

Renewal

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

FALL/WINTER 1993



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A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

With this issue *Renewal* takes, in terms of circulation, a big step. Until now *Renewal* has gone only to persons who were individual members of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Early last year AWSNA offered each Waldorf school the opportunity to purchase a blanket subscription which would cover all teachers, parents, and staff associated with the school. A majority of schools have responded positively, and so with this issue *Renewal* will be going to a greatly enlarged audience. We at *Renewal* are very gratified by the decision of the schools to bring this journal to all adults in their school communities. We take it as an vote of confidence that we have been fulfilling our primary aim: to disseminate interesting, practical and inspiring ideas about education to all persons committed to quality in our schools.

A "Thank You" to the participating schools and a special warm welcome to our new readers.

Sincerely,

Ronald E. Kotzsch

Editor

News From AWSNA

by David Alsop
Chairman

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America is made up of Waldorf Schools, Waldorf teacher training institutes and individual persons, working together to advance Waldorf education in America. Within the Association are a number of committees and focus groups each with a specific task. These tasks range from doing research on education to publishing books and periodicals, from doing consulting with Waldorf schools and initiatives to setting teacher training standards. Two timely and important tasks are long-range planning and the establishment of Waldorf schools in the public sector.

Late this year the leadership of ASWNA will meet in Harlemville, New York to frame the beginnings of a long-range plan. The goal is to develop by June, 1994, a written plan for the next five years, making clear priorities and tasks and establishing appropriate activities and programs. The Association faces an increasing number of increasingly complex tasks. It can continue to fulfill its role only with a clear and organized framework. The AWSNA leadership welcomes comments and suggestions about its long range goals and programs.

Also, a Public Waldorf School Task Force has been established, and in October had its first organizing and planning retreat. The Association is counseling and assisting public school officials who are exploring the establishment of Waldorf schools in the public sector. Those in independent Waldorf schools can substantially benefit from this interaction with public educators who are questioning education today and seeking new answers. This contact will help us clarify our understanding of education, and help us decide what are the essential and necessary elements that must be present in a school that calls itself a Waldorf school.

When *Renewal* was founded, the need to clarify and make explicit our ideas about education in general and about Waldorf education in particular was keenly felt. Also important was the desire to enter into dialogue with persons from other parts of the world of education. It is fitting and encouraging then that *Renewal* now will reach a very broad audience.

Thank you for your interest in Waldorf education and in *Renewal*.



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Perseus: A Dramatic Version of the Myth

By Henry Barnes

This piece is an example of an important and fondly-maintained Waldorf tradition - the teacher-written class play. This play, a rendering in verse of the Perseus myth, was written by Henry Barnes. Two commentaries on the myth, one by Henry, one by John Bloom, follow. Each examines, with a distinctive emphasis, the myth's significance for the evolution of the consciousness of humanity and for the development of the fifth-grade child.

SCENE I - *Isle of Seriphos. In a wood. Perseus alone.*

Chorus:

Murmurous music the green trees sing,
And dreams for men on their melodies wing;
Warm weave the shadows of noonday sun,
And sweetest pattern of sleep is spun.
To Perseus, son of Danae, the trees sing
their song,
And his soul toward sleep is slow-borne
along.

Pause. Enter Athene.

Chorus:

Now swift before his dreaming eye
Is a radiant vision come;
Cool is the light of her bright might,
And dimmed is the noonday sun.

Athene: Perseus! (pause) Perseus! (pause) Perseus!

Perseus: Lady, who art thou?

Athene: I am Pallas Athene, and I know the thoughts of men. To the souls of fire I give more fire and to those that are manful I give a might

more than man's. These last are heroes and I, by strange paths do drive them forth. But from the souls of clay I turn away and they fatten at ease. Which will you be, Perseus?

Chorus:

Perseus lovest thou fire or art thou of clay?

Perseus: I love the fire!

Athene: Then, Perseus, look here! (Swings her shield aloft)

Chorus & Perseus:

Medusa, the Gorgon!

Athene: Darest thou bring her head to me?

Perseus: Tell me where she is, O goddess, that I may go.

Athene: First prove yourself a man - then go in search of the Gorgon.

SCENE II - *Perseus enters the hall of King Polydeces empty-handed, without a gift. When he vows to bring back the Medusa as a present to the king he is mocked by the nobles and by the king.*

SCENE III - *Beyond the North Wind. Three Gray Sisters and Perseus.*

Chorus:

On Perseus speeds in armor of light
Into the North's deep darkness of night.
Death moves in the shadow of the icy sea
By whose frozen waters sit the Gray Sisters
three.

Sisters: Born of the deep,

Sleep's secret we keep;
Jealously guarding,

Time's course retarding.

What is warm shall be cold;

What is young shall be old.

Perseus: Ancient sisters, tell me the path to the Gorgon.

1st Sister: Who speaks our name?

2nd Sister: Who has entered our realm?

3rd Sister: We are but shadows - but this is a man.

Perseus: Ancient Sisters pray tell me the path to the Gorgon!

Sisters: Never! Never!

1st Sister: Give me the eye that I may see him.

2nd Sister: Give me the tooth that I may bite him.

Perseus seizes the eye.

Perseus: Cruel and proud old women, I have your eye! I will throw it into the sea if you do not tell me the way to the Gorgon!

Sisters:

You must go, foolish boy, to the southward,
into the ugly glare of the sun;

To Atlas, the giant, upholder of heaven and
earth, to the giant Atlas, you will come.

Ask his daughters, the Hesperides, who like
yourself are foolish and young.

And now, give us back the eye, for the time
of our speaking is done.

The sisters, mumbling repeat their first
chorus, fall asleep and turn to ice.

SCENE IV - *Perseus reaches the Atlantic island of the West, the Hesperides where the golden apples of eternal youth grow. He meets there the five young and beautiful Nymphs who consent to bring him to Atlas, their father.*

SCENE V - *Atlas between heaven and earth. Perseus conducted by the Nymphs.*

Chorus:

Heavy hang the heavens on the shoulders of
pain;

Atlas is weary of bearing the strain.

Perseus, the sword-bearer, being of light

Alone can bring Atlas the sweet sleep of
night.

Perseus: Giant Atlas, hail! Tell me I pray, the
road I must take to the Gorgon.

Atlas: Far away on an island I see her, writhing
in hideous beauty. Fair stranger, beware! Look
not into her face for you will be turned to stone.
Fair stranger, remember, beware!

Perseus: I too see the island and I will take care.

The shield of Athene shall watch for me,

And I in its brightness the Medusa shall see.

Atlas:

O stranger, if a presence divine gives you
victory,

Then return this way and show to me

The tortured beauty of her terrible face

That I, by her grace,

May be stone in this place.

O stranger let sweet death be my fate

For I am weary of this weight.

Perseus flies off.

Chorus:

Swift in the sunlight on sandals of speed

Doth Perseus, the hero, wing to the deed.

Below on the sun-warmed island of sand

Lie sleeping, the monsters, the hideous
band.

Pallas Athene, Goddess divine,

Speak strength in the heart

Of this great son of thine.

Now Perseus strike.

Like meteor's flight,

Down from your height,

Burning the night,

Swift be your fire!

Heavy sound falling offstage. Perseus returns bearing the head.

Chorus:

The Medusa is dead!
Fallen her head.
Tis Perseus who lives.
All honor be his!

Athene enters.

Athene: Well done, Perseus! Perseus, well done!
For through your manhood at last has come
The time when Medusa's moon shadow
May unite with the sun!

Henry Barnes graduated from Harvard College in 1933 and that same year encountered the work of Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf education. Deciding to become a Waldorf teacher, he did the teacher training in Stuttgart. After several years at The New School in England (now known as Michael Hall), Henry joined the faculty of the Rudolf Steiner School in New York in 1940. He taught there until 1977, for most of that period serving as Chairman of the Faculty. Henry helped found the Rudolf Steiner Educational and Farming Association in Harlemville, New York from which grew the Hawthorne Valley School. From 1974 through 1991 he was General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America. Currently he is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Association of Waldorf Schools North America.

Note: Anyone wishing the full text of the play can contact Henry Barnes at RD Box 373, Hillsdale, NY 12529



Perseus and Medusa

by Henry Barnes

This little play was written many, many years ago for a fifth-grade class in the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City. It adapts and dramatizes one part of the great Greek myth of Perseus and his conquest of the monstrous Gorgon, Medusa.

Like all myths, the story of Perseus has been told and retold in many versions. The version on which this play is based tells of a king, Acrisius, of whom it is foretold that he will meet his death at the hand of his daughter's son. To avert this fate, Acrisius has his daughter, Danae, imprisoned in the dungeon of a tower. Zeus, however, spies her there, and changing himself into a golden shower of rain, penetrates her prison and begets by her a child - Perseus. Discovered by Acrisius, Danae and her infant son are placed in a chest and cast out to sea. The chest is guided to the island of Seriphos where it is found by the fisherman, Diktys, brother to the island's king, Polydectes. Diktys and his wife raise the boy as their own.

Bearing a heroic destiny - as son of Zeus and grandson of a king - Perseus is visited in a dream by Pallas Athene who challenges him to undertake the conquest of her enemy, Medusa, the mortal sister of the dreaded immortal Gorgons. Medusa, once a being of transcendent beauty, has become a terrible presence - her hair has become writhing snakes - and she is endowed with the fatal power to turn a living being to lifeless stone. Perseus responds - hero that he is - to Athene's challenge. The goddess lends him her brilliant shield, instructing him to perceive the Gorgon in its mirrored brightness in order to slay her without himself being destroyed. Hermes joins Athene, to lend Perseus his winged sandals, the cap of invisibility, and a pouch into which he can thrust the terrible head of the Medusa.

In the version on which the play is based, Perseus comes of age as a simple fisherman's son, and is inspired by the divine power of Athene, goddess of intelligent wisdom, who sprang, fully armed, from the forehead of her father, Zeus. Perseus braves the

ridicule of Polydectes and his court in declaring his heroic intention to overcome the Medusa.

Perseus's journey in search of the Gorgons takes him to the ancient Gray Sisters, who penetrate the past and know the world of origins. They share but one eye between them - the common eye of an ancient insight - as they guard the secrets of the primeval world. Perseus forces them to tell him the direction he must take to the Gorgons. This leads him to the island in the West, to the Hesperides, the realm of mighty Atlas who bears the heavens on his great shoulders. His daughters, the Nymphs, care for the trees which bear the golden apples of eternal youth. The Nymphs guide the heroic youth to their father, and Atlas tells Perseus how to reach the Gorgons and begs him - if he succeeds in his mission - to return and put an end to his great weariness by turning him to stone.

Borne by the winged sandals, capped in invisibility, and bearing Athene's shield, Perseus discovers the Gorgons sleeping on the desert sands. Looking into the clear reflection in the mirror-shield, Perseus severs Medusa's head from her winged body with one clean blow, thrusts it into the pouch, and speeds away with the furious sisters, breathing revenge, in full pursuit. But the sandals of the divine messenger, Hermes, are too swift, even for the mighty wings of an ancient power. Perseus eventually reaches Athene on Olympus and surrenders to her the terrible fruit of his victory. Athene - with the skilled help of her brother, Hephaistos, the smith of the gods, places the Aegis, in the center of her shield. From here, the primeval cosmic wisdom, can now inspire a new consciousness for humanity on its long road toward freedom. And, from the headless trunk of the Medusa springs Pegasus, the winged steed of poetic phantasy!

For the fifth grader - ten going on eleven years of age - emerging from childhood into early youth, the story of Perseus is one of those great myths which accompany him or her on the road of human transition. An older, pictorial, mythic consciousness is giving way to reflection, to the dawning capacity to mirror reality thanks to a new ability to hold it at bay. The Medusa was a cosmic power, welling up out of the unconscious, atavistic depths. As long as she reigned untrammelled, the human being could never become free. She

had to become image, reflected in the bright shield of a newly awakening consciousness; her mighty head, severed from the body, which nourished and empowered it, by the clean, incisive blow of intellectual intelligence.

But Medusa is not destroyed; she is transformed, and can now look with quiet cosmic insight out of the center of the Aegis, Athene's shield. Under the aegis of a new wisdom, Medusa can be transformed into a deeper knowledge through the power of thought. And from her blood can spring a fantasy in which her ancient wisdom, freed from its petrifying power, can become a spirit of creative, playful imagination.

In the fifth grade curriculum, history, as we know it today, emerges from the all-encompassing womb of myth. The Vedas, the Sanskrit epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the tales of Manu and the Flood lead over through the Zarathustrian legends from the Zend Avesta, to the great mythologies of the river cultures of Mesopotamia and of Egypt. Language becomes inscribed in writing; the experience of the heavens embodied in star wisdom becomes astronomy; the earth herself is measured and "geo-metry" issues from the temple schools. Gilgamesh seeks the secrets of immortality, and fails. Osiris is torn to pieces by his brother Set-Typhon, and must be sought through the length and breadth of Egypt by his sorrowing sister-wife-queen Isis. Life, for the Egyptian, becomes a ritual-preparation to meet the risen Osiris after death.

And, finally, the fifth grader moves from Asia/Africa to Europe, from Egypt to Greece, to emerge in the full sunlight of the Acropolis and to hear from Homer that it is better to be a beggar on earth, in the land of the living, than a king in the realm of the shades. Aeschylus gives way to Sophocles and Euripedes; Socrates to Plato and to Aristotle; the ancient priest-king theocracy to the "polis" or city-state, to the "metro-polis," or "mother-city" and, under Alexander of Macedonia the dream of a "cosmo-polis" or "world-city" is enacted. Then the fifth grader is ready to return to school next year as a Roman citizen - a true sixth-grader, determined to have his/her rights under the law!

Medusa's Gift: Fifth Grade and the Developing Child

by John Bloom

Medusa's head, severed from its body, nonetheless retained its power to petrify those mortals who, either by fascination or coercion, looked upon it. It is a powerful mythical image -- this Gorgon's head with serpents writhing round it, a cursed substitution for the flowing ringlets of a young maid's hair. And, what a bizarre thought that this image may be an inverted portrayal of the human brain as we know it in modern times.

Any who apprehended Medusa directly faced a peculiar fate - being turned to stone, a sculpted image, pure mineralized form. But, Perseus learned his lesson well. Challenged to bring back the severed head, he was loaned the shield of the goddess of wisdom Athena, and admonished to look upon the Gorgon in the only way possible for survival - as a reflection in the shield's polished surface. Thus Medusa and, later, her head could be viewed solely as an image. What a philosophical lesson for an image-conscious culture was meted out in this mythic masque.

