

Renewal

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

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Wonder, compassion, and conscience—these are the three powers by means of which we as human beings, even while in the physical body, can transcend our limitations. Through these powers, influences that cannot find entrance into the human soul by way of the intellect and senses, shine into our earthly, physical life.

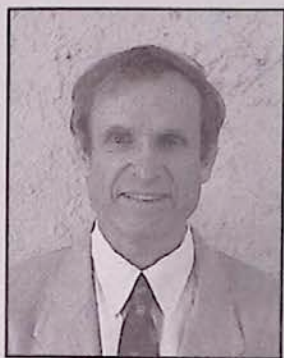
—Rudolf Steiner

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From the Editor

By Ronald E. Koetzsch



In his insightful article on child health (see page 9), Dr. Philip Incao points out that the diseases that afflict children today are different from those of a century ago. Children then were most susceptible to inflammatory diseases such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, and typhoid fever. Today our children are most threatened by chronic conditions such as asthma, allergies, and cancer. Also, a number of neurological and behavioral disorders, rare in the past, have become very common—autism, attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity, depression, and drug use among them.

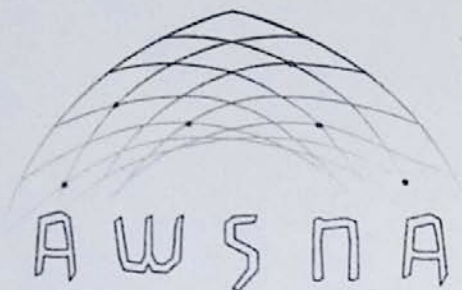
In explaining this change, Dr. Incao uses the polarity of “warmth” and “cold,” an important concept in anthroposophical medicine. In the early part of the twentieth century, warmth, both within the individual human being and within the general culture, dominated and tended to excess. Hence, the inflammatory (“hot”) diseases were prevalent. With the flowering and spread of modern industrial civilization, cooling elements (among them vaccines, antibiotics, and improved sanitary conditions) were introduced. For a time, at midcentury, these helped create more or less a balance. Now, however, our children and we are suffering from an excess of “cold.”

Of course, more is at issue here than just physical warmth and coolness—though they are indeed a part of it. (Please see Thomas Poplawski’s article “Button Up Your Overcoat” on page 15.) What is affecting children’s health is our whole way of life. And more is at issue than just physical health. What is being affected is the whole human being—mind, soul, and spirit, as well as body.

The cooling, hardening factors in our culture arise from an objective, scientific frame of mind, from the value placed on efficiency and speed, and from our success in the control and manipulation of the physical world. This approach to life is not inherently good or bad. Problems arise when it is carried to an extreme and when there is no balancing element. Then its creations tend to render us cold, hard, passive, and rigid. They can isolate us from each other, from nature, from our true capacities and identity. My own list of these cooling factors (NOT an official AWSNA or Waldorf list) includes:

fast food; fluoridated water; genetically engineered foods; plastic bags; synthetic clothing; cyberspace relationships; surfing the web; virtual pets; pornography; body-building machines; telephone answering systems that make it almost impossible to speak to a human being; muzak; automobiles; television and other electronic entertainment; spectator sports; prenatal youth soccer; modern rectilinear architecture; mail order catalogues; and a purely materialistic and deterministic view of the universe and of the human being (quintessentially expressed today by the horrific copout “It’s all in our genes”).

please turn to page 37



Contents

Fall/Winter 2000
Volume 9, Number 2

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Departments

1 From the Editor

Ronald E. Koetzsch

4 From AWSNA

David Alsop, Chairman

34 School Portrait

The Sierra Waldorf School

Jamestown, California

Pamela Williams-Gifford, Bill Roberson, and
Judith Weldon

A plucky school flourishes on the hardpan
soil of the Sierra foothills.

39 Out of Anthroposophy

Biodynamic Agriculture

Thomas Poplawski

A unique form of organic farming,
outlined by Rudolf Steiner almost eighty
years ago, is being applied in unexpected
places.

43 Waldorf Around the World



The Children of Nepal and the Tashi Waldorf School

Ronald Koetzsch with Meyrav Mor

An Israeli teacher is working to bring
Waldorf Education to the "Roof of the
World."

Renewal

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

45 Review

The Common Vision: Parenting and Educating for Wholeness

By David Marshak

Reviewed by Ronald E. Koetzsch

Articles

5 A Conversation with Todd Oppenheimer

John Bloom

The author of "Schooling the Imagination"—the prizewinning article that appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*—talks about himself, his work, and about unique aspects of Waldorf Education.

9 Tending the Flame: The Link between Education and Medicine

Philip Incao, M.D.

An anthroposophical physician analyzes changes in the health of children over the past century and suggests what can be done to meet the challenges of the present.

15 "Button Up Your Overcoat!"

Thomas Poplawski

Among the different types of warmth children need is physical warmth. A New England Waldorf father tells why and how to protect children from the cold.

18 "It's Time for Dinner!"

Susan R. Johnson, M.D.

An anthroposophical pediatrician explains how the schedule of eating and sleeping can affect the health and mood of children.

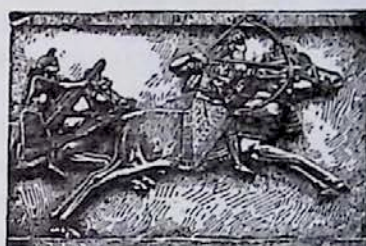
19 Advice to New Waldorf Teachers

Pamela Bradley

Three master teachers share the fruit of their many years' experience.

22 The Mind as an Arrow: Practicing Archery in a Waldorf School

Carmine Iannaccone



The discipline of the bow and arrow can aid in the healthy development of the child.

25 Morality and the Teaching of Literature in the High School

Carol Bärtges

Literature as taught in a Waldorf high school seeks to help adolescents develop a broader view of human life, compassion, and moral values.

28 Addressing Contemporary Issues in the High School

Craig Holdredge

The careful study of human development gives students a basis for opinions about the current and controversial issue of human cloning.

32 Life After Waldorf High School: Waldorf Graduates and Higher Education

Abraham Entin

Some elite liberal arts colleges actively court Waldorf graduates. A Waldorf parent and Waldorf school consultant tells why.

38 Why I Went Back to School

Eric Utne

A well-known publisher becomes a Waldorf teacher.

From the Chairman of AWSNA

By David Alsop



Several issues ago, I wrote in this column that AWSNA "should be much more active in aligning with and collaborating with other individuals and organizations that have compatible educational perspectives and values." Indeed, we have made progress in building those linkages with organizations such as the Council for American Private Education and the National Council for Private School Accreditation, among others. Waldorf Education is becoming better known in the mainstream, and is being met with warmth and enthusiasm.

AWSNA has also been very active in another important organization—the recently formed Council of Anthroposophical Organizations (CAO). The council represents the institutional/organizational aspect of the anthroposophical movement and promotes invaluable cooperation and collaboration among the various organizations working directly out of

Anthroposophy. Such associative activity is vital to the future development of Anthroposophy, the work of the Anthroposophical Society, and to the ability of the respective organizations to carry out their work.

As we become more visible to the general public, it becomes more and more important that we maintain and strengthen our connection to the source of Waldorf Education—i.e., Anthroposophy—and to other groups working out of the same source. Currently, within the CAO, those groups include the Camphill Association, the Biodynamic Association, Artemisia (a medical association), the Rudolf Steiner Foundation, the Anthroposophical Society itself, and AWSNA.

To date, the strongest initiative to come from the members of the CAO is the Critical Path Project. This is a collective effort to generate and distribute proactive information about Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education that can neutralize the misinformation that is being promoted by a very small circle of critics. Other initiatives include workshops for board members, the identification of opportunities for social service, and collaborative public relations work.

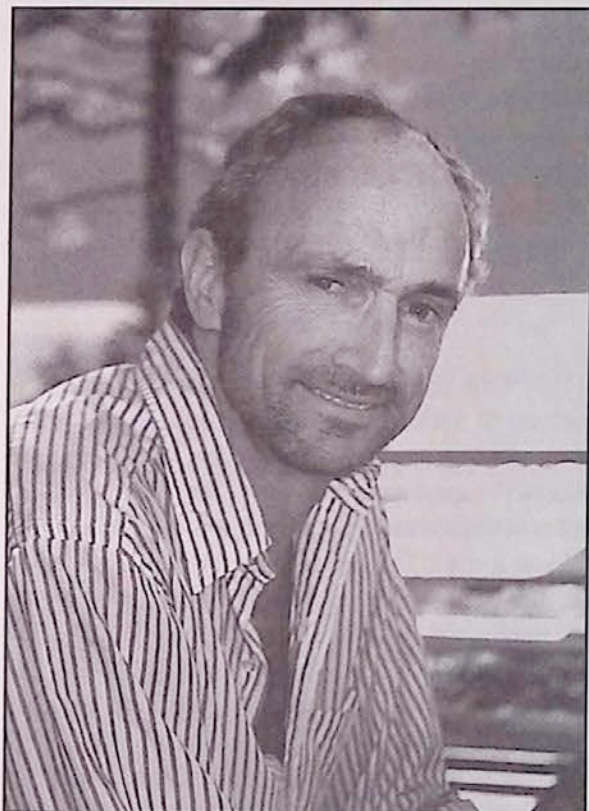
Perhaps even more important than the initiatives that can arise through such collaboration is the inspiration one feels in being

acutely aware of the scope of anthroposophical activity. Education, farming, medicine, care of the disabled, social action, the arts, finance—when one sees the varied fields of activity, one cannot fail to understand that the fundamental impulse is to be of service to humanity. Period. It is not about advancing Anthroposophy—it is about bringing the fruits of Anthroposophy into the service of humanity. Anthroposophy is sometimes thought of as "the wisdom of man," but according to Rudolf Steiner can be more appropriately understood as "the consciousness of one's humanity." It should be perceived not as a body of knowledge, but as unfolding activity, based upon insight.

