, they were unable to come to any conclusion concerning eleven of them because they found to their dismay that the relevant research had not been done! In particular, there has never been a study in America comparing vaccinated children with unvaccinated children. Such a study would conform to the "gold standard" of scientific research and would provide the clearest, most convincing data.

The only such study I know of was done by Dr. Odent from Britain and is cited in my article. He found that pertussis vaccinees had five times as much asthma and twice as many earaches as those who had not received the vaccine. This confirms my observations of the vaccinated and unvaccinated children in my medical practice.

The vaccination of children in America involves a massive public program in which countless dollars and medical reputations are invested To imagine that free, unbiased scientific inquiry could operate in such a context is to be out of touch with reality. Ask any researcher in the field (as I have done) what kind of pressures exist to avoid "alarming the public." Is it any wonder that unbiased medical research articles on the short-term or long-term risks of vaccinations are few and far between?

The Drs. Timmons note that vaccinations have been in use for over forty years. And yet today we still don't know how vaccinations affect the immune system. All we know is that they stimulate specific antibodies of the humoral immune system. With our recently expanded knowledge of the immune system, it is becoming increasingly clear that vaccines actually work by *suppressing* the all-important cellular immune system. This would explain why in the same forty years in which vaccines have been in mass use, the incidence of chronic conditions in children has almost quadrupled.

Isn't it time, now that fully 10% of all American children suffer with asthma and that in the past ten years prescriptions for Ritalin have increased sixfold, that we give up *presuming* that vaccination benefits outweigh risks and have the courage to evaluate the evidence impartially? I would suggest to the Timmonses that their trust in the CDC Web site is misplaced.

If we look instead at the deteriorating health of our children—as I have done for over twenty-five years—the conclusion is inescapable that something is terribly wrong with the CDC's conventional wisdom.

Dissent from the prevailing wisdom is never well received, yet it is the only way that progress in medicine, or in any field, has ever been made. To quote one well-respected but unheeded dissenting voice, Eugene Robin, M.D., Professor Emeritus at Stanford Medical School:

> *We must be honest and admit that we do not know the impact of administering multiple, different vaccines on very young children or, indeed, on anyone.*[2]

Philip Incao, M.D
Denver, Colorado

1. *A Review of Selected Federal Vaccine and Immunization Policies*, Office of Technology Assessment, Washington, D.C., September 1979, p. 169.

2. Eugene Robin, M.D., "Some Hidden Dimensions of the Risk/Benefit Value of Vaccines" from the First International Public Conference on Vaccination, Alexandria, Va., September 1997.

A bibliography pertaining to Dr. Incao's article in *Renewal* may be obtained by sending a SASE to his office:

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(303) 321-2100

Profile: Henry Barnes

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City. He was a class teacher there for over twelve years, took an active role in founding the high school and taught history in it. He was chairman of the faculty for many years. Also, as a founding member and officer of the Rudolf Steiner Educational and Farming Association, Henry helped establish in Harlemville, New York, the Hawthorne Valley (Waldorf) School, the Hawthorne Valley (Bio-dynamic) Farm, and the Visiting Students Program at the farm.

Henry retired from the Rudolf Steiner School in 1977, and he and Christy moved to Hillsdale, New York, not far from Harlemville. During this "retirement" Henry has taught on occasion at the Hawthorne Valley School; served as chairman of the board of the Association of Waldorf Schools; completed a tenure as general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America; lectured and written extensively on Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy; and been the founding and guiding spirit behind *Renewal* and for seven years a member of its Editorial Advisory Board. His excellent biography of Rudolf Steiner, *A Life for the Spirit*, was published in 1997.

Henry Barnes has been actively involved in Waldorf Education for over sixty-five years. His contribution to the lives of thousands of children, parents, and colleagues and to the development of Waldorf Education in North America is inestimable.

Henry has been an asset to the Waldorf movement not only through what he has done, but through who he is. In his dignity and personal warmth, in the breadth of his activities—he is an avid painter as well as gardener—in his active and enthusiastic engagement with the world and its challenges, in his love of learning, and in his sensitivity to the spiritual dimension of life, Henry exemplifies that balanced development of "head, hand, and heart" that is the essence of Waldorf Education. ❄

Editor's Column

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Individuals or school communities in North America who are interested in helping—even in a very modest way—a Waldorf school in another part of the world have two main options at this time. The Friends of Waldorf Education is a Grant Fund of the Rudolf Steiner Foundation (an anthroposophical financial institution based in San Francisco), and donations can be made to the Foundation in support of the Friends' work. The Foundation's telephone number is (415) 561-3900.

Those interested in cultivating a relationship with a particular school through sponsorship or other support can write or fax the Friends of Waldorf Education directly. Communications in English are fine.

Address:

Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners
Köpenicker Strasse 175
Berlin D-10997, Germany

Fax: 011-49-3061-702633
Phone: 011-49-3061-702630
E-mail: freunde.waldorf@t-online.de

We truly possess only that which we freely share with others. ❄