To grasp the connection between Medusa's head and the brain as an organism will take a long deep breath. Imagine those desperate writhing serpents, life-forces lessening, twining into a tightening mass, closing ranks - the serpent devouring itself, the Uroboros - emblematic of consciousness. This picture of transformation, if one can accept it as that, is useful because it has several parallels. The serpents were often portrayed as streaming out from the Gorgon's

head, almost as neurons sensing and responding to the outer world. Medusa, in her bestial state, was symbolic of old consciousness; she was a sensate being with no significant awareness of an inner world or self. But, of all the Gorgons she was the only mortal one - the one with a link to human life, the one whose blood had medicinal powers of life or death. Perseus's viewing her as a reflection (what he would have seen was a laterally reversed or inverted image), and the subsequent decapitation (isolation of the symbolic center of thinking) mark the evolution of modern consciousness in which the serpents instead draw inwards.

Perseus kept the head safely in a magical wallet (one wonders if it was skull-like in form),

but its power to petrify when seen directly was undiminished. Medusa's beheading was not a death at all, but rather a sacrifice of substance. It is more than coincidental that thinking and the act of

imagination incur a parallel physical sacrifice, in this case, of neurons. Like Medusa's head, the brain is a death-bound, devolving entity even as its intangible capacities grow. It is no less significant that the head of Medusa was destined to adorn Athena's shield. Wisdom is a wide reflective circle at the center of which resides the brain.

In this myth, once translated into terms ascribed to the development of consciousness, is an indication that the capacity for reflection is a matter of survival, and, further, that reflection

"Imagination and the ability to contemplate it by reflection are critical faculties in deep learning."

may be the only process available for the mind to encompass itself. Reflection and self-knowledge are intimately connected in a living, evolving relationship at the core of which are image and imagination. Awakening to image (as Perseus certainly did) is an incision into the complex yet seamless flow of imagination. What emerges is a detachment, an awareness of self looking at something. Perseus survived by the necessary acceptance of a mediated reality, one in which image is a crystallized imagination, an object of contemplation and reflection. Later in the historical development of consciousness this quality of detachment led to, and made acceptable to the mind, codified systems of representation. It is fascinating how dependent modern science has become on images for deepening our understanding of the natural

world, and how important storytelling has become as a healing force. Storytelling returns image (at least temporarily) to the state of imagination.

Imagination and the ability to contemplate it by reflection are critical faculties in deep learning. They are the brain's devices for linking understanding of the world with the understanding of itself -- matching external and internal experience. The myth of Perseus and Medusa, one example among many others, is a wonderful story rich with engaging images. Brought at the right time into a child's development, the story and its images not only touch the feelings but also inform the mind on an as yet unconscious level of its own history, its own evolution. The unfolding of these developmental stages has been clearly articulated by Rudolf Steiner who based the entire Waldorf school curriculum on them. Steiner's ideas have been corroborated by contemporary brain research and learning theory as compiled and assessed by thinkers such as Joseph Chilton Pearce.

The beginning of modern consciousness, the recognition that the mind has the extraordinary capacity to generate thoughts out of itself, appears in children around the age of ten or eleven when they are usually in the fifth grade. Paralleling this inner development, the Waldorf school curriculum at this time focuses on ancient history. Ancient history marks the beginning of historical consciousness as evidenced in the first records of human activity in biographies, historical accounts and in writings about the spirit-worlds and the relation of human beings to these worlds. The students experience the hieroglyphics of a new human capacity. Ancient Egypt, Persia, and China had languages still rooted in the pictorial. But by studying the development of cuneiform, the students can actually see the pictographic mode transform into abstract symbolic language, a series of pretty much uniform wedge-shaped marks representing a concept. Cuneiform tablets were portable and archived records of everyday life and a rudimentary history of human transactions.

The fifth grade concludes the year in the golden age of ancient Greece. This culture stood



Illustration from a main lesson on "The Greeks."

at the threshold between the old and new consciousness and left behind an extensive body of literature and cultural artifacts that expressed both phases. The birth of Alexander is a harbinger of the end of mythology and his life serves as a first history in which one witnesses the force of an individual destiny. Myths and the world of the gods were still living while science and philosophy emerged to solve some of the great existential and practical problems that still perplex us today -- the nature of matter and objective relationships, for example. Geometry and the codification of musical modes are examples of extraordinarily sophisticated abstract concepts which arose first out of experience then were transformed into systems which objectified that experience.

Given this picture of inner imaginative development as it is addressed in curricular content, it should come as no surprise to find that a child's brain goes through a major growth spurt somewhere between ten and eleven years old. It reaches the stage in which, as Pearce states in *Magical Child*, "the mind-brain should become its own source of possibility." The child at this time begins to recognize the concept of history as experience unfolding in narrative form, one that can be recalled, checked against memory, and even retold. While the students take in the awesome scientific and artistic accomplishments of the Greeks as evidence of that culture's own source of possibility, the myths, of which the story of Medusa and Perseus is but one small fragment, are giving them a sense for what is happening within themselves. Science evolved as the arbiter of the natural world, while myth remains as an imagination of the inner. Science and myth rarely share languages, and scientific metaphors tend to have more the feel of truth in our culture. The fifth grader, however, experiences them as equally valid.

Medusa's gift was the transformation of the power of reflection into the capacity for self-knowledge, a brain able to recognize and organize itself, and fully prepared to enter consciously into the world of matter. Fortunately, Perseus received two helpful and important items along with the wallet. They were a helmet which made him invisible and winged sandals which let him fly with

mercurial speed. The wallet with Medusa's head encased represents thinking. Invisible, he could feel his way anywhere, be present without appearance, sense without being sensible. His flight was will in action. None, of course would have been meaningful without Perseus's journey. And, conversely, Medusa's gift would have spelled destruction without the powers of all three.

*John Bloom is administrator at the San Francisco Waldorf School. He is the author of *Photography at Bay: Interviews, Essays and Reviews* published by the University of New Mexico Press in Fall, 1993. John has four children; one has graduated from the San Francisco Waldorf School, two are presently enrolled, and one is a future enrollee.*



Drawing from a Fifth Grade main lesson book.

Parenting the Adolescent

by Nancy Poer

This is the last of three articles on parenting. It is hoped they can be used as a series to aid in parent education.

Adolescents can be really wonderful. They are, at once, sacred and profane, maddening and funny, stimulating and challenging, archly witty and incredibly beautiful. In many ways they are even magnificent if we can stand back far enough to witness the drama of the emerging individual being born, sometimes chaotically, out of the cocoon of childhood.

It "is" true that teenagers can drive one almost crazy. For some reason the gods, in a fit of ironic humor, designed the process so that the argumentative, parent-challenging adolescent comes of age exactly at the same time that the parent, frazzled and frayed by life, is having to regroup and take another go at it. Just as adults are sifting through the ashes of unrealized dreams, a young upstart comes along and points out everything that's wrong with them. But the deeper, spiritual design is an expression of the wondrous and inexorable law of life: we are given ever new chances for growth. Through our adolescents we revisit the vicarious joy and pain of our own adolescence. All that was not then resolved in ourselves comes back to stir dismay and hope in our own souls. As the young people going through their development hold up a mirror, we get a second chance to face ourselves, admit our shortcomings, and redouble our moral striving. This is a key element for all involved. If

we are not working on ourselves, we can hardly expect our children to blossom as virtuous human beings.

Of course, during this process, our dear children are going for their "Master's Degree in Irritation" and their "Doctorate in Argument." And they have more vitality for it than we parents have. How they address a parent is often related to who is watching. I was with a mother who told her son to bring in the laundry. After a spate of whining and protest, embellished for my benefit, (After all one can't lose face by just immediately doing what a parent requests!) he brought in about a third of the clothes. When confronted by "Mom" regarding the remainder, he gleefully began the litany again, and said she hadn't "specifically" told him to bring in the socks!

A seasoned teacher once told me, "Parents are the whetstone upon

which teenagers grind out their will!" The adolescent can even enjoy the repartee. One of my children, with a charm-filled smile, told me that agreeing with everything would "take all the fun out of it." Like attorneys they hone their cases, designed to frustrate, exhaust and wear down the perceived opponent (the parent, who is opposing their glorious burst into life.) Teenagers believe they are ready to take on anything. Of course, that isn't so, and therein lies the rub and the challenge that makes parenting the adolescent an art form.

"Through our adolescents we revisit the vicarious joy and pain of our own adolescence. All that was not then resolved in ourselves comes back to stir dismay and hope in our own souls."

With the teenager, as with the younger child, it is only through deeper understanding that we can learn to live with and to appreciate them. Physical puberty is easy to observe. But the deeper inner maturation often escapes our awareness. The young person now has fully given birth to his or her inner soul forces. Emotions that once blew through like changing weather are now their own, and in the end must be "owned." It is a mighty experience to take hold of this inner life of passion, ranging from crass, driven sensuality and tender vulnerability to the questioning of one's worth and the most refined longing for compassion, service and exalted human love. If we write our teenager off (as the media encourage) as "hormones on feet," we drastically shortchange the higher essence of their humanness, their true being and their idealism that now seek to be born.

Adolescence is the time when the intellect matures and begins to fully awaken. This can be exciting to witness. Thinking powers are now released with vital force, and the young person realizes a new gift - an awakening to the life of ideas. Once I observed a young adolescent fondle the head of his beloved dog, his lifelong companion. But in that moment he was analyzing and thinking aloud about the way the dog's bones were moulded from eye to muzzle, about how and why they fit. Like an objective scientist he stood apart from that which he had loved and with new capacities, abstractly observed and pondered the design. But standing outside the relationship, and analyzing it, he was also separate and isolated.

How keenly young people experience the isolation and loss of 'oneness' with life as they more intensely experience individual separateness. The preciousness of childhood and the familiar warm cloak of imagination are gone. Where is consolation to be found? How does one now find and measure oneself in relationship to the world? Where is the connection to life again? For the babe it was the embrace of parents and the joy of growing that enfolded. For the schoolchild the connections came through imitation, fantasy, and the discovery of the world, with adults still providing the matrix of stability and understanding. For adolescents their affirmation, their



Students at a Waldorf high school sharing lunch. For the adolescent peer friendships are extremely important.

measure of worth is sought in the mirror of their peers, and in their success in the culture of their times.

This seeking can be alarming and poignant for parents. Participating in the "OK" activities and sports, having the "group" clothes and hair styles acceptable to one's peers, can become an all-consuming focus for the young person. While the adolescent's clothes today may appear to have been selected in a thrift store by a myopic bag lady, there is a definite style consciousness that every adolescent understands. They parade before the jury of their peers for approval of what is "bad." (Typically and perversely "bad" means "good" these days.) Are the jeans ripped strategically and is the baseball cap jammed down far enough on the eyes to be "cool?" At school and on the phone they talk endlessly about each friend and acquaintance, about who is and who is not "with it." If a teenager can earn the money for a

personal phone, I strongly recommend one. It frees up the main line and allows the endless conversations teenagers need. Besides they are home when telephoning and the parents know where they are. Underneath it all the teenager is trying to fit in and longing for recognition and respect, most especially from friends, and from the girl or boy of his or her dreams. The mercurial passions must find an outlet in idealizing and idolizing.

The young adolescent is intensely preoccupied with self, both in prideful fascination and scathing self-criticism. (Witness the hours in front of the bathroom mirror!) This extreme self-consciousness leads them to the perception that everyone else is just as intensely interested in them. This is the time they become embarrassed about parents. They want us to drop them off for an event a block away so as not to be seen in the old car or with the hopelessly out-of-date family members. It is no wonder that the feigned indifference of being "cool" is so practiced and admired among the young people. Not only is a "cool" attitude a cloak to protect oneself from imagined, as well as real, public scrutiny, it is an aid in holding a lid on the volatile soul life they now experience within.

"...they need adults who have a deep belief in them, who sense who they as teenagers truly are and who they seek to become."

Because teenagers can be so outrageous, or just because they represent a challenge to the adult as they try to express their emerging opinions, some adults try to level them with cutting put-downs and sarcasm. (Here I am not speaking of warm affectionate teasing which lets off steam for everyone.) This cruel leveling hurts and does more harm than can be imagined. Today's young people won't and can't take it. They need encouragement, not criticism. Even if they appear not to care, our words and values affect them deeply.

It is natural during these years for the adolescent to begin chipping away at parents as they pull away and try to realize their own identity. They are probing the depths of trust and jockeying for a position of respect. Here's where the parent needs the hide of an elephant and a quick and handy sense of humor. In fact, humor is their most versatile tool. If a parent hasn't developed a sense of humor by the time their child is a teenager, I would suggest a call to a local religious group for inclusion on the intensive prayer list. One needs all the help one can get! I wised up as I parented a succession of teenagers. By the last, when I was confronted with the standard line, "All the others are doing it and you're not letting me," I cheerfully went into a song and soft shoe routine: "Oh, yes, Kiddo, I am weirder than the average Mom!"

When our children were around thirteen we readily acknowledged to them that we could not really control their behavior. A life-altering experience can be had in five minutes if one is determined to have it. So teenagers like adults ultimately are responsible for their own lives. We believed our children could take that responsibility. We emphasized though the privilege of having a healthy mind and body, of being able to bear children and the responsibility this entails. Moralizing and arousing guilt are useless. But we were clear about our role as parents: to continue to set limits, to guide, to advise, to strive for mutual acknowledgement and for acceptable standards in living together, and to worry and care about them. That was, as parents, our job description. Teenagers may fight you outwardly, but inwardly they rejoice when you as parents care about them and stand for what you believe.

Adolescents will sneer at anything less than complete honesty. They may be hypocrisy-riddled themselves but they can't stand hypocrisy in adults. If you are concerned about a plan they have, tell them frankly: "I don't trust the situation. You may be able to handle some things but others who are influenced by you may not be able to." They don't want to hear this but know it is true. Sometimes you can just discretely plan attractive alternative activities.