Waldorf schools are attractive to such a wide range of individuals in so many varied locations precisely because they are "laboratories of unfolding." In education, the primary concern is that of the interaction between teacher and child, and the teacher's ability to meet, understand, and serve the child. Waldorf teachers are supported in this endeavor by the insights gained through "the consciousness of one's humanity." Perhaps so many individuals and organizations are pleased to establish connections with us because of these shared educational perspectives and values. ✱

A Conversation with Todd Oppenheimer

By John Bloom



Todd Oppenheimer is a journalist who writes and speaks about the media, technology, and education. His writing has been published in *Newsweek*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Washington Post*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, *The Utne Reader*, and *The San Francisco Examiner*. He has won numerous awards for his writing and investigative reporting and has been featured on radio and television shows such as *ABC's Nightline*.

Oppenheimer lives in San Francisco. He serves on the boards of several nonprofit organizations and volunteers at San Francisco's Mission High School as adviser to the school newspaper. In 1998 he was named San Francisco's School Volunteer of the Year.

He is currently at work on a book about technology in education to be published by Norton. The book is based on "The Computer Delusion," his cover article in the July 1997

issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. The article won the National Magazine Award for public interest reporting.

Todd Oppenheimer's article about Waldorf Education, "Schooling the Imagination," was published in the September 1999 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. The piece is remarkable in at least two ways. It is a thoroughly researched, objective, and insightful presentation of Waldorf Education, for which Oppenheimer has been awarded First Prize for National Magazine Writing by the Education Writers Association. Also, it is an article about Waldorf Education that appeared in a well-known, national magazine.

The following is a conversation between Todd Oppenheimer and John Bloom. John is currently the Gifts and Grants Officer at the Rudolf Steiner Foundation in San Francisco. John was a founding parent of the San Francisco Waldorf School, has been a member of its board for over twenty years, and served as the administrator of the school for eight years. He is now president of the board of trustees of AWSNA. John is an artist and author, has published a book—*Photography at Bay: Interviews, Essays, and Reviews*—and has lectured and written frequently on aspects of Waldorf Education and the Threefold Social Order.

JB: How did you become interested enough in Waldorf Education to spend over three years researching and writing this article?

TO: The whole process took three years but included intermittent work on other projects and waiting for *The Atlantic Monthly* to schedule the story. The work on this story, if I compressed it all together, probably took four to five months of research and another five months of writing. In part, this was because of my failings as a writer. I'm slow, or obsessive, or overly thorough. Also, the topic has so many layers and mysteries that I actually had to make myself stop doing research. And the issues and the arguments are so subtle, and the climaxes, such as they are in the story, are so subtle, that to write it with momentum, clarity, and progression took a lot of work. The editor at the magazine warned me that it would probably be harder to write than "The Computer Delusion," which involved a fairly straightforward argument.

The Waldorf story is a tapestry, a many-layered tapestry. Partly it's about individuals. But it is also about a long, long history with a lot of variegations in it. Not every Waldorf school is the same. Not every Waldorf teacher is the same. Not every Waldorf student is the same. I had to be very careful about generalizations and how to link an anecdote or an example with the research and with the point I was making, and then to make the transition to the next point.

JB: There is a high degree of integrity and fluidity to the structure.

TO: I spent about a month just going through the material and organizing before I really wrote anything. I played with how to tell the story. It's a writer's challenge not only to do justice to the material but also to bring a reader along who doesn't know anything about the subject.

As I watched the Waldorf classes and the way the children were being taught, I experienced something of a longing to reeducate myself. I am certain that this approach would have worked better for me.

JB: Is that why you began the story with the discussion of the Thomas E. Mathews Community School—"a hard-boiled public institution for troublemakers?" There is a certain immediate appeal to it.

TO: That's a lot of it. Its appeal is hard to deny, just because of what it is. However, the main reason was that that school transcends whatever political or educational philosophy a reader comes with. Here are these problem kids. Most everybody acknowledges that they need some kind of support, and here is something that's working. That just lowers everyone's defenses, no matter what their particular orientation.

JB: It was a great way to deal with the whole public-private question. What were some of the mysteries?

TO: The mysteries are in some of the tensions that Waldorf people struggle with, such as that concerning the role of spirituality in today's world. How can we teach it

in a way that people will find palatable and relevant? What will work for people who might start from the assumption that, "Well, I'm not a religious person, but the world works. There's probably some spiritual force somewhere. I'm not going to get into it too much, but I'm sure it's somewhere out there." To be able to serve people who take that view is one mystery.

The imagination, which of course features in the title of the story, is a second one. I continue to be fascinated by the imagination and expect it to be a primary theme of my upcoming book, which expands on "The Computer Delusion." Imagination is important. It remains a tremendous mystery and remains incredibly neglected in schools. We do not know very much about how it really works and how much it matters. Waldorf people have obviously done a lot of thinking about it and have developed many educational methods that relate to it.

JB: Was there a personal discovery process for you as you did the research?

TO: One of the reasons that I was immediately sympathetic to the Waldorf schools is that my own background was a combination of some very "Waldorfian" experiences and very "non-Waldorfian" ones. I was lucky enough to go to a summer farm camp when I was a child. The core activity of the camp was running this farm—getting up in the morning, doing your chores, feeding the animals before you fed yourself, and so on. It was a delightful, idyllic place.

On the other hand, I ended up going to pretty rigorous private schools. I did well, but I certainly did not learn the joy of learning. My own life was an alternation between getting oriented toward learning in a very experiential, organic way, then having that snatched away from me by being forced into a much more pressured learning situation.

JB: Did that create a conflict between your feeling life and thinking life—a conflict between two kinds of intelligence?

TO: You could definitely put it that way. Aside from the pressure, I think in those private schools there was a narrowing of my experience that was completely unnecessary. What narrowed it particularly was that the expectations from the teachers were fierce. That induced the students to meet just those expectations. Whatever free associations the students might make became irrelevant. You got the message very early on that you should close down and stick to the task.

JB: Did you find in Waldorf Education a middle

ground between your academic and farm experiences, between the two kinds of learning?

TO: There are situations in which I think very quickly, but in many that are demanding and complicated, I think very slowly. In school, I always felt pressured to think more quickly. Here is Waldorf saying, "Let's slow down. There is no reason to hurry!"—especially with the reading. As I watched the Waldorf classes and the way the children were being taught, I experienced something of a longing to reeducate myself. I am certain that this approach would have worked better for me.

JB: You said one of the challenges in writing the article was capturing the subtleties of the subject. Were these philosophical subtleties or matters of interpretation?

I felt a tranquillity and a fix on life that I didn't convey as much as I would like to—a real sound, solid moral footing in life that I would like to have dealt with more.

TO: I had in mind all that I have learned from and about education. Most people I spoke with didn't have any major disagreements with Waldorf. What I mostly heard was, "It's just a specialty school that does its own special thing. There's nothing that great about it that other schools should do. We should have a lot of different specialty schools." Others said, "Why are you making such a big deal out of this school?" Later, I heard, "This is so Eurocentric ... and it's so much for the arts that if you're a child who is not interested in those things, there is no reason that you should go to Waldorf."

A lot of people suggested that Waldorf should remain more on the periphery of education than obviously this article wants to suggest. I was trying to navigate that set of issues. I was trying to show that it is more than it is perceived to be. But at the same time I wanted to be sure that I wasn't presenting it as being more than it actually is. One of the dilemmas in education is that every philosophical camp sees itself very grandly and has profound theories surrounding and supporting its implementation. Some are more cogent and coherent than others. I wanted to make sure that for Waldorf the case is in fact valid. I was trying to grasp and convey the philosophical vision behind it without just accepting it at face value.

JB: You managed to include the nay-sayers with a lot of grace, which is not always easy to do. Was this one of the subtleties you were wrestling with?

TO: I knew that I wanted them in the article. I needed to let people know early on that they were coming, but that I would deal with them somewhere in the middle. To Waldorf's credit, one of the reasons that I think I was able to do it in a way that seemed fair is that most of the Waldorf people I talked to about the nay-sayers' criticisms were very forthright, open, and objective about the critics and their concerns.

JB: What was the inspiration for putting it in the middle?

TO: I remember when we read Melville's *Moby Dick* in college. My professor pointed out that Melville waited until the middle of the book to tell you about the intricacies of whaling technology. At that point you are so into the story that you want to know everything you can about whaling. If he told you early on, you wouldn't care, but at this point you're dying for it.

I thought that that's the way the Anthroposophy should be treated as well. It had to come far enough into the article for the reader to be invested. It was in the back of my mind as I was writing that there would be a point where the story created its own opening to address Anthroposophy and its issues. It was at that point where the reader would be thinking there's got to be some dark side or some complication.

There was also a lot that was cut out of the story. If I had had it completely my way, the story would have been a lot longer, would have gotten into more detail about the experiences—both positive and unsatisfying—of different students and graduates. The emphasis and tone of the story would not have shifted. There just would have been more detail. But, my editor at *The Atlantic Monthly* has a very keen sense for when to close a story.

JB: Is there anything you would have done differently?

TO: I would have spent more time in the public schools. In particular, I would have looked more at the Urban Waldorf School in Milwaukee, because I think it is fascinating and it has a long history. Also I would have dealt more with the question of how the effort to transmit Waldorf values plays out in the real world, plays out in life. I think the article only hinted at this.

In all my research and meetings with people, I felt something in the Waldorf community that I only partly conveyed. I felt a tranquillity and a fix on life that I didn't

convey as much as I would like to—a real sound, solid moral footing in life that I would like to have dealt with more.

JB: You are working on a book as a follow-up to "The Computer Delusion" story. Is it solely focused on educational technology?

Imagination is important. It remains a tremendous mystery and remains incredibly neglected in schools.... Waldorf people have obviously done a lot of thinking about it and have developed many educational methods that relate to it.

TO: The focus of the book is technology in schools, mostly the computer trend in schools from kindergarten to college. I'm going to present the issues in the context of what we know about education in general and make an argument for what seems best for teaching and learning. The educational technology folks advance very profound claims for the kinds of learning experiences that are possible with computers. I point out that in many cases they are talking about teaching approaches—such as the use of student projects—that have been around a long time before computers came into the schools. If they're going to advance that as one of their specialties, then I'll look at what's known about how student projects have influenced learning in a lot of other schools that may or may not use technology. The point is to show that there is more than one way to slice that piece of bread.

Another reason why I want to look again at the Waldorf public schools is that I am interested in schools for the underprivileged, in schools that serve poorer kids. The computer-booster's main claim is that the computer equalizes opportunities between rich and poor. I am not so sure it is quite that way. I mean, it just takes a tremendous force of will to keep that damn machine in its place, and it seems all the forces are going against its limited and appropriate use in education. ✱

Reprints of Todd Oppenheimer's article "Schooling the Imagination" are available from the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Call (916) 961-0927 for details.

EDUCATION, PLAY AND THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE HEART



A conference for parents and teachers
with **Joseph Chilton Pearce**
and **Stuart Brown, M.D.**

Saturday, October 21, 2000
at Rudolf Steiner College
Fair Oaks, California

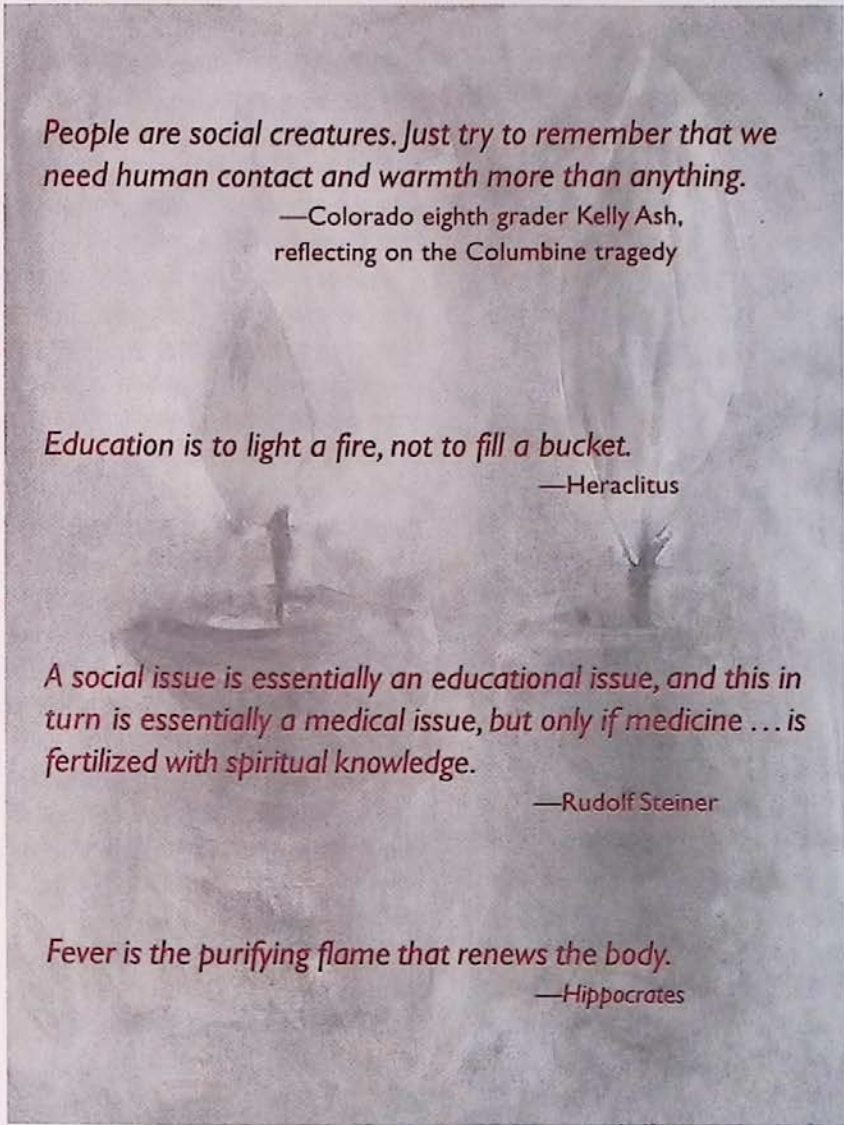
Recent research into the relation of heart and brain can revolutionize education and child rearing. Well-known author and lecturer Joseph Chilton Pearce will discuss recent discoveries about the critical effect of the emotional environment on the child's brain development—in utero, during the first 18 months, and at every stage of development. Joining Pearce for this all-day workshop is psychiatrist Stuart Brown, who will share his startling research into the lives of both geniuses and murderers. This research underscores the vital importance of play in healthy development and learning—and the dramatic results of its absence. Included in the seminar are practical afternoon sessions presenting activities for both home and classroom that cultivate play and a healthy emotional environment.

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and Mothers' Support Network

Tending the Flame: The Link between Education and Medicine in Childhood

By Philip Incao, M.D.



People are social creatures. Just try to remember that we need human contact and warmth more than anything.

—Colorado eighth grader Kelly Ash,
reflecting on the Columbine tragedy

Education is to light a fire, not to fill a bucket.

—Heraclitus

A social issue is essentially an educational issue, and this in turn is essentially a medical issue, but only if medicine ... is fertilized with spiritual knowledge.

—Rudolf Steiner

Fever is the purifying flame that renews the body.

—Hippocrates

Once had as a patient an eight-year-old Waldorf student who had been adopted by her American mother from a Romanian orphanage. The mother recounted to me the moving story of their first encounter. She entered a room full of children, and her eyes rested on a tiny waif in a crib who looked to be about eight months old, with no teeth and as yet unable to stand or talk. Their eyes met, the child laughed, and in that moment the woman knew that "this was my child." Then to her shock she learned that the child was over two years old! "I just took her home and loved her," she told me, "and all her teeth started coming in, and she began standing, walking, and talking!"

What an amazing demonstration of the power of human caring, of human warmth, and of the human spirit itself, I thought at the time. I've since learned more fully that this was by no means an isolated example.

In the early 1900s in America, children in orphanages and hospitals died at a staggering rate of a mysterious condition that came to be called "hospitalism," ... a listless wasting away despite adequate food, a weakening of muscles, loss of reflexes, and greatly increased risk of gastrointestinal and lung infections. For older children, it might take days or weeks for hospitalism to set in, but if they left the hospital they improved drastically within days."¹

The experts of the day could not understand why these children were dying in great numbers, but exposure to hospital germs was the prime suspected cause. So children were further isolated from human contact in disinfected hospital cubicles designed to be a barrier to germs. Their death rate worsened!

"Hospitalism lay at the intersection of two ideas popular at the time—a worship of sterile, aseptic conditions at all costs, and a belief among the pediatric establishment that touching, holding, and nurturing infants was sentimental, maternal foolishness."²

In those days, even parents were only allowed to visit their hospitalized infants or children a few hours per week. It wasn't until 1942 that "emotional deprivation" and "loneliness" were identified as the true causes of hospitalism.

It is interesting—and tragic—

Health is the harmonious balance in the rhythmical workings of spirit, soul, life, and body in the human being, a household in which our spirit rules, rather than any other member of our being.

how an idea that seems self-evident today—that infants and children need loving human contact in order to grow and develop properly—took so long to be acknowledged and accepted. But that is the usual way human knowledge advances. As Schopenhauer observed, "All truth goes through three stages. First it is ridiculed. Then it is violently opposed. Finally, it is accepted as self-evident."

The forgotten story of hospitalism still has important lessons to teach. In the early 1900s it was an article of faith for physicians that human consciousness and human emotions can have no influence whatsoever on the inner workings of the human body. How could they? They are subjective and nonmaterial. They exist "only in the mind," quite separate from the physical body. Or so we imagined.

In our search for ultimate answers in human biology and medicine, it is reassuring to have solid ground, and for most of us that solid ground is the human body. Medicine still operates on the assumption that the inner processes of the body are pretty much the same in everyone. When these processes operate smoothly we have health, and when they malfunction we have illness. Medicine is based on this assumption, and so is popular thinking about health. Illness is a problem of bodily malfunction, end of story. In this respect, things haven't changed much since the days of hospitalism.