One of the biggest problems is "the party" which tends to emerge in the seventh grade or earlier. Parties often go out of control because of uninvited guests. As partying today becomes more decadent, unsupervised parties, as well as individual dating, should be discouraged until common sense and self-direction is acquired. Nature abhors a vacuum. A house emptied of parents can attract a party through the wild, unorganized but amazingly effective grapevine of the adolescents almost before the adults are out of town. Parents need to stick together regarding what is acceptable behavior at a party. And they need to provide as many wholesome activities as possible. Confidence-building outdoor challenges, such as rafting and camping trips and ropes courses, are excellent at this time. Excursions and chaperoned slumber parties and other get-togethers which give healthy social contact but do not lead to the unsupervised "party" are also helpful.

Today young people and their parents are challenged as perhaps never before. Alcohol, accidents, depression, drugs, the lethal disease of AIDS and the epidemic of teen suicide all threaten adolescents. It can happen that parents literally fear for their children's lives. In addition, there is an all-out attack on the senses, even on the basic qualities of humanness. The fast-paced world of mind altering electronic media including seductive and addictive video games like Nintendo and Sega Genesis, violent and subhuman pornographic tapes and segments on MTV, Cyberpunk, Cybersex and the coming inundation of "virtual reality" machines, together with drugs, alcohol, et. al., all threaten to eclipse free, creative



A scene from a recent Waldorf high school production. Such musical and dramatic performances help young people to develop poise and confidence.

thinking, individuality, and healthy human relationships.

Parents need to be well-educated about all of these subjects and to share facts and insights with their young people at the brink of adolescence, before they are fully in it. The antidote to these threats lies in the development of a healthy self-confidence; in the valuing of individuality; in the cultivation of talents and capacities; in community service; in work and the assumption of responsibility; in religious-spiritual education; and especially in the arts, which nurture our highest potentials of human creativity.

As young people emerge into selfhood and have a broader horizon, they need strength, confidence, hope and a sense of self worth. Otherwise they can be overwhelmed by looming specters of a polluted and dying world, of senseless war and violence, and of irresponsible rapacious adults in business and politics. For adolescents to feel they can find a place in life and make a difference they need encouragement from everyone around them. Above all they need adults who have a deep belief in them, who sense who they as teenagers truly are and who they seek to become. Parents need to exude an iron resolve that these

young people are too valuable to have their futures destroyed.

Parents need to be awake to unexpected opportunities for deeper communication with their teenagers. They need to be open to hear their children's viewpoints on the world and on the issues of our time. They can know that pain is a part of the common journey. While physical contact with parents naturally wanes, a tired teenager often can appreciate a back rub or foot rub. Such an occasion may lead to a special conversation which otherwise might not have occurred.

One thing cannot be emphasized enough. Every teenager needs skills. Every child has a gift that needs nurturing and that can be developed to an adult level of competence. This can be in any field - music, art, writing, sports, cooking, dance, computers, math, carpentry, mechanics, counseling, child or elder care, or drama. While the young person must feel they have initiated the interest, the parent should do everything possible to support it. The self-discipline required in sports and in developing skills and talents hones and directs energies during adolescence. Parents should rejoice when the children exceed their abilities in a field.

My husband and I delighted in every potential our six children developed. We did not regard their talents as a threat to our status, but rather as affirmations of our parenting. Our children put us through lots of challenges. But they developed their capacities in higher education and in many others areas. The girls were active in everything from writing and teaching to skydiving and competing in world class triathelons, the boys in house building, mechanics, athletics, art and music. Most rewarding, both sons and daughters value relationships and have become devoted parents. And they have chosen for their children the same education we chose for them, Waldorf education.

I urge families to support every young person in taking responsibility, developing skills, and finding healthy work. Then if a certain profession is the child's destiny, further years of training may be added. All honest and caring human en-

deavor is honorable and worthy. Each young person needs to unfold his or her unique gifts from a broad range of experience.

We are all creating the coming world together. Young people today need adults who believe in the redemptive qualities that they, as young people, can bring into their own lives and into the lives of others. We have felt our own children and other young adults strongly upheld by the hope for the lifelong growth of their individuality, character and values, a hope that was carried for them by their parents.

These young individuals wanted and needed to be born just now in these difficult times to bring what only they can bring to the world. While they need our guidance they also have much to teach us. They are the next generation giving birth to new capacities for the continuing evolution of humanity. With faith in the ever-present help of the spiritual world, we should strive together for strength, hope and courage in an exciting and needy world, for our own sake and for the sake of our children who carry the future.

Suggested Reading:

On the Threshold of Adolescence Hermann Koepke

Between Form and Freedom, Betty Staley

Waldorf Education For the Adolescent, Rudolf Steiner

The Big Issues in the Adolescent Journey, Richard Hawley

Thirteen to Nineteen, Julian Sleight

American Replacement of Nature, William Irwin Thompson

Amusing Ourselves to Death and Technopoly, Neil Postman

Nancy Poer is the mother of three sons and three daughters, all Waldorf-educated. She has been a Waldorf kindergarten teacher and a special subjects teacher in the upper grades. One of the founders of the Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, Nancy has been on the faculty there for sixteen years. Three years ago, she helped found the Cedar Springs-Waldorf School in Placerville, California. Nancy lectures widely on parenting and educational issues, is well known for her painting and for her "threshold" work with the dying.

Discipline

By Betsy Sutton

Discipline. Few words arouse such immediate, intense and varied reactions: fear, pride, anger, relief, etc. Discipline is a topic on which many of us have strong opinions, especially when we are talking about the discipline of our own children.

But what is discipline? Why does it matter to us at all? For me to begin to answer this question I have to look at my own life and what part discipline plays in my day to day experience of the world. Like the majority of Waldorf teachers (and many other people) I have chosen to undertake several personal disciplines. Certainly teaching, like virtually all work, has many built-in disciplines needed to do the job. But to understand discipline it has been more useful to examine the "unnecessary" or voluntary disciplines I undertake on a regular basis. Whether exercising for physical well-being, engaging in artistic activity, or meditating for clarity of mind, one common thread stands out: connection to life. Each of the disciplines I undertake brings me, in some way, into a greater intimacy with life.

This seems to be a universal experience. Frequently one hears runners and other athletes describing the vibrance they feel running a race, or a potter describing the calm he or she experiences centering the clay. All told, discipline is more than a way to keep order, to make life manageable. It is a pathway to experiencing life in all its possibilities.

"It is our own inner discipline, our connection to life as we experience it, that nurtures the child's sense of discipline."

For many, the word discipline connotes a way to keep things down or hold them together. It is a word we often associate with being humiliated or insulted. However, we can view it instead as a celebration of our connection to life.

Even if we all agree on this, a flood of "buts" come rolling in. One of the biggest might be, "But the children haven't chosen to undertake the discipline of being in a class." Do self-discipline and imposed disciplines have the same outcome? I would say "no" for adults and "yes" for children. Adults whose discipline is regulated by others have given up their freedom and their responsibility. Of course they feel oppressed. But children have not yet developed the consciousness needed to be responsible for themselves; they demonstrate this to us again and again.

If you think of a stream it is obvious why it must have strong banks. Without them the stream becomes a flood or a swamp. It is similar for the child. For the child we are those banks. Children have not yet grown into the consciousness that will one day serve as a strong, self-directed river bank. Strong banks do not oppress them. Rather they give them the structure and support they need to move forward bursting with the zest and strength of a spring stream. While children are growing, it is up to us to provide the certainty and direction they need to live in an intimate and appreciative relationship with the world.

As individuals we focus on our connection to life as the core of our disciplining. But what

does this mean on a practical level in a faculty of over twenty working with two hundred children? In a school like the Waldorf School in Lexington where the children work with many teachers, how do we establish a base of consistency without forfeiting our personal connection to the limits we set? Since the children need both the certainty of dependable boundaries and the recognition of their individual needs the situation is more difficult.

The faculty of our school spent much of the last two years looking deeply into these issues. We began with two things: first, the assumption that we all want to have well-disciplined classes, classes where the children are attentive and respectful as an expression of their sense of well-being and enthusiasm; and second, that this was not what was happening. Everyone in the group was concerned about some aspect of the discipline in our school. To some our task was a fairly straightforward matter of establishing baselines. To others it was a question of how to relate more

"While children are growing up, it is up to us to provide the certainty and direction they need to live in an intimate and appreciative relationship with the world."

deeply to individual needs. As we worked together, it quickly became clear that we needed to ask some fundamental questions: What is the relationship of the group to the individual, both the teacher and child? What is the relationship of structure to freedom? What is fairness? What is reliability? The list went on and on.

A few things stood out clearly. Of greatest importance was our understanding that developing discipline in children is a process that takes place mostly within the parents and the teacher. It is our own inner discipline, our connection to life as we experience it, that nurtures the child's sense of discipline. Our self-discipline must be the model that sparks discipline in the children.

Who we are and how we connect to life is just as important at home. Joseph Chilton Pearce,

a renowned child development theorist, believes that children are born with a full set of capacities for living, but that these must be activated by a living model. From this viewpoint we can see that if we set clear limits for children, then we model the ability to set limits. Instead of squashing their independence, we actually activate their capacity for setting their own boundaries.

As individual teachers we all know that it is the certainty of our guidance, our belief in what we bring the children that makes discipline work. I work with this quality of certainty by looking back to a boundary whose undeniable quality I know. The image I hold vivid is that of a stream. If you put your foot in a stream you get wet. Whether you are "good" or "bad," "nice" or "mean," you will get wet. It is a very solid, simple sense of boundary. It is neither punitive nor degrading. It is directed and it is connected with life. When I find myself struggling with unclear, ineffective limits, I think of the stream. I know what it feels like to connect with that sense of wetness, that quality of limitation without judgment.

Each of us in the faculty study group began believing that we had a straightforward solution to the problem of discipline. However, as we explored and argued and pleaded, each discovered more and more subtle implications of what had seemed simple and self-evident - our own viewpoints. We saw the limits of each of our viewpoints, and began to look more deeply. We looked at the issue of discipline from different angles, from that of the child and from that of the teacher. We looked at it in terms of our desires, for ourselves and for the children, as a class and as individuals. We considered our fears. We approached the issue by describing what was happening in each classroom day to day. In the process we came to understand our own approach and one another's.

After many months we were surprised to find that we had come back to where we had started. We had come back to a commitment to have a well-disciplined school, one where we are all attentive and respectful as an expression of our sense of well-being and enthusiasm. But we had come back with a deeper understanding and with

some specific recommendations on how to implement this understanding.

As we approached the end of our group work we realized it involved two stages. One, exploring a group understanding of the issue, we had already completed. It was the more important one. It gave us a base on which to work. The second was to ensure ongoing communication concerning difficult situations in and out of the classroom. This required that we define certain behaviors on the part of the teacher and the child which must always be presented for general discussion. The problems which must be brought involve open defiance, rudeness, and harm to people or property. Anything can be brought, but these things must be. We did not want to formulate a specific response to these issues, only to say that they must come before the full faculty for discussion and possibly for group action. To do this we established a Faculty Consultation section in our Thursday meetings.

This has been working well so far, and as it turns out, quite a wide range of questions and issues have come up for discussion. This opportunity for discussion seems to support our ability to work as individual teachers with individual children and still build the sense of stability and strength as a group. It was an inspiring, difficult process to begin at the beginning, to dig through assumption, bias, expectation, hope and fear, and to find our way back to the beginning again, but with a deeper understanding and more strongly grounded.

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The Morning Verses

In all Waldorf schools the day begins with the children and teacher reciting together a morning verse. In some Waldorf schools other translations of the original are used.

Morning Verse

For Grades One through Four

The sun with loving light
Makes bright for me the day.
The soul with spirit power
Gives strength unto my limbs.
In sunlight's radiant glance
I reverence, O God,
The human power which you
So lovingly have planted
For me within my soul,
That I with all my might
May love to work and learn.
From you come light and strength;
To you stream love and thanks.

Morning Verse

For Grades Five through Twelve

I look into the world
In which the sun is shining,
In which the stars are sparkling,
In which the stones repose;
Where living plants are growing,
Where sentient beasts are living,
Where man, soul-gifted, gives
The spirit a dwelling place.

I look into the soul
That lives within my being.
The World-Creator moves
In sunlight and in soul-light,
In wide world space without,
In soul-depths here within.

To Thee, Creator-Spirit,
I will now turn my heart
To beg that strength and blessing
To learn and work may grow
(for learning and for work)
Within my inmost being.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

September 26, 1925

Translated from the German by Arvia MacKaye

Discipline and the Development of the Child

by Thomas Poplawski

In recent months newspapers and magazines have carried many articles about discipline and the quondam parents and teachers find themselves in regarding this question. A generation of adults who feel that their own disciplining in childhood was harsh and even damaging has explored abandoning the old rules, discarding the belt and the paddle, and treating children as equals.

Alas, the experiment has failed and its residual effects are still reverberating through society in the form of falling educational standards and myriad social ills. While there

has been some improvement in communication between adults and children, discipline continues to be a source of confusion and a misunderstood burden to adults.

A common observation is that a well-disciplined child learns most easily, is most open, and is one in whom inner beauty can most harmoniously unfold. The desire not to "break" the child in the process of disciplining, however, as well as other misunderstandings interfere with creating a discipline that brings about this optimal development. Meanwhile, parents are abdicating their responsibility for discipline which makes the teacher's job impossible. On the other hand, parents feel that too much is expected of them. We all need to understand discipline in a manner that will help overcome these barriers to a healthy, balanced approach.

In Waldorf education a basic concern is to work with the inner life forces of the child, guiding them in a way that brings about a wholesome growing up. In the earliest years of the child's life

these forces are mostly involved in forming the physical body. With the formation of the second teeth, the tremendous task of physical development of the first years of life slows down. These growth forces are now available for other tasks, especially for thinking and development of memory. Throughout the life of the child (and later, the adult) freeing of these forces through the

progression of life stages is of prime importance in human development. They must be wisely and responsibly guided or else problems occur. While in aeons past the angels may have had a

role in guiding these forces, the responsibility for this task now lies with the ego and with the will of the human beings, with that part of us we call "I". In a child, this ego is only to come to maturity around the age of 21, a principle recognized in drinking and voting age laws. Hence, the guidance of the young person's energies becomes the responsibility of those who have a developed ego, the adults around the child.

Because these adults cannot always be present in helping in this manner, the development of habits is the only way of responsibly "tying up" these energies. Developing habits in the child is one of the prime tasks of discipline. As evidenced in the psychological studies of Lawrence Kohlberg, moral development comes only eventually. Until the ego develops the sense of morality, habits are there "to hold the fort".