Perhaps we no longer consider

children's need for loving human contact to be sentimental foolishness, but we are still a long way from understanding the inner needs of children. Mainstream medicine and education are still based on the unproven and unjustifiable assumption, really a bias, that human feelings have little or nothing to do with the health of the physical body.³

Like the canary in the coal mine, today's child is in distress. A look at the statistics confirms this. The crudest measure of children's health is their death rate from all causes. In the 1950s American children had one of the lowest death rates in the world. According to the latest UNICEF statistics, there are now 30 nations in which children under five years old have a lower death rate than ours.

What are American children dying from? In 1900 most of the deaths among our children were from inflammatory conditions like pneumonia, diarrhea, tuberculosis, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, and scarlet fever. Deaths from acute inflammatory contagious illnesses declined in the twentieth century with improvements in the standard of living, sanitation, and literacy in the United States and other developed nations.⁴

By the early 1950s most acute inflammatory conditions were less common and far less serious in American children. Sulfa drugs and vaccines for diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough had been developed before World War II and were

beginning to be put into more widespread use along with the new wonder drug, penicillin. Polio was the new and dreaded scourge of the 1940s and 1950s but soon declined with the advent of the Salk and then later the Sabin polio vaccines.

The 1950s, the Eisenhower years, were a time of postwar optimism and prosperity, and also for American children a time of relative good health. We had reached a balance point: the old acute scourges like pneumonia, typhoid, and diphtheria had largely retreated, and the new chronic problems like allergies, asthma, diabetes, and cancer were still relatively rare in children.

Practically unknown in those early postwar years were the now common conditions of autism, learning disabilities, hyperactivity, and attention deficit disorder. Also largely unknown were the modern tragedies of homicide, suicide, and drug use among children.

There has been a dramatic shift: in all modern industrialized nations, children seldom die from acute inflammations. Instead they suffer from a variety of chronic conditions affecting the immune system (allergies, asthma, diabetes), the neurological system (autism, learning and developmental disabilities), and behavioral and emotional stability (depression, suicide, violence, and drug use).

It is reasonable to assume that there are various causes that contribute to these conditions, in specific and nonspecific ways, some

A growing child must find its inner ground, its center of warmth, and from this solid ground it can seek to connect to other sources of warmth, in an ever widening circle around itself, from immediate family all the way to God.

acknowledged and many as yet unknown or unacknowledged. One of the acknowledged nonspecific causes that contribute to stress and distress in today's children is the decline of stability in the American family. According to the 1994 Carnegie report on children in the United States, the percentage of children under three years old living with one parent increased almost fourfold from 1960 to 1990, from 7% to 27%. There are also a number of possible specific causes now being debated across the country. These include vaccine reactions as a cause of diabetes, autism, and asthma; excessive antibiotic use as a cause of allergies and asthma; excessive television and computer use as a cause of behavioral dysfunction in young children; and exposure to fluoride in water and to mercury in vaccines as possible causes of neurological dysfunction.

I will not here discuss these specific causes, though the debate around them is an important one. Rather I will point to the overall trend and characterize it in such a way as to shed light on the problems children are experiencing today. I've already sketched the overall trend in the United States and other developed nations since 1900, but further elaboration is needed. The most salient characteristics of this trend are:

1. Children are dying at a lower rate than ever before.

2. Illness and death from acute contagious inflammatory illness occur at a lower rate in children than

ever before. This fact alone is responsible for the low overall death rate (Point 1 above).

3. Children have more chronic conditions and more disabling conditions than ever before. A recent survey estimated that 18% of American children have chronic health or behavioral problems that qualify them for special health or educational services supported by public programs.⁵ That's almost one in five children.

4. While certain social conditions like poverty, poor hygiene, and inadequate sanitation have improved, others like family instability, child abuse, violence, and drug use have worsened.⁶

A recent survey by the Public Health Policy Advisory Board reveals that of all the children from one to nineteen years old who died in 1995, 41% died from accidents or unintentional injuries (many of these alcohol- or drug-related), a shocking 14% died from homicide, 7% from suicide, 7% from cancer, 5% from birth defects, and 1% from infections.⁷

Thus although the overall death rate of children has declined very dramatically in all developed nations since 1900, it bears repeating that American children under five years old are still dying at a higher rate today than children in 30 other countries. This is probably largely due to the worsening social conditions already mentioned (Point 4 above).

In America, homicide is the fourth leading cause of death in

children from one to nine years old, the third leading cause in children ten to fourteen years old, and the second leading cause in adolescents fifteen to nineteen years old.⁸ This is a tragic social problem in our country. The blue ribbon Public Health Policy Advisory Board concludes in its report under "A Call to Action":

*"The most important threats to American children today lurk in . . . the changing psychosocial fabric of American society, and in behavioral and cultural changes not readily amenable to definition by the biomedical models that empowered public health earlier in this century."*⁹

The message is clear: a new way of thinking and new models are needed, not just applied to social problems but to education, health, and medicine as well. Rudolf Steiner's 1920 lecture, "Health Care as a Social Issue," quoted at the beginning of this article, speaks to this need. Steiner's mission was to bring a much needed healing into human culture and social life. Essential to this was the renewal of contemporary medical science and education through the application of a new model of human biology and human psychology.

Steiner's model was simple in outline, though complex in the details. It was a renewal of ancient wisdom, maintaining that the human being is composed of four concrete realities: spirit, consciousness (soul), "life" (sometimes called the "life body" or "etheric body"), and a physical body. Only the last, the

Technology has enhanced many aspects of our lives, but no technology, whether a video screen, loudspeaker, or a drug or vaccination, can be a source of human warmth—that's why our children are growing inwardly colder.

physical body, is concrete in the material sense, and is perceptible to our senses and to our scientific instruments. The other three elements of the human being—spirit, soul, and life—are wholly spiritual and nonmaterial in themselves. Without them, however, the wonderful human body would be nothing but a cold, lifeless corpse. Thus, spirit, soul, and life are not vague abstractions but are concrete realities graspable by the human mind and having definite functions and observable effects in the human physical body.

As soon as one begins to study the human being in light of this fourfold model of spirit, soul, life, and physical body, some helpful answers to very basic questions start to emerge.

The question at the core of this article is: What is health, and why has the health of our children changed so dramatically in the last hundred years?

Using Steiner's fourfold model, we can answer this question as follows: Health is the *harmonious balance* in the rhythmical workings of spirit, soul, life, and body in the human being, a household in which our spirit rules, rather than any other member of our being. Here again is a statement simple in outline, but very complex in the concrete details.

As to the important question—What is healthy childhood development?—we would answer: It is the free and full unfolding of a child's individual spirit in the course of time so that this active spirit is

unhindered in growing to its full expression and full potential within the child's soul, life, and physical body.

When a child's spirit waxes strong and becomes the master in its own house, then balance, harmony, and health are the result, both in soul and in body. But our spirit has a co-worker; the human soul, in which needs, desires, and emotions reign, and which is as unpredictable as the wind.

Spirit and soul are linked in their activity like fire and air. When spirit rules, our inner flame burns steadily and quietly, suffusing our mind and our actions with its warmth and light. When soul rules, then we are prone to mood swings. One moment we may experience a mighty wind that fans an inferno, and the next a stifling calm that causes the inner flame of our spirit to choke and sputter.

These polar excesses of the human being were called Yin and Yang in ancient Chinese wisdom, and Love and Hate in the ancient Greek philosophy of Empedocles. Steiner called them Sympathy and Antipathy, perceiving them, as the ancients did, as the bipolar primal energy working in the universe and expressing itself in forces of nature like heat and cold, or positive and negative electricity. In the human being these are expressed also as the primal warm, effusive, expansive energy of our blood and the primal cool, focusing, and condensing energy of our nerves, brain, and sense organs. Robert Frost's little gem of a poem

"Fire and Ice" is a succinct poetic picture of these twin primal forces:

*Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice is
also great
And would suffice.*

It is the mastery and discernment of our spirit, working through its physical instrument, the immune system, that keeps harmony in its household between these mighty opposing powers, our inner Fire and our inner Ice. Our spirit transforms and heals their tendency to destructive excess. The unique composition of Yin/Yang (or Ice/Fire) imbalances that a child has in body and soul by heredity or destiny will determine the particular illnesses to which that child is susceptible.

Illness too has a bipolar nature. On the hot side are the acute contagious inflammatory illnesses and on the cold side the chronic degenerative illnesses. These are the twin dangers we must navigate on our life's journey, as between Scylla and Charybdis, between Fire and Ice.

Throughout recorded history the fiery acute inflammatory illnesses have always predominated as the chief causes of death. This is because the human constitution has always tended to the warm side, and thus we have been more susceptible to inflammations. But in the past 100

Our task of healing ourselves, our children, and the Earth is one and the same. To accomplish this will require a revolution in all aspects of modern science, and especially in agriculture, medicine, psychology, education, and parenting.

years the illness pattern of all previous recorded history has suddenly reversed itself. Now in all developed nations, the cold illnesses prevail: cancer, heart disease, and stroke in adults; and asthma, allergies, cancer, and neurological and emotional dysfunction in children.

What is the deeper meaning of this sudden and profound reversal? From 1900 to the 1950s the health and survival of children improved because *the cooling and densifying effect of modern industrial and intellectual civilization* made them less susceptible to dying from the acute contagious inflammations that had claimed children's lives throughout history. After a brief period of healthy balance during the 1950s, children's health has worsened since 1960, due to *the further intensification of the same cooling and densifying forces that improved their health from 1900 to 1950!* We were on the right track, but now we've overshot the mark: we are out of balance.

Children are indeed the canaries in the coal mine. Their distress is trying to wake us up to the health-weakening and spirit-deadening aspects of modern life. We must learn how to protect and nurture the delicate growth and unfolding of their individual spirit. *This spiritual unfolding is nothing less than a child's entire developmental process.* What we call brain development, neurological maturation, and the like are the all-important physical effects resulting from a healthy and balanced *spiritual* development.

In the forgotten story of hospitalism, we see the devastating effect on children's development that emotional deprivation—a *lack of human warmth*—can have. But what is human warmth? Is it the 104° Fahrenheit body temperature in our child that frightens us? Is it the interest that a consoling friend shows in us? Or is it the steady burn of enthusiasm that energizes us to carry through an important project? All three are human warmth. *Warmth is the unique element interconnecting body, soul, and spirit in us.*

Like water for fishes, warmth for humans is the indispensable medium that supports and nourishes our humanity at every level of its existence. Through warmth we connect. We connect to our family, our friends, our teachers, our colleagues, to all humanity, to animals, to plants, to the universe.

A growing child must find its inner ground, its center of warmth, and from this solid ground it can seek to connect to other *sources of warmth*, in an ever widening circle around itself, from immediate family all the way to God. But today's child understandably has great difficulty finding its connection to the world when that world is portrayed by modern science and education as ultimately an arrangement of atoms and molecules devoid of any higher meaning or purpose, and devoid of any human warmth.

The "failure to connect" that causes so much dysfunction and quiet despair in our children, and all

too often leads to horrible violence, stems ultimately from the fact that our culture and our society are missing the boat. The "solid ground" referred to earlier, which we all need and seek, is not the cells and molecules of our body—it is our *human warmth*. Technology has enhanced many aspects of our lives, but no technology, whether a video screen, loudspeaker, or a drug or vaccination, can be a source of human warmth—that's why our children are growing inwardly colder.

Physicians can learn marvelous truths from patients, if we have the ears to hear them. Just recently a mother reported to me that her weary, uncomfortable eight-year-old child said to her around 2:00 A.M. during his third night of fever; it having just occurred to him, "Mom, you know what I need? I need some new ground to stand on."

If modern education and medicine are to strengthen our essential humanness, then they must learn that this humanness, this solid ground, derives from the human spirit, not from the human body. As the ancients knew, the human spirit manifests in warmth, in fire: the fire of love, the fire of enthusiasm, and, in the physical body, in that most misunderstood and most feared of all human fires—the fire of fever.

Fever remodels and renews the body, making it a truer and more responsive instrument of the spirit. How often have mothers told me of their child's developmental leap in emotional and neurological maturity

after working through a fever that was not suppressed with antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs. And conversely, how often have I seen children whose inflammations were repeatedly suppressed with these drugs lose their spark and stagnate in their development.

One of the most effective ways to reverse the increasing cooling and densification taking place in our children's (and our own) souls and bodies is to realize the healing, enlightening, spirit-permeating power of feverish inflammatory illness. In fact, inflammation is never the real illness; it is always the attempt of our immune system to permeate our inner opacity and coldness with the spirit's healing warmth and light. When this attempt is overzealous and threatens our life or functional capacity, then we can be very grateful that modern medicine has given us the tools and techniques to suppress and control inflammation. But we must use that power with discretion! To suppress all inflammation indiscriminately with antibiotics, vaccinations and anti-inflammatory drugs contributes enormously to just this condition of spirit-rejecting density of body and soul I've been describing—and lamenting—in this article. Health is balance. Thus we must learn to avoid overshooting that balance with our overzealous efforts to "conquer" illness.

The growing interest in Waldorf Education and in alternative medicine in our country is a sign that our paradigm in medicine and in education is shifting. What is most urgently needed is a widespread awareness of the critical difference between *healing* illness and *suppressing* it. Healing empowers our spirit; suppression cools down the spirit's activity in the body. *Repeated suppression may hinder the capacity of our human spirit to express itself in us, or*

may transform our acute illnesses into chronic ones. The spirit renews as well as destroys, and now that we have the power in our technology to modify even the spirit's power, we must acquire the discernment to use that power wisely, or else cause our children and ourselves great suffering.

The task of healing ourselves, our children, and the Earth is one and the same. To accomplish this will require a revolution in all aspects of modern science, and especially in agriculture, medicine, psychology, education, and parenting. It will require enormous enthusiasm and goodwill. It will require of us nothing less than a practical, down-to-earth embodying of the spirit's fiery, renewing power. ✱

ENDNOTES:

1. R. Sapolsky, "How the Other Half Heals," *Discover*, April 1998, 46-52.

2. Ibid.

3. For further information on this point see: D.J. Benor, *Healing Research: Holistic Energy Medicine and Spirituality*, vol. I (United Kingdom: Helix Editions, 1993).

See also S. Locke and M. Hornig-Rohan, *Mind and Immunity: Behavioral Immunology, An Annotated Bibliography, 1976-1982* (New York: Institute for the Advancement of Health, 1983).

4. For further information on this point see: L.A. Sagan, *The Health of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

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See also T. McKeown, *The Role of Medicine* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979).

5. D. Mann, "Study: 18% of U.S. Children Suffer Chronic Conditions," *Medical Tribune*, August 13, 1998.

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7. "Health and the American Child, Part I: A Focus on Mortality Among Children" (Washington, D.C.: Public Health Advisory Board, May 1999).

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

Dr. Philip Incao received a B.S. degree from Wesleyan University and an M.D. degree, in 1966, from Albert Einstein College of Medicine. In the early 1970s he spent two years in Europe studying anthroposophic medicine and later was the first president of the Physicians Association for Anthroposophic Medicine (PAAM). He has written and lectured widely, particularly on the topic of child health. Dr. Incao is a recognized authority on the issue of vaccinations and the problems associated with them. Between 1973 and 1996 he practiced medicine in rural upstate New York and since 1997 has been in practice in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Incao has been a medical consultant to many Waldorf schools. He is currently working on a book entitled *The Healing Flame: How to Raise a Healthy Child in the 21st Century*.

"Button Up Your Overcoat!"

Warmth and the Healthy Development of the Young Child

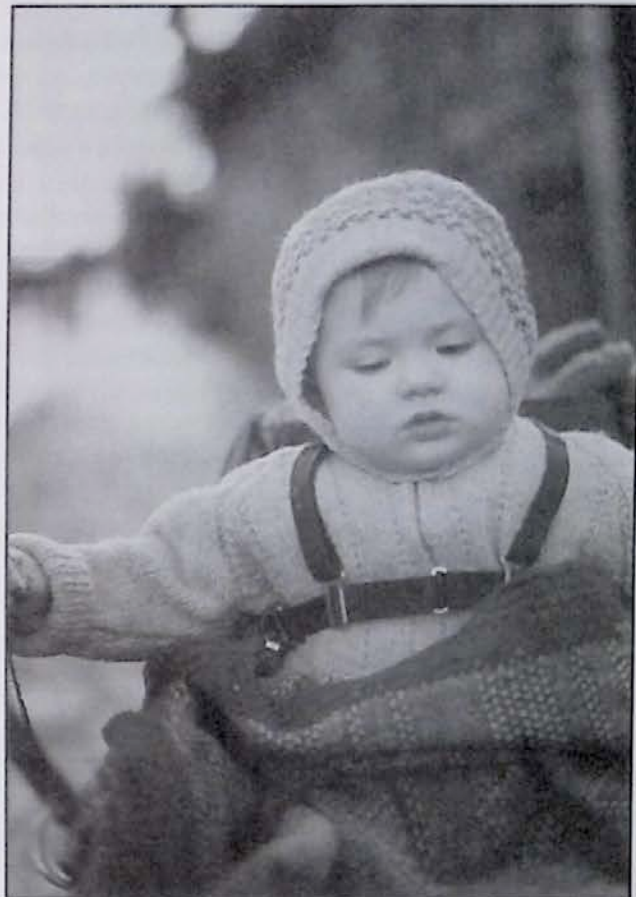
By Thomas Poplawski

There is a folk wisdom that remains alive in the Waldorf community but that is increasingly neglected in the larger society. It concerns how children today need, on many different levels, to be protected. Waldorf parents are encouraged to shield their children from the mass media and technology, from adult fashions in clothes, and from junk and convenience foods—not too many sweets in the lunch box, please. They are also encouraged to protect little Trevor or Fiona from one thing that seems less insidious—the cold. Waldorf wisdom says to keep infants and children physically warm.

The fetus at birth leaves the totally protected, warm, dark environment of the womb. It enters a relatively cold world full of dazzling lights, harsh sounds, and other often chaotic stimuli. The newborn, expelled from paradise, needs a period of transition to get used to its new environment. Thus a mother will instinctively hold the infant close, enveloping it physically in her arms. In doing so, she is enveloping it on a more subtle level, within her aura, within the protective covering of her life energies and soul warmth. If she needs to set the baby down, she should wrap it warmly, cover its head with a knitted cap, and lay the infant in a warm, secure place.

Keeping an infant warm is important because its ability to regulate body temperature has not yet been established. The newborn has a very large head in comparison to the rest of the body. Since most body heat is lost from the head, it is crucial that the infant's head be covered with a wool or cotton cap. The cap also serves to cover the vulnerable fontanelle, that place at the top of the skull where the bones have not yet come together. It protects too from the direct rays of the sun, which for the infant also can be too extreme.