Habit development requires the rhythmical repetition of a behavior (or avoidance of a behavior). Good habits involve the doing of some things as well as the avoiding of others. Since the

"When we give our full attention to something, we call on our resources of intelligence, feeling and moral sensitivity."

child does not have the will to accomplish this repetition on its own, the adult is left with the task of repeatedly reinforcing the habit until it "sticks".

Good habits involve various aspects of the child's being. These include habits of hygiene and safety - care for the body; habits of manners, impulse control and social sensitivity (like sharing with others) - care for the soul; and habits of consideration for the earth and its creatures, sensitivity for beauty, the truth, and goodness - care for the spirit. In this sense, discipline is not just the forbidding of objectionable behaviors, but the rhythmical channelling of these energies in the direction of good habits. Some forms that channeling this may take include regular mealtimes and their accompanying chores, the rhythm of feeding and caring for pets, evening prayers and stories, as well as the longer rhythms of family festivals and rituals.

One question at this point is, "Why not let Nature guide these forces?" - which is the premise in Rousseau's Noble Savage. Indeed, this has been the experiment of the last two decades, letting these surplus forces go "free," unguided, not led to refinement but left to "express" themselves. What has become apparent is that without an adult ego to guide them, the life forces of the child often sink to the lowest "savage" or animalistic level rather than developing to maturity or ennoblement.

For the development of the child's ego to occur, it is necessary that in the formative years, the adults around the child accept the responsibility for guiding. Adults must accept being in charge, acting as stewards of the child's and the adolescent's development.

Owning this responsibility must include the delineation between the adult world and the child world, and recognizing the different rights and responsibilities of these two realms. Just as children are not expected to assume the responsibilities of adults, they must be protected from assuming the rights of adults prematurely, protected from the freedom to choose diet, bedtime, entertainment, etc. Family therapists long ago discovered that the strengthening of this

boundary between the adult and child worlds often resolves many discipline problems.

Instinctively the child desires the help and attention of the adult ego, and will agitate and throw tantrums until it can attract it. This is because the stray, undisciplined forces confuse the child, make them anxious, disturbed and generally unhappy. Deep down inside every child wants to be a good child but cannot achieve this alone. A child who is acting up or acting out is struggling with what to do with these excess energies. The adult, through again and again attending to the child, helps the child to order and tame these energies thus restoring inner harmony. Without this assistance the younger child can display an attention deficit, low self-esteem, or the feeling of being neglected and unloved.

Allowing the forces free reign is not really liberating at all when the child lacks the wisdom and self-discipline to manage them. This situation can be compared to giving a palette full of colors to a very young child and asking it to creatively express itself. In very rare cases we may discover a prodigy able to produce something of aesthetic value but generally the result is a bit of a mess. However, with patient instruction over the years, a work of merit and beauty can be produced. Later, in adolescence the undisciplined forces can create havoc. Undirected, these "vagabond" energies overwhelm the developing moral sense and tend to take either an outward or inward direction. The former is seen in increasing teenage crime, irresponsible sexual activity, and vandalism to name a few. Inwardly, the manifestations take the form of depression, sometimes even leading to suicide, and the increasingly common route of addictions, to drugs, alcohol, food, shopping, or electronics (television, Nintendo, computers). In all the addictions there is a binding of the excess forces by the repetitive use of an object, a materialistic habit which permanently binds these forces to things and to our instinctual nature.

Our parents' generation has been characterized as having been not only strict in discipline, but rigid and inflexible. Along with good habits, other not so good habits were engendered in children - habits of fear, shame, anger, or lack of

sensitivity to others. As such, this is not the route we would like to return to in trying to find the right approach to the challenge of discipline. The difficult task is to find a balance between too much and too little as either extreme has the effect of impairing the child in later life. A right discipline means tying up these excess forces or channelling them in such a way that the individual can "untie" the habits in adulthood, and utilize these forces in work and self-development. Too hard a discipline tends to lack heart and leaves the child's energies tied up in neurotic complexes which require a lot of work to transform once the child grows up. With too little discipline, there has arisen the situation about which sociological researchers are now making dire predictions. The next generation to enter the work force is expected to be unmotivated, difficult to work with, and poor in concentration and basic skills. This sobering prospect is mainly attributed to the change in child-rearing practices.

When we give our full attention to something, we call on our resources of intelligence, feeling, and moral sensitivity. The child looks to the adult for attention, for it is precisely this capacity to "pay attention" that the adult has and the child lacks. Paying attention is how we determine the use of our energies and the kind of self we are cultivating, the person we are learning to be, and the person we are helping the child learn to be. It is this force of attention which shapes and guides the life forces. As such, our ability to be centered in disciplining the child and in filling its emotional needs involves the granting of more attention to family than our society has lately been willing to give.

Cultivating ourselves and our children's selves demands that we protect ourselves from those things that disturb and fragment this attention -- all the busyness, all the nonessential driving, all the things we "have to do." In increasingly difficult economic times, two working adults feel hard-pressed to make the time and space to attend to creating a warm and beautiful home environment and to dealing with the wearisome demands of helping the child form good habits. As the sociologist, Robert Bellah, has warned, in *Bring Along Your Compass, Family Therapy Networker*,

November 1992, the failure to make this commitment will lead to "a generation of listless, anxious people unable to concentrate on anything very thoroughly or unwilling to plan coherent lives for themselves because they have not had the attention they needed as children."

In a recent issue of the *"Utne Reader"* (May 1993), Amitai Etzioni reduced the dilemma to a choice between work and family; giving the family its due usually means someone sacrificing career opportunities. If a couple chooses to have a family (and today it is very much a choice), then the "having it all" mentality of our time needs to be reviewed.

Slowing down, calming the hectic pace, making life simpler creates a space for family life, for a family rhythm. At the core of Waldorf teacher's training is the recognition that an inner practice of slowing down and creating a centered space, of regular meditation, is necessary to remain attentive through the school day. Psychologists are increasingly recommending such practice for all of us not only to reduce stress and promote relaxation but to allow us similar access to an inner source of balance. From this inner attending we can better sense when discipline is too much or too little. We may even find inspiration for the creative discipline required by an individual child, for each child's needs are uniquely individual.

Like the injunction that disciplining the child requires self discipline, we see that giving attention to our children requires attention also to ourselves. The rewards of watching them grow can be augmented by watching ourselves develop as we sometimes painfully grapple with this task of discipline. The creation of a space, an almost sacred space for ourselves, for our family, sheltered from the maddening pace of the world, requires, perhaps, the greatest discipline but yields the most satisfying result - a place where the seeds we most cherish can germinate, grow, and eventually flourish.

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Teaching Poetry

by Christy Barnes

Waldorf pupils leaving the twelfth grade carry with them, one hopes, a sense of the world's poetry from ancient times up to the present. This sense grows with them daily and monthly from kindergarten on. But there is a magical opportunity in which the teacher has the creative freedom to concentrate on poetry's most essential elements. This is in the tenth-grade "History of Poetry" block.

Memory

During this main lesson block, each morning for half or three quarters of an hour, the students can drink in the nature of poetry through the spoken word as they practice a poem in chorus and then listen to one another speak self-chosen verses from a group of poems selected by the teacher. Soon they have absorbed from each other much more than their own assignment. Some are eager to pass off their poems quickly; others need more time. Helped by this situation, the teacher can, without too much trouble, foster an atmosphere of lively volunteering. It is, of course, the poems the children learn earliest, in the elementary school, which stay with them longest. A good teacher will provide the children through the years, with a substantial but varied diet: enough salty ballads, a scattering of peppery verses, and poems with beauty to give the children vision, and poems with "iron" and substance to make them sturdy and build them a backbone. Then there should be no chance of wispy, undernourished, anemic souls!

But poems assigned the children as pieces of educational baggage or as specimens only to be analyzed will lie within them undigested, ready to be spewed forth on a test and soon gratefully forgotten. Poems, like loaves of bread, need to be

baked through by the voice, enthusiasm and experience of the teacher. Then they can be taken up "by heart" by the students and circulated through their whole being to become a permanent part of themselves. This fund of poetry, living in the subconscious, gives the children a general sense of wealth and health. And it may be drawn up to consciousness from time to time for inspiration, pleasure, consolation - or as a measuring stick against which to evaluate new poems, experiences and perplexities.

Imagination

The images that have given color, drama, humor and joy in the elementary school can become something more to tenth-grade adolescents. As their inner life deepens and opens out, they are ready to grasp the conception that the sun, a star, the human eye, the face of a daisy, a luminous thought are all inhabited and imbued by the same out-radiating principle: a vibrant form and force invisible to the physical eye but clearly apprehended by the inner, unseen eye of the soul -- an eye that can see through to the unifying principle that creates analogy after analogy. This inner eye the poets have named "imagination."

Through its lens we can look, for instance, into the realm of time, into the no-longer-visible past, and visualize the causes that have led to our present deeds and situation. Learning from these, we can penetrate into the not-yet-seeable future -- hopefully in time to adjust and amend our plans to more beneficial and less disastrous ends. Through microscope and telescope we have explored the endless miracles of the dead quantitative world. Through our own individual soul-scopes, we can begin to search and research the qualitative forces "in-forming" living worlds,

and discover some of their healing, creative, non-polluting attributes.

We cannot change our physical eyes except through the use of glasses or an operation, but the lens of imagination is pliant and subject to the growth and guidance of our individuality. We can gradually correct its subjective astigmatism and aid the development and exactness of its "far-sight," "near-sight" and "in-sight." These, then, can lead us to varied discoveries, both inspiring and practical, and can reward us with their ability to reveal accurately the nature of seemingly unsolvable dilemmas. The poet sees the most potent characteristics of his own times and depicts these for us sometimes with an almost mirror-like faithfulness. But he is also one of the first to see, as from a watchtower, the dawn of a coming age and help to reflect the light of its influence into the present world.

Morality

The great literature of the world fills our imagination with the joys, sufferings, customs, religions, and aspirations of people very different from ourselves. Our understanding widens, our judgement matures, our compassion deepens. Shelley tells us in his *Defense of Poetry* that:

A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively: he must put himself in the place of another, of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own.

The great instrument of moral good is imagination; poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral life of man in the same way as exercise strengthens a limb.

If we look with the eye of imagination deeply enough into the nature of a Buddhist, a Hebrew, a Christian, of a Russian, a Chinese, a Serbian or a Croat, what do we discover? In the inmost center of each, we see a human being like ourselves. All persons of all races, nations and creeds upon our entire globe are united by their native humanity, by their common destiny. Once assured of this kinship, we can become free to welcome, explore and enjoy the infinite variety in which this single universal fact expresses itself.

Must we forever concentrate on the inconveniences of our differences instead of drawing pleasure from the wealth of our diversity? Must all gardens be planted with one kind of flower only?

There is nothing so demoralizing as to live in a world without meaning. But each new analogy - and analogy is a great part of the power of poetry - each analogy reveals unifying harmonies in the world around us and makes life meaningful. This meaningfulness can satisfy one of our deepest longings and fill us with relief, purpose and zest for life.

Music

In poetry, imagination is carried by the dancing feet of rhythm, the melody of vowels and the sculptured motion of consonants. These can move the listener to joy or melancholy, to a warlike or gentle mood. The motions of the spirit, the "e-motions," move on the waves of such rhythms, and thus great music can give our feelings a finer, fuller, more compassionate strength -- unless the heart is too hardened or inert to respond to it. Shakespeare has told us in *The Merchant of Venice* that:

The man that hath no music in his soul
Nor is not moved by concord of sweet sounds
Is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted.

Poetry and music can become a powerful counterforce to such "dullness" and "untrustworthiness." Prose conveys imagery but a poem is a thought become imagery and music. Poets and scientists alike have recognized that music works as a powerful harmonizing force in both nature and in man. Pythagoras spoke of the music of the spheres which, the ancients said, formed order -- or as the Greeks called it "cosmos" -- out of chaos. Kepler, the astronomer, proved mathematically that harmonic laws underlay the motion of the planets. The German physicist Chladni demonstrated how musical tones form symmetri-

cal patterns in salt or loccapodian (a substance made from flower pollen) strewn on a copper or crystal plate. But such tones build no order or beauty if the "plate" of the human soul is leaden. Then only a strong kick will awaken it. Today poetry and music are used therapeutically in hospitals, whereas noise is known to cause illness.

Thomas Carlyle wrote: "All deep things are song. Poetry is musical thought. See deep enough and you see musically, the heart of nature being everywhere music, if you can only reach it." And in Shelley's lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* we find this poem:

He gave man speech
and speech created thought
which is the measure of the universe;

And the harmonious mind
poured itself forth
in all prophetic song.

And music lifted up
the listening spirit
until it walked --
exempt from mortal care,
god-like
o'er the clear billows
of sweet sound.

The high school boys and girls learn how to scan these "clear billows." They learn about rhyme, alliteration and figures of speech. They learn also about the subtleties of tone color, which is the more varied and informal repetition of sounds occurring - not regularly as do rhyme and alliteration - but unpredictably anywhere within stanzas.

But no one can really plunge into the element of poetry unless he makes poetry himself, throws himself head over heel, into the waters of language and learns to swim in its rhythm, music and flow. This swimming comes to its full glory with revision and rewriting: choosing just the right word, avoiding any unnatural word order, tuning and matching the sounds, shading and

heightening the gloom or the glow, awakening a whole bee-swarm of rhymes, each suggesting a new image or idea, then weeding away the weaker ones. We must be sure that we have at last fished up and landed the unifying conception that we have all along been trying to catch - a thought so alive and dripping with imagery and tone that, as Carlyle says, it is itself music. Let them try a number of verse forms: ballads, triolets, haiku, sapphics, Spenserian stanzas and a sonnet before they write in free verse. Free verse does not have of itself, the restrictive demands that exercise and strengthen the muscles that give form and force to a poem. Free verse though can hold form and force if the writer has already won the requisite powers.

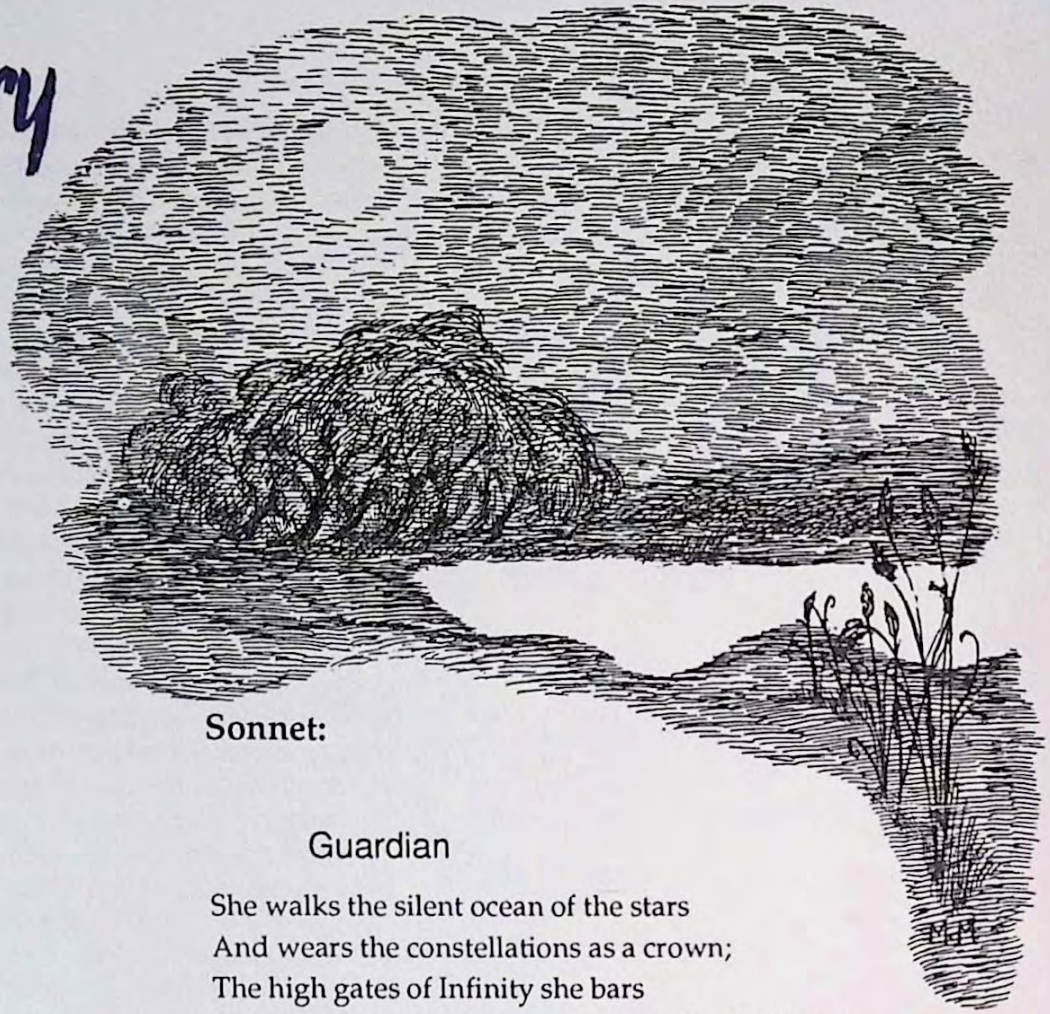
The very best of such student work can be gathered in a yearly literary magazine. But it will only do its job if the teacher keeps it continually at heart and urges those with an especially promising poem or piece of prose to work it over still again and again. The student editors need to be encouraged and trained to base their judgements on positive, not negative grounds, and the teacher will do well to reserve the right of final veto even though she seldom or never uses it. Then the magazine can be held up with pride to the student body as an inspiration and a criterion for good work.

Each teacher will find his or her own way to let the music of poetry live in the memory, imagination and moral fiber of the students. Then we can say of a Waldorf graduate: Let all such souls be trusted!

Christy Barnes, a native of New Hampshire, attended Smith College and graduated from Rollins College in Florida. Christy met Anthroposophy through her sister, Arvia MacKaye Ege, in 1928. She was present in Dornach at the opening of the second Goetheanum. While studying speech in Dornach she met and married Henry Barnes in 1939. Upon completion of her training she received her diploma from Marie Steiner in 1940.

Returning to the USA just before World War II, Henry and Christy began teaching at the Rudolf Steiner School of New York, Christy as a class teacher and later as high school English teacher. For many years Christy was faculty advisor for "The Key," the high school student literary magazine of the Rudolf Steiner School. Christy has published a book of poetry called "Wind in the Grass." Christy has also served as editor of the Journal for Anthroposophy. Christy is now working on a new volume of poetry as well as a book about the teaching of English which AWSNA will publish in 1994.

Poetry



Sonnet:

Guardian

She walks the silent ocean of the stars
And wears the constellations as a crown;
The high gates of Infinity she bars
Lest mortals in bright heavens gaze should drown.
Where time is lost in Nothingness, where turns
The wheel of Fortune in majestic arc,
She rules the realm of every sun that burns
Its tiny candle in the boundless dark.

She gives the galaxies their distant glow,
And sees the world, the dying and reborn;
The age-old mysteries which men would know
She knows, but silent keeps; and men forlorn,
Gaze up into the deep and brilliant skies
And wonder why she smiles and shuts their eyes.

Melissa Merkling, who wrote this sonnet as a high school student in the Rudolf Steiner School of New York, is founder of the Star Meadow Kindergarten, a Waldorf kindergarten in Bridgewater, Connecticut.

The sonnet is a fourteen line poem written in iambic pentameter. This is a Shakespearean sonnet with a rhyme scheme of ababedcd efefgg.

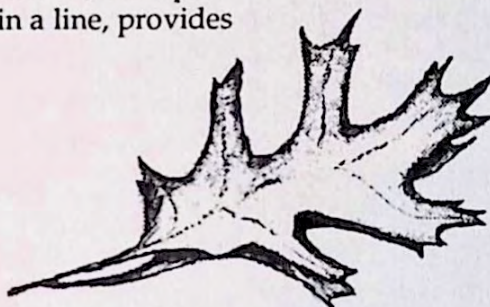
Anglo-Saxon Verse Form:

Autumn Birch

Glad and gold are the blazing birch-blossoms,
Lemon-leaves shining above the white earth
mother,
Tossed by storm-serpents, slashed by hail
stones
Or laughing in sun-splashed, sea-dappled
skies.
Free and fiery they fly in their fury
Then downward drift, a snow-storm of sun-
light,
Clasping the earth in crackling clear gold.

Tenth-grade boy

In Anglo-Saxon verse alliteration, the repetition of consonant sounds in a line, provides structure.



Limerick:

Modern Computer

There was a computer named Zerk
Whose intricate head went beserk:
"I find that I need
A replacement. Indeed
I'll put all these humans to work."

Tenth-grade girl

A limerick is a humorous verse in which lines one, two and five rhyme and lines three and four are a rhymed couplet.

Triolet:

A butterfly
Upon a stem -
Fluttering by -
A Butterfly
Laughs at the sky
A glist'ning gem -
A butterfly
Upon a stem!

Eleventh-grade girl

A triolet is an eight line poem having a rhyme scheme of ab aa abab. The underlining here indicates that the entire line is repeated.

Haiku

The Brain

Intricate structure
Housing for the soul of man
Center for our thoughts.

Tenth-grade boy

The Haiku, a Japanese form, has seventeen syllables arranged in three lines.

Free Verse:

Door

If time, our ancient mother, would,
even if just for a moment,
stop to take a breath;
stop to think,
to reflect on ages past,
I would be content.
Her memory does not fail her.
She knows the birth of history.
She knows the prehistoric giants.
She erected the pyramids and
built the roads in ancient Rome.
She has seen all rise
and eventually she must push down
all she has done.

In her most recent remembrance;
how clear, how crisp
the image stays.
She holds our hands
as we look into the dawn.
She guides us on the path of life.
Our every step, every word is structured.
She loosens her bands.
Now we develop character -
personalities as we move through our lives;
learning more of what she knows;
ready to move on.

But now she must cut the bands.
We MUST be free, but alone. That door
which she was inching us toward -
That we were eager to pass through,
Now we dread its coming -
She now flies us to the portal
Into the world.

So now, Mother of generations past,
I am inclined to ask you to stop;
stop short on the threshold
and give me a moment to reflect;
to breathe and to reminisce;
to love and to hold
to cherish for my short life
and retire your job for the day,
today, only one day in a thousand life times.
And let myself step through the door
by MYSELF, willingly and in full knowledge
of the unknown ahead.

Written by Davis Samas, upon graduating from Eighth Grade at
the San Francisco Waldorf School, June 1993



Foreign Languages in American Waldorf Schools

by Michael Navascués

For many of us involved in the foreign language field, it is clear that adolescence is an inappropriate time to begin foreign language study. The pervasive American practice of cramming language learning into two to four years of high school and college has not proven effective for many students. It is obvious that too much is attempted in too short a time at an age when most teenagers have lost a good deal of the child's natural imitative capacities, and moreover have become engrossed in the distracting problems of personal and social identity. Why not begin at a much earlier age, as most other countries do? In our still largely monolingual society, the antipathy that many Americans feel toward language learning could surely be countered by a sympathetic, living experience of another tongue during the flexible, formative years of childhood. Waldorf schools, with their developmental concept of education, have for many years offered a viable approach to this problem.

There are some interesting similarities between the activities in a typical Waldorf morning main lesson and what goes on in a lower grade foreign language class. In their language class the first and second grade Waldorf children might recite together a poem that is being memorized, sing a simple folk song, play finger or circle games, and practice rhythmical counting. There might be a story period in which the teacher presents a dramatized narration of a short fable. Although

the children will not understand the precise meaning of many words and phrases, they will absorb the feelings and the different sounds and rhythms of the other language. Clearly they are capable of enjoying the drama, suspense, or humor of a simple tale and can capture its essence if it is carefully presented by means of gesture, mime, and pictures or other visual props such as puppets or toy animals.

At this stage, more important than an exact comprehension of meaning, is the fact that the children are listening to the sound and soul of the other language. On a small scale, this is akin

to what babies do when they absorb the mother tongue out of their environment, listening, watching, mimicking, and then finally and miraculously, creating their own meaningful language. Of course, in

"A person who sympathetically enters into another language opens doors in the soul, becomes sensitized to other peoples and other modes of experiencing reality, and not least of all, learns to understand his or her own language better."

comparison with the baby's constant exposure to its native language, the amount of time devoted to language learning in a Waldorf elementary school is all too brief. Much can be accomplished, however, by introducing children to other languages at an early age before their natural linguistic capacity declines. To begin with, the young schoolchild retains for a number of years a marvellous ability to imitate - and Waldorf teachers are well aware how much young children learn by imitation. Thus, most children can readily attain an excellent pronunciation of the foreign language. Sounds which an adolescent or an adult might find difficult, impossible, or just plain em-

barrassing to reproduce, the child delights in imitating and repeating. An innate sympathy for the differing qualities of the other language is naturally imparted to the young child in this way.

Each language is unique and to a certain extent one-sided or limited in its expressive capabilities. The child who develops a personal and positive relationship to another form of speech can acquire something very important that would otherwise be lacking if he or she remained in the limiting confines of the native tongue. A person who sympathetically enters into another language opens doors in the soul, becomes sensitized to other peoples and other modes of experiencing reality, and not least of all, learns to understand his or her own language better. The new language provides a subtle, contrasting counterbalance that helps offset the one-sidedness of the person's native tongue and culture. In Waldorf schools, the curriculum calls for two modern languages to be taught to each child. This creates a more complex and fruitful three-way balance. In the first grade language class, everything is learned by listening, group repetition, and continual recitation, an approach we might call "oral-choral." The children are not exposed to any foreign language writing for the first two to three years. Ideally, English is not used at all, or as little as possible. The teacher needs to create a living language environment by building with the class a varied repertoire of verbal resources which the children listen to, recite, sing, or use in games. To assist the children in comprehending what would otherwise be unintelligible sounds, the teacher adds a variety of visual images in the form of gesture, mime, pictures, and any kind of props that would convey meaning. Rudolf Steiner, founder of the first Waldorf school in 1919, was a very early proponent of methods in some ways similar to the "direct," the "audio-lingual" and the "natural" approaches developed in later decades by language educators.

Little by little, through the varied techniques that the foreign language teachers elaborate and the class practices, the children's immediate environment penetrates their consciousness through the sounds of two other languages. Nature with its changing seasons, her animals and

plants, rivers, meadows, and mountains; the human body with the foods and clothing that it needs; society with its families, homes, and towns; time and its division into months, days, and hours; daily routines and favorite pastimes--these are familiar aspects of life that concern the child and that slowly she learns to apprehend through the linguistic soul of different cultures.

In the second grade, the teacher begins to ask for individual responses and recitations, making the children gradually aware of the social function of language. Each one will have to learn to listen attentively in order to comprehend and respond with accuracy. Now begins the long and often arduous process of trying to communicate more actively in the language. By the end of third grade, some classes are ready to begin writing a few phrases and words with which they are familiar. Fourth grade marks an important transition toward the written language. The teacher may begin by writing on the board some of the songs, poems, and phrases previously learned orally. The pupils copy the text in their notebooks; later they will be asked to read aloud what they have written. Familiarity with the content of the text helps the child develop a natural, unstrained relationship to the written language. A drawing might accompany the text, and by the end of the year, each child will have a brightly colored collection of songs, poems, mini-stories, plus a section for vocabulary and grammar.

Grammar is introduced in a more conscious way in the fourth grade. An effort is made to present grammar in an imaginative, lively manner, avoiding the lengthy abstractions of traditional grammar books which often stifle pupil interest. Verb conjugations may be first learned orally by reciting the forms rhythmically while clapping, singing, gesturing, or marching. The teacher may lead the class in an inquiry about some aspect of a written sentence, and then the rules will be deduced, formulated, and written down. The Waldorf developmental philosophy stresses the importance of the ninth or tenth year as a significant turning point in the child's consciousness. A new sense of separateness, of self-awareness, begins to awaken in the child. Steiner believed that during this transformational phase, the child

could be helped in part by the study of grammar. Awareness of the structural elements and rules of language can fill the need for rational structure and coherent form. But Steiner warned against teaching grammar pedantically and in excess. The child can easily be repelled by such an approach and may end up suffering indigestion!