This wrapping and covering of the baby—which has its parallel with the older child—has to do not only with physical warmth. In many religions there is a tradition of covering the head when in church or temple. At play here is the intuition that to protect and keep the head warm is to keep the soul "warm," to keep it from hardening. In the child, this protection of the "warmth organism" supports the development of emotional



flexibility and fluidity. On a warm, sunny day, a mother may feel she does not need a head covering, but it is still important to protect the much more sensitive baby.

The newborn must also be guarded from a too rapid exposure to the bright lights, activity, and commotion of the everyday world. Traditionally, a mother observed a "lying-in" period, during which she and the infant remained in a curtained room where light was dim and filtered. This gave the infant's eyes time to develop and to be able to focus. (Placing a rose-colored silk cloth over the crib as a canopy also can give a similar protection.) This period of relative dark and quiet usually lasted a number of weeks—forty days was a commonly observed length of time. During this period the mother rested and devoted herself to the care of the infant. Distractions were avoided. Only the closest family and

friends came to visit, and it was unthinkable to take the baby out during this almost sacred time.

Alas, what a far cry from the situation today! Now one often sees a two- or three-day-old infant, dazed and vulnerable, being wheeled around beneath the glare of the fluorescent lights in a noisy shopping mall, or taken to the mother's place of work to be displayed for the benefit of colleagues. We have largely forgotten and lost the old practice of sheltering the newborn.

Fortunately, many mothers today retain an intuitive sense that the newborn must be protected from cold, from the direct rays of the sun, and from sensory overstimulation. Few realize, though, that this "gesture of the womb" continues to be an important need for the growing child, especially in relation to warmth.

As the child matures, the body has a finite amount of energy to use for growth, both for the growth of the body as a whole and for the development of the brain and inner organs. Keeping the body warm allows the greatest amount of these energies to be devoted to this task. When the child is not sufficiently warm, the growth forces are used up in maintaining body temperature, and the processes of outer and inner growth are affected. Making sure that Johnny's hat is on, his scarf wrapped, and coat buttoned are thus important for more than just fending off colds. They allow the child to devote all

available energies to its healthy growth and development. Whether hats are in or out of fashion at the moment, the growing child should wear one and should otherwise be kept warm.

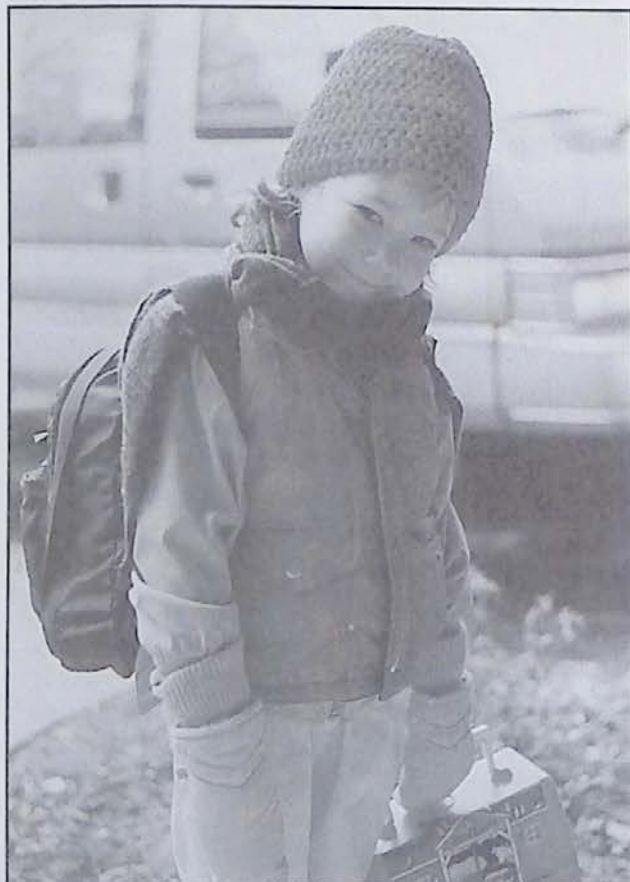
Some pediatricians advise that you dress your child with as many layers as you feel you yourself need. The problem with this is that an adult has much greater control of body temperature and, often, a greater store of bodily fat than a child and thus needs less clothing. A child tends to be more like an elderly person, someone who is in "second childhood" and who does not retain body heat. The difference, though, is that a child can be turning blue with the cold and have chattering teeth and not even realize that she is cold.

Temperament is also a factor: A choleric or fiery-natured parent may be relatively insensitive to cold, while her melancholic (introspective, slow-moving) child will need extra layers. The melancholic child needs extra clothes both to warm his often spare frame but also—since he is often anxious and overly sensitive—to provide an extra buffer against the world—a security blanket. All children through the age of thirteen or fourteen can benefit, especially in their more vulnerable moments, from an extra layer of clothing. It is no coincidence that we speak of the loving care we give to others as warmth.

One frosty March New England morning when I took my two sons to school, one of their classmates took off his winter coat to reveal that all he wore underneath was a tee shirt! As the door opened again and another chilling blast of wind swept into the room, I inwardly shivered, though this little fellow did not seem to notice at all. Then a seven-year-old girl came in wearing a thin and unbuttoned cardigan, and a thin, short skirt that left her bare legs exposed. Brrrr!

One Waldorf school doctor recommends that when the temperature is below 60 degrees, children should wear—in addition to their coats—at least three layers above the waist and two below. All layers, however, are not created equal. Wool (long favored by Europeans for underwear as well as for outer layers) is superior to all other fabrics in promoting warmth. Thus optimally a child might wear cotton short underwear; wool long underwear; and then warm pants (or skirt) and a warm shirt. On very cold days, especially for the slimmer, more delicate child, a woolen vest or sweater might be worn as well. Socks and caps should be of wool.

"What is so special about wool?" you may ask. It is not available at local stores, requires special care in washing and drying, and so on. Wool is an amazing fabric, though. It can absorb up to 30 percent of its own weight in moisture without feeling damp. Also, it wicks moisture



away from the skin and insulates even when wet. Thus a child with wet wool socks will still have warm feet. Duofold, which is generally available and which has an inner cotton layer and an outer woolen one, is an excellent option.

Synthetic fabrics such as polypropylene and polyester fleece have some of wool's characteristics, but they impact the environment negatively in their manufacture and disposal. Also, as artificial fabrics (fleece is made from recycled plastic soda bottles) they lack wool's natural aesthetic appeal. They just feel "unnatural" and "peculiar." And, as synthetic products, they may thus, on a more subtle level, be detrimental to the proper development of the child's senses. (Please see my article "Losing Our Senses" in the Fall 1998 *Renewal*.) As one art therapist put it, expressing a totally nonscientific but deeply intuitive view, "[Synthetic] fleece is entirely dead, and carries deadening vibrations. It is not what you want to wrap your child in if you can help it." And most of us can help it.

The archetypal image of the robed Madonna holding, enveloping, and protecting her young child is an image we all need to hold and nurture as we go about our own not-so-archetypal lives. Keeping our children well covered and warm from head to foot can be a struggle, but it is an important aspect of our protecting them. In the words of a popular tune of the 1940s:

Button up your overcoat
When the winds blow free.
Take good care of yourself—
You belong to me. ✱

Thomas Poplawski is a psychotherapist living in Northampton, Massachusetts. Both Thomas and his wife, Valerie, are trained eurythmists. Their two young sons, Julian and Byron, attend the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, Massachusetts. Thomas was recently a keynote speaker at a conference on the four temperaments held in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is the author of *Eurythmy: Rhythm, Dance, and Soul*, published by Floris Books, as well as numerous articles, many of which have appeared in *Renewal*. Please see Thomas's article on biodynamic agriculture also in this issue of *Renewal*.

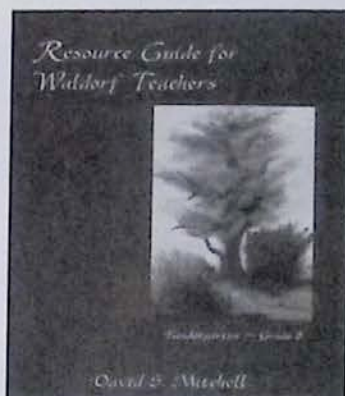
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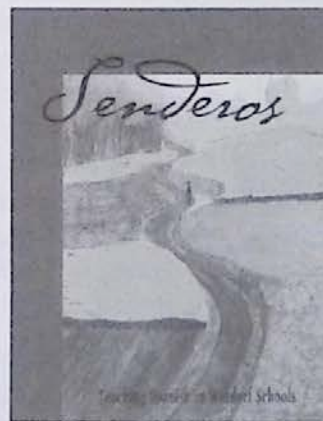
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"It's Time for Dinner!"—Giving Your Child a Foundation for Sound Sleep, Abundant Energy, and a Positive Outlook

By Susan R. Johnson, M.D.

I still struggle getting my seven-year-old son to sleep by 8:00 P.M. It seems there is a magic window. If we eat by 5:00 and I start slowing down his activities by 6:00, then there is a good chance that he will fall asleep soon after we have read stories together at 7:30. He will sleep well, and in the morning he will be refreshed, be in a good mood, and will have a lot of energy for the day.

However, if I don't have dinner ready until 6:00 or 7:00 and the slowdown doesn't begin until 8:00 or 8:30, then my son gets a second wind that keeps him awake and active until 10:00 or 10:30. The next day is difficult for him. He has trouble getting up, eating breakfast, and getting to school on time. He is tired and more irritable the entire day. What is happening?