As in the English grammar lesson, the pupils make their own grammar notebooks from the material presented by the teacher. After they have begun to grasp the basics of writing and reading, the children are asked to write things of their own, perhaps a brief letter, a description, or a short summary of something that has been read or experienced. Practice in reading progresses gradually each year, so that by junior and senior high school, samples of representative literary works can be read. Along with literature, the pupil studies the geography and elements of the history of the countries whose languages he is studying. Here again, fruitful parallels and connections with the main lesson subjects can be found, revealing the wisdom of a holistic educational philosophy. Reciting and conversational practice in the foreign language continue through the grades, but the demands of the grammar, reading, and writing components of the curriculum require a major share of attention and an extended time-frame.

The decision about which languages to teach is made by each school faculty. Steiner himself, when lecturing in England, declined to give an opinion on whether German and French should be taught in the first English Waldorf school. He indicated that the teachers would need to make a decision based on the circumstances of life. German and French have been the "traditional" languages in many of the established American Waldorf schools. Increasingly, however, there is a perceived need to offer Spanish. Not only is there a centuries-old Spanish presence in North America, but the destinies of various Hispanic peoples have become more and more entwined with those of Anglo-Americans. Russian and Japanese have also been offered in some schools. As for the classical languages, some Waldorf schools have followed the European model by offering an introduction to Latin and/or Greek beginning in the fifth or sixth grade.

Among the Waldorf schools that continue through high school, one finds many different arrangements in the modern language programs. Some schedule intensive language blocks, perhaps offering one language the first half of the year, and the other for the second half. At least one school allows the option of dropping one modern language so as to acquire greater depth in the other. Other schools offer a third language starting at the elementary level. This allows transfer students without foreign language backgrounds to start at a beginning level. One highly commendable feature of Waldorf high schools is the opportunity for students to participate in an exchange program abroad, spending a few weeks to a few months with a family and attending the Waldorf school there. This can be one of their most exciting and memorable experiences. If the stay in the foreign land is of several months duration, a rapid and wonderful increase in language fluency can be achieved. Along with the joy of making friends in a distant land there is the deep satisfaction of being able to put to practical use the language skills that have been practiced in class for years.

Parents sometimes wonder why, after a number of years of foreign language classes, their children don't come home and begin speaking in one of the languages, or perhaps cannot answer a question posed to them in the language by someone outside the class. The answer partly has to do with the relatively limited exposure to the foreign language. Try to imagine how long it would have taken your child to learn English if he had been allowed to hear it for only ninety minutes a week, and not at all in the summer months! Although two lessons per week per language seems to be the norm in the Waldorf elementary schools of the United States, three times a week is considered more desirable, and some schools have moved in that direction. It must also be kept in mind that children develop the "receptive" or "passive" listening skill more quickly than their speaking ability. Moreover, a class full of children will of necessity spend a lot more time listening than speaking individually. This can be partly offset by the teacher planning group activities, which can range from brief situational dialogues to putting on a play.

One of the major problems confronting foreign language programs in American Waldorf schools is a scarcity of qualified teachers with some knowledge of, or at least interest in Waldorf pedagogy. (With the recent rapid increase in the number of Waldorf schools, this scarcity extends, of course, to all areas of teaching.) In North America there are no formal training programs designed specifically for foreign language teachers. Some language instructors, however, have been through a regular Waldorf teacher training program, and this broad pedagogical base can greatly assist them, as they develop their foreign language specialty. In any event, personal study and research, and visits with experienced Waldorf foreign language teachers become indispensable for the novice instructor. Occasional workshops provide a much needed forum for exchange of ideas, information, and teaching techniques. Compounding the difficulty in recruiting teachers is the fact that foreign language instruction in the public elementary schools in the United States, despite a recent growth of interest, has had a very short and spotty history, and is virtually nonexistent in most school districts. There is thus no pool of trained primary school foreign language teachers from which a Waldorf school might draw.

Within the framework of general goals and teaching approaches, the Waldorf foreign language teacher has a great deal of freedom in developing the language program and selecting the appropriate materials and techniques. The program must be created by the teacher week by week, and evaluated as to effectiveness. This is a weighty responsibility, requiring initiative, creativity, perseverance, careful preparation, and a willingness to work with restless youngsters who have trouble understanding all those strange sounds!

In view of these circumstances, it is not surprising that there is not only a scarcity but also a high turnover of Waldorf foreign language teachers. No doubt part-time status and weak salary structures in some schools are additional factors. Some schools have been obliged to curtail or delay the start of foreign language programs. And too often schools must scour the area in

search of replacements for departing teachers. Stability is needed for a foreign language program to flourish, and a lack of stability in that program can affect the overall health of the school. Like the learning of some other skills, the sequential nature of language learning requires a very gradual unfolding of the child's abilities. In order to thrive, foreign language programs require careful long-range and day-by-day planning and coordination by a skilled and imaginative faculty dedicated to the Waldorf ideal. The Waldorf schools of North America face myriad challenges, but one may hope and expect that in the future more conscious attention and effort will be devoted to attracting, preparing, and retaining foreign language teachers.

These challenges are a reflection of our society's general indifference toward the study of other languages and cultures. Of course, this situation does not detract from, but rather highlights the many fine achievements of foreign language teachers and their classes. Waldorf schools stand committed to implementing cohesive foreign language programs (in not just one but two languages) from the first grade through junior and senior high school. This might not be so unusual in some other parts of the world, but in our society it is nothing short of remarkable and the Waldorf schools stand in the vanguard of foreign language instruction in North America today. The many talented, enthusiastic, and dedicated Waldorf language teachers deserve the full support of their school communities, and recognition in the broader educational sphere. They meet a profound need of our fragmented world and psyche.

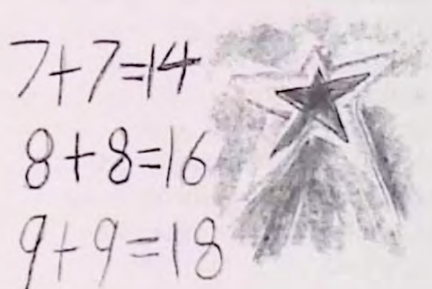
This article reflects the teaching of foreign language in the United States only.

Michael Navascués is a professor of Spanish language and literature at the University of Rhode Island. He also teaches Spanish to the fifth-grade class at the Meadowbrook Waldorf School in West Kingston, Rhode Island. Michael recently spent a semester sabbatical visiting Waldorf schools and studying their approach to foreign languages. He has been working on an annotated bibliography and a curricular overview of foreign languages in American Waldorf schools.

Mathematics and the Elementary School Child

by Arthur M. Pittis

In ancient times the study of mathematics was open only to those on a path of spiritual initiation. Mathematics was seen not only as a practical science, supportive of trade or engineering, but rather as a path to spiritual knowledge by which the laws of the cosmos and the inner being of Man were revealed. Both the inner world of the human being and the outer world of phenomenon are still represented by mathematics. It becomes our challenge as educators today to discover the appropriate methods by which the study of mathematics can cultivate and balance the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing.



If you watch a young child count objects, you quickly recognize that for the first dozen or so there appears to be a pretty good grasp of quantity and number. If you look more closely however, you see that the child has only counted what can be physically held in the hand or beheld by the eye. A table covered with pebbles can have any number from a hundred to the awesome, mighty million. One of our duties as teachers of mathematics in the elementary school is to show the children how to joyfully reach out into the world with the "limb" of conscious thinking and to take hold of that which they could never physically reach.

In the opening mathematics block of first grade both arithmetic and geometry are introduced through an examination of the first dozen or so cardinal numbers. What is "oneness," "two-ness," "threeness" and so on, and where are they found in the world? One child will say that oneness is seen in the sun. Another will recognize it in the circle, and a third will declare that it is in God. Someone else might point out that there is only one teacher in the room. The class then will begin to realize that there is only one of each of them, and that oneness also exists in our abilities to say "I." In this way the qualities of the various numbers are examined, and the geometric forms and rhythmic patterns which exist in Nature become apparent. Through this type of activity the descriptive and differentiating power of numbers is revealed.

The first computational work starts with whole numbers and shows the derivation of their constituent parts. Initially the class works with natural objects which are aesthetically pleasing and upon which imaginations can be built. Polished flat stones are a practical choice; they neither roll nor attract rodents. Various types of computation involving the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division can be explored using these objects.

A classic Waldorf teaching story tells of the four number gnomes: "Plus," dressed in green, "Minus" in blue, "Times" in yellow, and "Divide" in red. Each has a characteristic temperament and manner of working. Plus is greedy and loves to heap up quantities. Minus is sad, always losing things and finishing with less. Times is swift and magical, increasing quantities at a marvelous rate.

And Divide is fair, always settling arguments by seeing that each gets an equal share. These characters can animate a full year of learning and help lay firm foundations for all future work in arithmetic.

The second grade curriculum introduces place values, carrying and borrowing. It explores further the beautiful rhythmic patterns and designs which can be discovered through different counting patterns. Imagine a great counting room with sets of shelves, nine per set. The shelves are marked "units," "tens," "hundreds," "thousands," and so on. Across from them sits the "Total Master." A tireless stream of counters place single object after single object on the units shelves until all nine are filled. With the tenth object the units are cleared into a "tens" sack which is "carried" to the first "tens" shelf. On and on this operation goes, up through the place values. At any time the Total Master can tell exactly how much is possessed simply by reading the shelves. Many variations on this activity can be devised as it evolves into the introduction of long addition. After several weeks the mechanics of adding are well understood and large numbers are freed from being seen as abstracted symbols. They become instead like Russian nesting dolls whose quantitative reality exists hidden within successive shells.

Subtraction with borrowing is a bit trickier, largely because it is not commutative, i.e., the direction in which the operation is performed cannot be reversed without affecting the result. Children must learn that when they add 3 plus 4 the the result is the same as when they add 4 plus 3, but that subtracting 3 from 4 gives a different result than subtracting 4 from 3. Thus it is important that all operations be made visible. An effective method is to divide the class into small groups and then distribute loose and bagged stones. Present the problem 23 minus 15. While some children can do it mentally it is important that everybody recognize that it cannot be done physically until a "tens" sack is opened, its contents "borrowed" and combined with the three units. Now it is simple to subtract first the units, then the tens. Work can then evolve into written exercises. The practice of working in columns and the im-

portant necessity and courtesy of neatness will follow naturally. Work with long multiplication and division can follow in third grade, with close attention being paid to mastering the repetitive steps by which such problems are solved.

The study of measurement forms the heart of the third grade arithmetic curriculum, and the human being serves as the basis from which all work develops. We are very fortunate in the United States still to be able to experience the human being as the source of our nonscientific measurement. Experiences of the inch, foot and yard are possible within our own bodies. The first joint of our index finger is discovered to be roughly one-twelfth of the length of our foot, and our foot to be one sixth of our height. The distance from the tip of our nose to the end of the extended arm is equal to a stride, that is, a yard. The children's taking and comparing of all these measurements helps develop a new understanding of what it means to be a human being.

A very important and practical social question becomes apparent when each child measures the same object. The measurements differ. Individually everyone is right, but like the famous elephant and blind men from Hindustan everyone is also wrong. The solution is found in the establishment of a ruler. At first the teacher's foot can be used, followed by the conventional foot. Now there is an objective standard which can be used to establish "true" dimensions. This is a great relief. Fairness can be established and social harmony can prevail.

The children now see that people need to be in agreement regarding units of measurement. But even more deeply they realize that measurement is a human creation, discovered in the ratios of our physical body and used to divide and differentiate the wholeness of the physical world. This realization serves as a pedagogical mirror for the child as she or he passes through the crisis of the ninth-year change. We, ourselves are the measure of the world. The human being is profoundly important. Such a feeling and thought can serve as a cornerstone for a healthy definition of self as the anti-human forces of materialism assault the young person full force.

Each day in a Waldorf school begins with speech, music and movement work which awaken and enliven the children. Rhythmic counting and arithmetical games play an important role in these exercises. Waldorf school children probably do more counting than any other students in the world. They count forwards and backwards by every multiple practical, and when they have mastered that, some even get to count by square and prime numbers. One can easily equate all this counting with torture by information, but children in the Waldorf schools love to count. This seemingly pedantic activity of counting is elevated through the engagement of the children's natural love for rhythm and geometric forms.

In one typical counting exercise the class is arranged in two concentric and facing circles. Opposite each child is a gap. The teacher establishes a beat -- soft, soft, soft, hard, then says "Three, two, one, start!" Each child moves forward four steps, clapping/shouting "four" on the final beat. As this is done one circle contracts and one expands. Then each child moves to the right, step, step, step "eight," and accordingly both circles move to the right. Then the children move backward, step, step, step, clapping/shouting on "twelve!" and causing the circles again to expand and contract. Finally, the movement is to the left, and each child arrives home on "sixteen," having walked a small square on the floor. Ninety-six is a good terminus. Then the exercise is done backwards to zero which is home. Through dozens of such rhythmic activities repeated daily over several years all the times tables and number facts are learned by heart.

In fourth grade the nine-year old experiences a difficult transition, a change of consciousness. The child experiences for the first time a sense of separateness from the world. Its sense of inner wholeness is weakened, the pain of individuality is felt and the world seems fractured. The Waldorf curriculum for the fourth grade directly addresses this transition and when taught imaginatively can be therapeutic. Just as whole numbers which have been broken into fractions can be restored, so can the children's inner peace and security be regained.

Because of this intimate relation of fractions to the inner life of the nine-year old they are introduced in fourth grade and not before. Exercises involving the folding and cutting of paper geometric shapes can make clear the relation of the parts to the whole. The use of paper "pie plates" can illuminate fractions and their corresponding values. Visually-based representations can help the child understand the four arithmetic function in fractions and to learn to do them in written form. Three weeks of careful hands-on work is worth a year of talk.

In fifth grade all previous work is reviewed and consolidated. Decimal fractions, the metric system, prime and square numbers, simple factoring, estimation and word problems are introduced. But it is the introduction of geometry which provides the first formal expansion of mathematics beyond arithmetic.

To find an origin for the study of geometry we turn to ancient Egypt and the yearly flooding of the Nile. When the waters subsided crops could be planted, but the land first needed resurveying. This task was the responsibility of priests who had been initiated into the sacred knowledge of measurement which the Greeks later named "geometry," or "earth writing."

The class can be taken outside to measure and enclose part of the school yard. Clothesline, stakes and a designated "ruler" are all that is needed. Through the use of these simple tools and of their own reason, the children can discover basic geometric relations. By laying out grids the class can explore square measurement and the formulaic relation of the sides to the enclosed area, learning why the square, given a set perimeter, is the most efficient way to enclose an area. They can also construct a circle using a stake and length of cord and begin to understand radius, diameter, circumference and the number "pi."