According to anthroposophical medicine, the liver is a very important organ. It largely determines the quality of our sleep, as well as our energy level and our general sense of well-being. Two of the main metabolic

tasks of the liver are to break down protein and to store sugar as glycogen. The liver follows the cycle of the sun. It is at its peak of activity at the height of the day. After 3:00 P.M. it doesn't want to process any large meals, especially ones that contain much protein or fat. Around 6:00 in the evening it wants to go to sleep and starts to store up the sugar as glycogen to be used for the next day.

Both eating late and staying up late disturb the liver's functioning. By having a heavy meal late in the evening we are stressing the liver when it is wanting to rest. Then if we stay up late and are active in the late evening, we cause the liver to reverse its normal process and to break down the glycogen back into glucose. We do get a burst of energy, but in fact we are depleting energy stores that are meant for the next day. When we do get to bed, our sleep, because the liver has been overactive, is not likely to be deep or restful. We awake in the morning still tired and out of sorts.

Because we begin the day tired

and with our liver depleted of glycogen, the adrenal glands release stress hormones to keep us functioning. These hormones act to provide more sugar in the blood, but they also accelerate our heart rate, increase our blood pressure, and constrict the blood vessels going to the hands and feet, thus causing cold hands and feet. They also suppress the immune system. That is why in such a condition we get colds more easily. The combination of stress hormones and too little glycogen in the liver can make us crave sugar. Then, if we eat something very sweet, such as candy or cookies—especially on an empty stomach—the sugar stimulates our pancreas to produce too much of another hormone, insulin. The excess insulin causes our cells to absorb too much sugar from the blood. We go into a condition of low blood sugar or hypoglycemia. We feel tired, irritable, and lightheaded. A child at this point may become impulsive and hyperactive. The hypoglycemic condition *please turn to page 24*



Advice to New Waldorf Teachers

By Pamela Bradley

*Imbue thyself with the power of
imagination.*

Have courage for the truth.

*Sharpen thy feeling for responsibility of
soul.*

—From a lecture given by Rudolf Steiner to the first Waldorf teachers and contained in the book *Study of Man* (recently retranslated and published as *The Foundations of Human Experience* [Anthroposophic Press, 1996]).

Recently three of the Chicago Waldorf School's veteran master teachers, Ron

Richardson, Frances Vig, and Susan Stevenson met to discuss the advice they would give to new Waldorf teachers. Each has been involved with the Chicago Waldorf School for most or all of its twenty-five-year history. The three offered the following counsel to new teachers:

- **Have an artistic activity in your life that you cherish and nurture, one that is separate from your work with the children.**

This will enable you to regenerate and rejuvenate yourself. Ron has done speech formation work, Susan eurythmy, and Frances clay modeling. An area of artistic endeavor is vital to the life of a teacher.

- **Maintain a meditative practice based on Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science.** In virtually all of Steiner's writings and lectures for teachers he includes advice for meditation and stresses the importance of individual meditative work.



Teachers at a curriculum workshop display the instruments they have made.

Meditation is one means by which we as adults can change, evolve, and develop. It helps us be fresh, open, engaged in our work, and flexible in meeting difficult situations. Also it makes us more interesting to the children. Children can sense that we are striving, that we are trying to become more truly human. They are interested in growth and change. If we appear as already finished beings, then the children will think, "Who cares?"

- **Be prepared, especially in a pioneer school, to be asked to do (just about) anything.** In the early days in Chicago, Frances Vig recalls, "We had nothing. We had to find, make, create everything to shape the beginnings of the first kindergarten. Along with parents and friends of the school, we built classroom

chairs, painted classroom walls, and sometimes found that there was no money at the end of the month for the payroll. However, that lovely spirit of everyone contributing whatever he or she had to offer the school was incredible."

- **Be clear about your professional boundaries.** Be clear about what you can and will do for the children, their families, the school, and your colleagues. Communicate these and the limits they imply so that others will expect of you only what you can bring. There is a tendency today to ask of teachers and schools things that they cannot deliver and to place blame on them when problems arise. In this context the vocation of teaching can become overwhelming. One has to set realistic limits. Rudolf Steiner talked

about a teacher having to put up an umbrella sometimes to protect herself from the rain. You can't take everything personally in this work. If you do, you won't last.

- **Keep your enthusiasm and your desire to learn more about Waldorf Education.** The theory and practice of Waldorf Education involves an unending study. Go to conferences, take summer courses.
- **Stay flexible about the way you teach and about Waldorf Education.** Waldorf Education is an approach to education, not a set of rules. The needs of children are varied and ever changing, and it is a great responsibility to try to meet them. One needs to be flexible rather than dogmatic to succeed in this task. Continue studying the principles of the education so that you can apply them in any situation.
- **Be free in your presentation of the curriculum.** Waldorf Education calls for the teacher to be creative and free in bringing the

curriculum to the children. Each group of children is different and requires that the teacher present the curriculum in a way that meets the group's specific character and needs. The challenges and rewards here are great.

- **Don't be afraid to make up and tell your own pedagogical stories to the children.** This can be an excellent way to deal with situations in the class, such as teasing and bullying. Susan as a new teacher was hesitant to use her own stories and did not feel very skilled at making them up. However, among the stories she told, her own had the most profound transformative effect on the children in her classes.
- **Help the children cultivate a sensitivity to and respect for other human beings and to manifest this in social forms and habits.** Politeness and manners based on respect of others have been largely lost in our society. The children no longer know how to behave socially. By teaching them to

shake hands, to stand up when an adult enters the room, and to greet teachers at school, we are helping them develop a sense of how individuals and groups can interact, as well as cultivating in them a flexibility and sensitivity in relating to other human beings. This builds in them a capacity to relate to other human beings out of authentic respect.

- **Maintain a sense of joy and a sense of humor.** You may have all the other skills required, but without these gifts of joy and humor you are "done for" in teaching.
- **Become fluid.** In a spiritual sense, we must become "a verb"—someone who is actively open to and capable of change and development. The meditative practices can help us in this. Ron Richardson remembers an image he experienced in relation to his last eighth-grade class, an image of standing on the banks of [something like a body of water that was actually] the coming into being of these human beings. "Then I realized," he recalls, "that I wasn't on the



A Waldorf teacher and one of his students discuss an important aspect of the day's lesson.

banks—I was wading in the substance of the coming into being of these modern people as they were evolving. It was such a privilege!" Teachers need to strive to become more universally human as the children are simultaneously realizing their own identity. A teacher's ability to lead comes out of this interrelationship between the mutual development of teacher and student.

- **Be aware that you have exactly as much experience as you need to handle any situation that arises.** This is true even for the new teacher. A master teacher who had taken five classes through the grades told Susan Stevenson, "When you have more experience, then the problems will be bigger." In other words, have confidence.

- **Pay attention to your own perceptions and trust them.** Really pay attention. If you are awake to a situation the child will communicate what he needs. The communication will often be nonverbal, and in fact may be the opposite of what is spoken. If you are searching for the meaning of a particular situation and what to do about it, often an answer will come unexpectedly.

- **Love the struggle.** It is a humbling experience to be a Waldorf teacher. No matter how many times you go around in the grades, it is different each time—there are different children and new problems. Ron remembers a "Hagar the Horrible" cartoon that expresses this well. Hagar's warriors are fighting against the enemy and one of the men says, "Who is winning?" A voice responds, "Who cares! We are just fighting!" You have to love the challenge.

- **Remember that Waldorf Education has to do with quality, not quantity.** If quantity becomes a goal, then we will lose

Waldorf Education. Plugging children into the Internet or testing them to discover what information they have in their heads is different from helping them develop into free, thoughtful, creative, and loving human beings.

- **Talk to your colleagues in the faculty room.** There is much richness in the short conversations that take place informally among teachers. The more we talk and listen, the more we come up with solutions that go beyond the commonplace. Through the art of conversation teachers can work through many of the challenges and issues they meet. Be sure your school has a faculty room where this can happen.

- **Listen to the perceptions of the subject teachers and other school staff.** Their perceptions need to be shared so that all the staff are learning from one another. The educational experience of the children is created over the years by the class teacher in conjunction with the subject teachers and other staff. The views and opinions of these colleagues are important in supplementing your own perspective. Make the time to meet with them.

- **When asked to do something new, to lead a workshop or to give a talk, for example, don't be afraid to say no, but also don't be afraid to say yes.** One danger for the new teacher is being overburdened. But it gives you strength as a new teacher to say yes to a request and then to figure out how you are going to get the job done. Challenge yourself to develop new skills!

- **Remember that parents put great trust in teachers.** We likewise need to put trust in the parents, to respect their opinions, and to listen to and address their

concerns. This cooperative exchange greatly enhances our work.

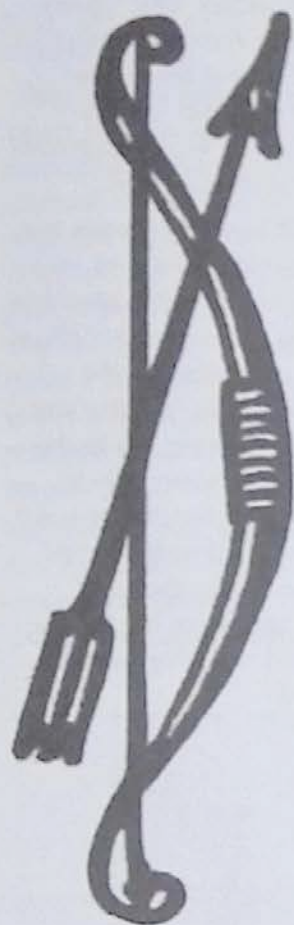
- **Remember too that your first responsibility is the education of the children.** We, as teachers, are engaged in the community of the school, but we are responsible for the children first of all. Parents are an important part of the school community, and without their warmth and initiative, a Waldorf school could not thrive. Teachers need to be involved with parents, but that should not divert them unduly from their work in the classroom.