Throughout the middle school years one block per year is devoted to geometry. The compass and straightedge are introduced in sixth grade. One must be exacting with these tools, and the students discover that truth and beauty are inseparable. A carefully divided and colorfully

shaded circle has an aesthetic quality which reflects the accuracy of its construction. Smudged points, wavering lines, variable radii and imprecise connections speak eloquently. But of course, tools will be blamed; rules will be ignored or called dumb, and personal responsibility will be denied, yet the truth is on the page. The geometric work of sixth grade can be the most important block for the pre-adolescent student if it can instill a deep respect for the lawfulness of form and the beauty of lawfulness.

The instinctual sense of gain and profiteering is very strong in the eleven/twelve-year old, and should be counterbalanced by the powers of discernment and judgment. Thus the arithmetic curriculum for the sixth and seventh grades focuses on the practical business operations which govern the flow of monies and commodities. This block provides a valuable grounding in the importance of trust and responsibility, the social virtues which must govern the exchange of funds and products. Accountability is an important inner challenge, and the study of business math gives images which show the importance of individual and social responsibility.

Towards the end of sixth grade or early in seventh grade the first powers of abstract thinking have begun to awaken. Now algebra can be taught, first its historical roots and then its basic language and equations, as well as signed numbers, factoring and operational properties. Balance and reason are at the heart of algebra. The simple three part equation can be seen as an apt metaphor for the adolescent. When one term or operation is misinterpreted or ignored the whole equation falls out of balance. Similarly it is the profound difficulty of keeping the three soul faculties of thinking, feeling and willing in dynamic balance which leads to much of the turmoil in the adolescent's inner life.

Throughout the elementary grades nothing has been taught abstractly. Rather the human ability to recognize and inwardly create mental pictures has been brought into activity and nourished. When Waldorf educators speak of imagination, it is this process, not "make-what-you-will" fantasy, which is being described and

developed. The following image from eighth-grade geometry can give rise to a wonderful imagination of the whole curriculum's intent.

After the study of triangles, parallelograms and the Pythagorean theorem in seventh grade the geometry curriculum examines volume. In our school the eighth-graders construct the five Platonic solids - the cube, tetrahedron, icosahedron, octahedron, and dodecahedron, - as the culmination of the whole elementary geometry curriculum. This task requires exacting attention if the final product is to be true and beautiful. Through repeated, identical constructions of the same figures complex two-dimensional figures are made. By careful folding and gluing, the flat figures can then be lifted into three-dimensional space. Where there was once nothing, space is now enclosed by the beautiful physical representation of an idea.

The construction of the marvelous Platonic solids can be seen as a metaphor describing the transformation each child has experienced through the Waldorf school curriculum. Over the years many disciplines have been explored and abilities developed, as a deepening understanding of self has been brought forth in each child through the experiences of the curriculum. Now all these experiences give rise to a new developmental stage of life in which thinking raises itself up by its own power of will, stands upright, and steps boldly into the world of ideas

Suggested reading:

Julia E. Diggins, *String, Straightedge and Shadow*. New York: Viking Press, 1965.

Arthur M. Pittis is in his thirteenth year at the Waldorf School of Baltimore and is a member of the Eastern Regional Committee of AWSNA. He has taken one class from first through eighth grade and is currently teaching fifth grade. In addition he has taught middle school arithmetic and algebra as a specialty subject for the past eight years. Prior to receiving his teacher training at the Waldorf Institute he worked as a biodynamic dairy farmer at the Kimberton Farms School in Pennsylvania. He is presently pursuing a master's degree in dramaturgy at Johns Hopkins University.

Teaching Physics in the Middle School

Personal Experiences and Observations

By Rolf E. Hummel

In my thirty years as a university science and engineering professor, I have always wondered about the apparent lack of basic understanding of fundamental physical principles among American-educated students. Why doesn't the average student know the functions of simple everyday devices, such as a light bulb, an electro motor, a transformer, a battery, or a resistor? Moreover, why do these students apparently lack the joy and excitement of discovering the laws and secrets of nature? Part of the key to answering these questions undoubtedly must be sought at the secondary education level. Thus, I welcomed the opportunity to teach a "physics block" in a Waldorf school in which the children are intensively exposed for the first two hours of the morning of each day for three to four weeks to a certain study area, such as chemistry, biology, history, literature, etc. It is the aim of a Waldorf school to combine, whenever possible, various study areas. For example, one strives to interperse physics with elements of philosophy, art, or history. My assignment was to introduce the 7th and 8th graders to the foundations of mechanics.

Our first endeavor was to explore the laws of pulleys and tackles. For this, we hung a pulley from the ceiling, threaded a rope around the roller, and attached bricks of equal size and weight to each end. Quite naturally, and to nobody's surprise, the bricks held each other in balance unless someone pushed or pulled on one of them. Next, we fastened one end of a rope to the ceiling and threaded the other end through a movable pulley on which we hung a brick. The free end of the rope was then strung around a fixed pulley which was attached to the ceiling. This end of the

rope was connected to only half a brick. Then came the question to the class: Why is it that half a brick can counterbalance a full brick? The question was not immediately answered by the pupils. Several incorrect suggestions were proposed, including magic or tricks. We took our time. After half an hour of experimentation, guessing, and steadily increasing excitement, I asked one student to hold one of the bricks in each hand and to move the hands up and down. Suddenly she exclaimed, "I have to move one hand a much greater distance than the other hand!!" Now everyone wanted to try it. This took another 15 minutes or so. Finally, everyone seemed to have shared the



Eighth-grade students in a Waldorf school perform a physics experiment using a pulley system and human weights.

revelation that a movable pulley halves the necessary force while it doubles the travel distance. Philosophical remarks entailing how a weak person can double (or quadruple) his strength were discussed in order to bring this physical phenomenon into a larger, that is, human, context. At home, the pupils drew colorful pictures about the day's events in their own notebooks.

On another day, when studying the laws of an inclined plane, we wondered how the ancient Egyptians might have brought their heavy stones to the top of a pyramid. We discussed that the Egyptians might have piled up a ramp, consisting of mud from the Nile River, beside a pyramid on which they pulled their load. This ramp decreased the necessary force compared to a straight vertical lift. We studied the appertaining laws by experimenting with some simple devices, including a cart, an inclined plane, and some weights. The students eventually discovered for themselves that the smaller the slope, the less force is necessary for the lifting process.

On still another day, we investigated the laws of levers. At first we constructed a seesaw from a 4x4 wooden beam and a wooden block. Then two approximately equal sized children sat on the ends of the seesaw. After playing with this device for some time, I selected the heaviest boy and a small girl to sit on the opposing ends and we moved the fulcrum closer to the boy. You should have seen the excitement when the balance was eventually reached! Then we moved the fulcrum very close to one end of the beam. Over the shorter end we placed the crossbar between two legs of a table. At first, one child sat on the table and could easily be lifted by someone else by pressing on the longer side of the lever. Then another child sat on the table, then another child, and so forth until the pupils requested that even I had to sit on the table. Still, all of us could be lifted by only one child. We discussed how one person can move a large crowd. Then we talked about other types of levers. The children were allowed to go around the room and onto the school grounds to search for devices which function on the lever principle. It was interesting to observe how many levers they found, such as a nutcracker, a light switch, a clothes pin, etc.

The greatest excitement occurred on the day when we dropped bricks from various heights of a fire escape and measured their descent time. It came to most everyone's surprise that the bricks increased their velocity the longer distance they fell. We found the laws of free fall. We discussed that hundreds of years ago Leonardo da Vinci made similar experiments (supposedly involving the inclined tower of Pisa). Then we learned about other inventions and works of art created by Leonardo.

These experiments (and many others) which we performed were quite simple, inexpensive, and "transparent." In my view, there is no need to derive complicated equations in lower grades of secondary school physics and to make the pupils solve mathematical-physical problems. This can largely wait until high school and college. It often bores the students and eventually drives them away from science or engineering. The main task in secondary schools is instead to bring awareness of the laws of physics to the younger generation and to excite them.

Today, the children and I look back with a great deal of pleasure and pride when we browse through the class books which each student prepared in the afternoons as part of their homework assignment. No science textbooks were presented to the pupils. Their learning came through observations, experimentation, and creating their own journals. It is hoped that this experience will lay a seed in these young souls which might eventually cause some of them to want to understand more of the mysteries of science.

Rolf Hummel is a professor of Physics in the Department of Materials, Science at the University of Florida in Gainesville. A native of Stuttgart, Germany, Professor Hummel attended the Waldorf school in Stuttgart, having as teachers some of the men and women who had been appointed by Rudolf Steiner in the first years of the Waldorf movement. Professor Hummel has been in the United States since 1964 and was the principal founder of the Gainesville, Waldorf school.

School Portrait: The High Mowing School

by David White

High Mowing School is located among meadows and woods on a broad hilltop in the southern part of New Hampshire. With a surrounding panorama of mountains, valleys and thick forests which includes a view of Mount Monadnock, the school is spectacularly situated.

High Mowing is special in other ways. It is the third oldest Waldorf school in America, having been preceded only by the Rudolf Steiner School of New York (1928) and the Kimberton Farms School in Pennsylvania (1941). It is the only Waldorf boarding school in America. It is the only Waldorf high school that is not directly connected with an elementary school. And it is perhaps the only Waldorf high school where classes - academic classes as well as those in arts and crafts - are mixed, where students of the different grades routinely learn and work together.

High Mowing's roots go back to the Edgewood School, a John Dewey school in Greenwich, Connecticut. Beulah Emmet, president of the trustees of the school, invited Dr. Herman von Baravalle - a teacher from the original Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany - to join the faculty. Through von Baravalle's influence the school adopted the Waldorf approach and curriculum. Mrs. Emmet, sensing a special mission, decided to build a new school at High Mowing, her family's summer home. With Dr. Baravalle, other Edgewood Faculty and Ann Friedl (today still a member of High Mowing's faculty), Mrs. Emmet



moved to High Mowing to create a school from a farm.

It was the summer of 1942, World War II was raging and it seemed an insurmountable task to found a school. As Sabina Nordoff, a teacher of eurythmy who joined the school several years after the founding, observes, "It is hard to fully appreciate the idealism, vision, courage and energy that was required of Mrs. Emmet and others at that time."

But little "miracles" occurred to indicate that the school was indeed meant to be. Despite a strict wartime building moratorium, permission was received to renovate the barn and the house. Despite a shortage of glass, a science laboratory was built and outfitted. And enough junk metal was found to build a required fire escape. On September 21, 1942, High Mowing opened its doors to forty-eight students in kindergarten through the twelfth grade. A few children came from the area but most were boarders, many having come from the Rudolf Steiner School of New York.

From its early days High Mowing was blessed with a distinguished faculty, which included such well-known figures in the Waldorf world as Karl Ege, the last teacher appointed by Rudolf Steiner to the Stuttgart school; Dr. Hermann Poppelbaum and Dr. Friedrich Hebel (both of whom later became members of the Vorstand or Executive Committee of the Anthroposophical Society in Dornach, Switzerland); Isobel and Frederick Karl and many others.

Mrs. Emmet, as founder, principal and main benefactor, played a strong guiding role in the life of the school. In the small chapel, a renovated farm shed, she presided over the weekly Sunday evening service, consisting of music, a reading of poetry or prose and a talk. Mrs. Emmet taught a "History through Art" course, using works of art and photographs she had collected on her many journeys abroad. She taught literature and directed the children in presentations from Shakespearean plays. Working with the eurythmy and music teachers, Mrs. Emmet staged an annual Nativity in music and mime, and a yearly May Day all-school production, often of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

On the night of January 18, 1970, a fire broke out in the main faculty house and in a few hours destroyed part of the school and most of Mrs. Emmet's personal possessions including much of her art collection. The whole school narrowly escaped destruction. A carved stone lamb, thought to have originated in China in about 300 B.C., and felt to be a symbol of the school's endurance, was rescued from the flames, however. Mrs. Emmet, in her eighties and nearing retirement, calmly announced the next day that school life would go on as usual. The lamb resides today

in a chapel built in 1972 by High Mowing students.

Today, High Mowing is a high school, with grades nine through twelve. (The lower grades were gradually dropped during the school's early years.) It has presently fifteen faculty members and eighty students. Almost all the faculty members live on the campus. Some forty of the students board at the school, coming from eleven states and from four foreign countries -- Japan, Germany, Brazil, and Chile.

On the surface the High Mowing curriculum is typical of a well-equipped, college-oriented private high school. Students study ancient, modern and American history, English, world literature, geometry, algebra, calculus, physics, chemistry, biology, foreign language, computer science and third world studies. There is a physical education program, based both in the immediate outdoor environment, and in the gymnasium built by students in the 1950's. There is also a student work program, in which students help with the maintenance and improvement of the school, and do service projects in the larger community.

The social center and dorms at High Mowing School.



How the curriculum is presented though reflects a particular understanding, based on indications by Rudolf Steiner, of how the adolescent is developing and what he or she needs in each year to continue to evolve into a mature, responsible and aware human being. Douglas Gerwin, a teacher at the school for eleven years, observes:

"In the ninth grade, observation and description are very important. The student is ready to learn about the natural and human worlds and about the variety of phenomena that exist in them. In the sciences the ability to observe and to describe is trained. And in a standard art exercise the students draw pictures of a plant or stones without looking at the paper, letting the eye directly guide the hand. They study modern history in order to understand how the world around them has come into being. "The tenth grade is a time for the development of judgment, the ability to contrast, to compare and to make a balance. The children study acids and bases, the proofs of Euclidean geometry, and in embryology and ancient history learn about the origins of things. They learn to write an "essay," a "testing," to hone their ability to form opinions.

"The eleventh grade students are ready to explore the invisible world and to develop "sense-free" thinking. Beginning to hunger for the invisible, they are ready to go beyond the visible and the palpable. They study Parsifal with its theme of the search for the Holy Grail, as well as Dante's "Divine Comedy." In science they study atomic theory and electricity, learning to go beyond what the senses perceive.

"In the twelfth grade the adolescent, now near-adult, is ready to have an overview of the world, and to experience himself or herself as an



Students performing eurythmy at the 50th Anniversary.

human individuality within that world. The year explores new areas, history through architecture, evolution, zoology, and so on, but is also a resurveying and recapitulation from a new point of view of all that has gone before. It is as well a preparation for the stepping out into adulthood."

At High Mowing strong emphasis is also put on the arts and crafts. Students draw, paint with watercolors and other media, work with clay, wood and metal. Eurythmy is optional, but as Sabina Nordoff points out, that virtually every student participates in the class, and with enthusiasm. Plays, musicals, and the Nativity production are an important part of school life. All these artistic activities are integrated into and support the academic curriculum.

Today High Mowing faces several challenges. One, common for Waldorf schools, is to maintain a high-level faculty. Douglas Gerwin states: "Except for a new program at the Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, there is no training for Waldorf high school teachers in North America. The ideal person is someone who has had a successful career in some field and then decides to become a teacher. Such people are few. We have been fortunate so far but it is always a challenge to replace a departing teacher."

Another challenge is enrollment. "There are simply fewer teenagers today," says Gerwin. "This will change in a few years but now there is a smaller than usual student pool to draw on. Wealthy schools attract students with large scholarship offers. Our tuition is average for an independent school in New England, and we have a generous tuition aid plan. We don't have unlimited funds though, so we sometimes lose a student whom we would like at the school."

"The enrollment situation is complicated by the fact that Waldorf schools sometimes may have an image of being an other-worldly paradise. Adolescents today want to live in the real world, not in a paradise. And parents are concerned that their children need to become capable of standing in the real world. We find though that if the prospective student and his or her parents visit the school we usually have an enrollee. They see that our life here is indeed special, but that it is not other-worldly and that it does prepare students for life in college and in the working world."

High Mowing seems to be dealing with its challenges quite well. It has a diverse faculty which includes teachers who have been with the school for years and more recent arrivals. Enrollment is getting nearer to the school's full capacity. Many of the students come from Waldorf schools, particularly from the Pine Hill school located nearby. Many, though, meet Waldorf education for the first time at High Mowing.

Last year High Mowing celebrated its Golden Anniversary. It can look back on more than fifty years of educating young people according to Waldorf principle and aims. It looks ahead to fulfilling that same mission in the years ahead.

David White attended the High Mowing School, graduating in 1962. He presently works in public relations, helping develop educational and classical musical endeavors. For the past twenty-five years he has helped organize the annual Marlboro Music Festival in Marlboro, Vermont. A loyal and generous alumnus, David is currently doing research for a history of High Mowing.

Adult Education

Workshops, lectures and course work are open to all who are interested in learning more about Waldorf education and Anthroposophy. Please contact the following institutes regarding their programs and schedules:

Antioch New England Graduate School
Roxbury Street, Keene, NH 03431
(603) 357-3122

Rudolf Steiner Centre (CANADA)
9100 Bathurst, Unit 4, Thornhill, ONT L4J 8C7
(905) 764-7570

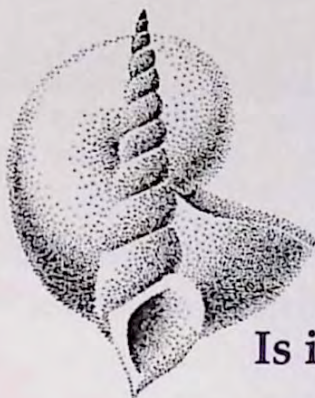
Rudolf Steiner College
9200 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 961-0927

The Waldorf Institute of Sunbridge College
260 Hungry Hollow Rd.
Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977
(914) 425-0055

Waldorf Institute of Southern California
17100 Superior St., Northridge, CA 91325
(818) 349-1394

For information on Waldorf education and the Waldorf School list, contact:

AWSNA
3911 Bannister Road, Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 961-0927



Commentary

Is it Time to Take Sides?

by Robert Mc Dermott

How did it happen that more than eight million adolescents, more than one-third of the nation's high school students, sit in classrooms every day watching Channel One, a news plus advertising program paid for by commercials, which, by contract with the sponsors, the students and teachers cannot switch off?

How did it happen that sixty experienced public school teachers learned last summer, in a two-week workshop at Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, California, to tell stories, to integrate various artistic activities into their lessons, and to approach students with a greater awareness of their needs as whole human beings going through a process of inner and outer growth?

These pedagogical situations represent competing images of the child, teacher, and the learning process. Both have been a long time forming. The possibility of commercial control of education is built into the American materialist-capitalist image of the human being as a consumer. The view of the child as a whole human being consisting of body, soul and spirit, and the teacher as an artist, dates to Rudolf Steiner's writings and lectures on Waldorf education in the first quarter of this century. It is this second image that is cultivated in Waldorf schools and Waldorf teacher training institutes all over the world.

The view of the child assumed by Christopher Whittle, creator of Channel One and the

Edison Project (a plan for 200 schools by 1996 that, according to the Wall Street Journal, will be used as "expanded outlets" for advertisements), and other advocates of techno-education, is that the child is a head to be filled with images of superficial status and instant satisfaction or a product to be developed to meet market demands. How have our societal expectations become so distorted that we have resigned ourselves to controlling media taking the place of caring and creative teachers? One answer is that overwhelmed educators have felt it is so difficult to teach children in this society, at this time, with so many obstacles and such powerful competition, and with such meager results, that they imagine technology, particularly television and computers, will perform better than some teachers.

We have slipped down another slope concerning the child. Since adults in our society watch television an average of six hours a day, and un-

consciously measure their own worth by their purchasing power, we are educating our children to follow suit. By this unspoken and self-validating assumption the American way of life increasingly reduces itself to cycles of viewing

and buying. Our problem is not on the surface but deep in the unexposed recesses of the cultural psyche. Jerry Mander, (author of *Four Arguments For the Elimination of Television*, 1971, and *In the Absence of the Sacred*, 1992), and Joseph Chilton Pearce (author, most recently, of *Evolution's End*, 1992), are only two of the penetrating analysts of

"The possibility of commercial control of education is built into the American materialistic - capitalist image of the human being as consumer."

pathologies rife in our culture. They are also two of the increasing number of cultural critics who acknowledge the Waldorf approach as a significant counter to current ills.

Chuang-tzu, the Chinese philosopher, tells of a fire on one side of which a man is feeding the flames by throwing in pieces of wood; on the other side a man struggles to beat the fire out. Are our children being consumed? Is it time to take sides?

Children and cultural freedom, however, are not necessarily saved merely by taking sides against computers in elementary school classrooms or commercial television in high schools. These are but symptoms of a deeper problem - and a deeper opportunity - namely, the need to honor the inner life of the child and the teacher in the process of learning and creating together. Teachers themselves need help in finding their own wellsprings of insight, creativity and compassion. Waldorf teacher training programs - perhaps the only teacher training programs based on a spiritual understanding of the child - offer a variety of transformative disciplines to help the teacher develop capacities to meet parents and colleagues, as well as children, in the reality of spiritual needs and possibilities.

Robert McDermott, former chairman of the Department of Religion at Baruch College, City University of New York, is currently President of the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Dr. McDermott is the author of The Essential Steiner, an anthology drawn from the work of Rudolf Steiner. This article appeared first in the newsletter of the Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California.

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Book Review

Matter and Mind

Imaginative Participation in Science

by Stephen Edelglass, Georg Maier, Hans Gebert and John Davy

Published in 1992 by Lindisfarne Press, 136 pages, \$12.95.

Because Waldorf education is generally associated with the arts, there is often a question of the role of science in the Waldorf school. Natural science, as it is usually understood, is not easily found in the main lesson books of the earlier grades. Later, when science appears in the curriculum, one finds descriptions of observations and experiments rather than theories and conceptual models. These come into the science lessons of the last high school years when the students can begin to reflect critically upon the relation of models and theory to the observation of phenomena.

A critic may ask then if Waldorf students are doing "real" science. When he or she learns that the artistic is incorporated into the study of science, the reservations may become stronger. Is science being made "soft" to make it palatable to budding artistic souls? Do teachers embrace outmoded "imaginative" views of the world? While these tendencies may be present in some Waldorf schools, they do not reflect the true aims of Waldorf education. Waldorf education has a different approach to science, one that is relatively young, and hence subject to the pitfalls of youth.

Within this context, *Matter and Mind* is a significant book. It lays a solid foundation for this new approach to science and follows its implications in a very lucid manner. The book does not discuss Waldorf education nor the teaching of

science per se. Rather it deals with a more basic issue, the essence of the scientific endeavor itself. It is a valuable book for anyone interested in "Goethean" or "phenomenological" science. And since the Waldorf approach is based on Goethean science, it is valuable for anyone interested in the teaching of science in the Waldorf schools.

Chapter one deals with some fundamental problems which have arisen through the conventional scientific way of approaching the world. Science strives to be objective and impersonal in its treatment of phenomena. This tendency creates a division between a personal, subjective inner world and an objective outer world. Science is concerned only with the latter. This dualism overlooks a significant fact which leads to a paradoxical situation: "... the experience of scientific insight demands personal activity. Although we know this, we continue the ironic demand that science confine itself to producing impersonal descriptions of the universe with no place for the scientists who actually produce them." (p. 17)

Also, this way of looking at things creates a certain type of reality. "If we systematically think of a world in which human beings don't exist, we should not be surprised to find ourselves creating a world in which they cannot exist." (p. 19)

Humankind needs a science in which the scientists consciously include the active human being as a part of the reality they strive to understand. This means taking concrete inner and outer experiences much more seriously. It means overcoming the habits of mind which lead us to treat consciousness as a mere epiphenomenon of underlying neural processes, and sense experience as a subjective, (i.e. inaccurate) picture of an underlying "real" world of matter and forces.

In the second chapter, the authors examine the deeper roots of materialistic science. Their approach is unique in that they go beyond a philosophical and psychological treatment of the subject. They look closely at the more subtle sense experiences upon which materialistic thinking is based. Rudolf Steiner set the stage for this approach in his 1922 lectures on "Origins of Natural Science," (Anthroposophic Press, New York) but

the authors may be the first to carry it through and show its fruitfulness.

We have senses which are directed to the outside world, but also senses which allow us to perceive our own body. These are the sense of touch, the sense of balance, the kinesthetic sense (perceiving the body's movement) and the somatic sense (perceiving the body's state of being). The sense of touch for example, mediates tactile impressions from external objects, but also allows us to experience ourselves as separated from what we touch. The concept that objects exist separately from us and from each other is based therefore on our own sense experience. The authors go on to show how the experience of the other supplementary senses provides the foundation of our concepts of three-dimensional bodies existing in space.

Since Galileo, scientists and philosophers have distinguished between objective or "primary" and subjective or "secondary" qualities. The former are thought to be the "real" attributes of things, limited three-dimensional bodies with a specific size and shape, either at rest or in movement in space. The secondary characteristics - color, taste, smell and acoustical phenomena - are supposed to exist only within us. This distinction between primary and secondary characteristics, the view that one is objective and the other subjective, has never been rationally demonstrated. It has merely been asserted. If we consider the existence and role of the bodily senses, it becomes clear that scientists and philosophers have taken what was based on the perception of their own body to be objective in the world. This conclusion has far reaching consequences. One can see that there is no justification for assigning one type or quality of experience greater reality than another.

Scientists, concentrating on the primary qualities, have chosen a realm susceptible to mathematical penetration. The sense of certainty which mathematics brings because we produce it, plus its applicability in the world, gives this approach great appeal. But secondary qualities are not so susceptible to mathematical penetration. Thus scientists have treated nature as if it contained only primary qualities, and have reduced

the world to a complex mechanism. If the phenomena are complicated then one can at least construct the mechanical models behind them. These models are usually understood as physically real, albeit very small versions of the phenomena. In physics, the models however have lost their object-like quality and increasingly have become pure mathematical constructs. In quantum mechanics and relativity theory, "the only guide is mathematics ... We are led to new worlds only insofar as we can grasp them with mathematics, which enables us to manipulate these new worlds. Every attempt to think about these worlds with ordinary mental pictures has failed." (p. 70)

Physics reached then, early in this century, a point at which thinking had freed itself completely from sense experience. At the same time and in the same context, it was realized that observations being made depend on the apparatus and the experimental situation. Depending on circumstances, light behaves sometimes like a wave and sometimes like a particle. The image of the objective, distant observer is no longer valid. Thus there is in modern science on one hand a thinking free of the senses, and on the other the realization that the observer participates and influences the phenomena.

Can this purified thinking now set out to self-consciously and actively participate in the phenomena, and in its secondary as well as its primary qualities? If so, a new science, capable of entering new realms would emerge. In chapter four the authors demonstrate the possibility of this approach, leading the reader by descriptions of phenomena - primarily in the field of optics - into conscious, participatory science. Careful observation of phenomena (for example, reflections in a pond) of which any person is capable, is paired with a marked clarity of thought. The reader can understand how the spatial aspects of reflection and refraction are very different in nature from the color phenomena one experiences looking at the same pond. Because both realms are taken seriously, each reveals its own lawfulness.

In modern physics there is no such attending to the different aspects of the phenomena

and to the clear distinction between them. Thus the paradoxes of modern physics arise. But an approach which gives value to the experience of the observer of the secondary qualities of a phenomena, as well as to a mathematical comprehension of its primary qualities can apprehend the whole. It can be truly holistic without being general and vague. This seemingly simple but rigorous approach to science can achieve a greater clarity and deeper understanding.

Because this key chapter is so different from what one expects from physics it will cause some readers difficulty. Readers might try carrying out the observations described and then reading the chapter again. This approach demands a kind of activity different from what we are used to. Engaging in the activity can help one appreciate the subtlety involved.

In the last chapter, the authors reflect upon the path they have trod and deal with the consequences this approach to science can have. These consequences go far beyond the tasks of science. "Only a science that can conceive of a wholeness in which each part is an expression of the unity of the whole, is able to solve the increasingly difficult problems that face humanity. Furthermore, practicing the intensive imaginative participation required of such a science will develop the attitudes and capabilities needed to heal the sicknesses which result from living in a technologically advanced society." (p. 128) In view of these tasks I hope this book finds readers who are stimulated to involve themselves in a new way of looking, thinking and working in the world.

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When the Bell Rings

To wonder at beauty,
Stand guard over truth,
Look up to the noble,
Decide for the good:
Leads man on his journey
To goals for his life,
To right in his duties,
To peace in his feeling,
To light in his thought,
And teaches him trust
In the guidings of God
In all that there is:
In the wide world all,
In the soul's deep soil.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

Translated by Arvia MacKaye Ege

This is one translation of a verse frequently used
in Waldorf elementary and high schools.