- **There will be rough times, but if you commit yourself to your work, the rewards are considerable.** If you find yourself in a difficult situation or are feeling that the romance of teaching has gone, your commitment can carry you till the joy returns. Susan remembers deciding to honor her own vow and to persevere in a difficult situation. Because she did this, the world seemed to open up to her, and she experienced a rewarding year of teaching. ✱

Pamela Bradley is a parent of two daughters at the Chicago Waldorf School. She recently coauthored (with Barbara Patterson) Beyond the Rainbow Bridge: Nurturing our Children from Birth to Seven, a book on early childhood for teachers and parents. (Beyond the Rainbow Bridge is available from Michaelmas Press, (978) 388-7066.) Pamela has also ghostwritten The Home Birth Advantage, which includes the history of home birth in Chicago as well as the stories of many home births from the practice of Dr. Mayer Eisenstein, Director of Homefirst Family Health Services.

The Mind as an Arrow: Practicing Archery in a Waldorf School

By Carmine Iannaccone



Like Autumn leaves,
My arrows rustle in
their quiver.
Like startled deer,
They leap with a sigh.
Like blades of grass,
My arrows are light
when I hold them.
Like birds of the field,
They fly.

Along with fire and the wheel, the bow and arrow are among the fundamental inventions in human history. Their significance lies in the fact that they gave early man a way to greatly extend his effective reach, allowed him to “touch” something that was far away from him. Even a bow of Stone Age design can send an arrow flying a distance of over a hundred yards with great accuracy.²

In archery, first, the eye and mind locate a point in the world. Then, the body and the bow are aligned with that point. Finally, the arrow—an extension of that mind, body, and mechanism working together—flies off and

makes contact, binding the archer to his environment. One reward of teaching archery to a child is the thrill she experiences in this basic act of extending her “reach” into space. Another is the deliberateness with which the child, guided by an instructor, will try to repeat that initial experience.

At the Highland Hall Waldorf School, children from both the lower school and the high school participate in the archery program. All our archery instructors are certified by the National Archery Association, and we operate according to the protocols and the high standard of safety set by that organization. As members of the Waldorf community, though, we also bring a unique perspective to this activity as it relates to the mind, body, and spirit of the developing child. Rudolf Steiner called eurythmy “speech that has become visible.” In a Waldorf context, archery also is an activity that makes visible the extension of mind into the world. Using the Waldorf curriculum as our guide, we can understand the different way this happens at each stage of the child’s development.

The mind and spirit of younger children (those in grades one through three) extend into the world through the imagination. For children at this age, archery is not a matter of learning proper form—although that is, in fact, what they are doing. When they draw back the string, they not only “shoot” the arrow, they watch the arrow spring to life, in the same way their imagination brings a doll to life. When that arrow flies, it becomes a bird, a leaping stag, a flash of lightning. It becomes animate, and they feel the intense joy of taking part in that process. For the younger child, when the arrow flies, some part of the imagination flies too. Wooden arrows and authentic feather fletching, because of their sensory associations with the natural world, promote this activity of the imagination and help make it palpable. Furthermore, the bow, with its graceful curves, becomes an extension of self. The bow and the archer become one, an experience that comes to children easily and naturally and that adult beginners often have to struggle to achieve.

Around grade four, the child begins to bring a different set of priorities into his practice. First of all, he is much more conscious of having his own bow. But this is



not strictly a matter of possessiveness. His emergent ego understands the bow as a trusty companion, a reliable friend—his friend. And the arrows, now, become an extension of that nascent ego. Waldorf teachers recognize that as the ego evolves, children feel less imaginatively embedded in the world and begin to sense a separation of self from other phenomena. For the older child then, archery becomes a matter of closing the distance between himself and the target. Therein lies the satisfaction of the hit. Out of this also emerges a desire to keep placing the target farther away, to further challenge the reach and extension of the ego. Many younger children don't share this concern—they don't care how far away the mark is. For them, it is the life of the arrow that matters. The arrow is animated as though by its own force, a force that the child is able to release. Older children, by contrast, send the arrow forth as an expression of their own volition and newfound will.

This development takes yet another turn as children approach high school age. As part of their study, our students make all their own equipment. They begin in the early years, and even the youngest children enjoy making their own leather fingertabs and armguards. Later, they make their own arrows and quivers. But for the adolescents, it is the opportunity to make their own wooden bow that fascinates, because the bow represents

the mechanical aspect of the practice. The bow is a tool, and, as such, it engages the analytical powers of mind that now extend into the world as probing questions and as a new capacity for discernment.

The bow makes accessible to this adolescent a wealth of physical properties in a simple, tactile way. One can feel how the recurved or double-curved bow is springier upon release than the crisp longbow—a virtue of its design. One can see that greater pounds of pull result in greater speed and flatter trajectory of the arrow. Because the older archer will want to test his comprehension of these factors, a new preoccupation with accuracy emerges. He becomes fascinated with how a small adjustment in the placement of the nock on the string affects the flight of the arrow, how such small adjustments are magnified by distance to the target, and, most important of all, how he can exercise control over those effects.³

In all cases, it is just this kind of direct contact between the child and the bow or the child and the arrow that seems to make archery appropriate in a Waldorf environment. The mechanics of the activity are very straightforward. Thus archery can lead to a variety of experiences, from the pleasure the very young child feels at the way her hand fits snugly into the carved wooden grip, to the heightened awareness an adolescent

may experience when he tries—in the meditative manner of Japanese masters—to loose the arrow in the space between two heartbeats.⁴

In both the Orient and in the West, indeed, the entire world over, across all cultures and through much, much history, archery has been a practice filled with legend, lore, and ceremony. For us as members of the Waldorf community, it is also a valuable way to witness the progressive growth of a child's inner being and to create a safe, constructive environment where that inner being can enter into dialogue with some of the material things of this world. For an archery instructor in a Waldorf school, it can be deeply rewarding to see a group of children side by side on the shooting range, all equally absorbed—but each in a different way—with the challenges and the satisfactions of this ancient practice. *

ENDNOTES:

1. The practice of archery is readily enriched by a wealth of literary and poetic resources to which Waldorf students, in particular, are very receptive. This verse (composed by the author) is one example of how we draw upon these resources to catalyze the child's imaginative experience. We also use various archery games in which children play out main lesson ideas, from the story of St. Michael, to themes from Norse mythology, to tales from the ancient Greeks.

2. Tim Baker, in *The Traditional Bowyer's Bible, Volume 3* (Azle, Tex.: Bois d'Arc Press, 1994), recreates the entire experience of constructing a wooden bow using only the tools and resources available to Stone Age man.

3. This is the point at which some children begin to think of archery more formally as a "sport." The rigor and discipline of Junior Olympic-style competition, with its emphasis on high performance equipment and precise scorekeeping, can be a natural next step.

4. My concept of archery as an activity that addresses not just the body, but also the mind and spirit, owes much to the example of *kyudo*—the Japanese art of ceremonial archery. For one of the few discussions of *kyudo* in English, see Hideharu Onuma (with Dan and Jackie DeProspero), *Kyudo: The Essence and Practice of Japanese Archery* (New York: Kodansha International, 1993).

I would like to express my indebtedness to Alice Stamm, eurythmist, and Pamela Saterdalen, Bothmer gymnast, both of the Highland Hall School, for helping to deepen my understanding of the crucial connection between physical movement and the nature of thought.

Carmine Iannaccone is a professor in the School of Fine Arts at the University of Southern California. He also teaches at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. The father of two Waldorf students, he practices Japanese ceremonial archery with the Los Angeles Kyudo Dojo and leads an after-school archery course at the Highland Hall Waldorf School in Northridge, California.

It's Time for Dinner continued from page 18



makes us crave sugar again, and the cycle is repeated.

These physiological reactions take place in everyone. Individuals, though, vary in the amount of stress hormone they release in response to sleep deprivation and in the amount of insulin

they release in response to sugar. Thus, certain children and adults are more susceptible to this debilitating cycle. For all children (and adults), but especially for children who are overactive and who have difficulty paying attention in school, it is wise to observe the following:

1. Have the main, protein- and fat-rich meal early in the day, ideally not later than 3:00 P.M., but certainly before 6:00 P.M.
2. Have the child go to bed early, between 7:00 and 8:00 P.M. for a young child and proportionately later for an older child.
3. Minimize sweets and foods with refined sugar. Give the child fresh or dried fruits. *

Why I Am Going Back to School continued from page 42

Soon thereafter I abandoned acupuncture and got involved in journalism and magazine publishing. My intent, inspired by Findhorn, was to offer an alternative to the negative, problem-oriented perspective of most mainstream media. I wanted to help people see a more complete picture of themselves and the world—not just what is breaking down, but also what is breaking through.

Teaching children in a Waldorf school feels as right to me now as starting *Utne Reader* did nearly seventeen years ago. I learned a little about a lot of things while editing and publishing the magazine, which was great preparation for teaching. But I needed to learn my most important life lessons elsewhere. If I can help my students learn one thing, it will be to discover and to intelligently nurture what they love. I want to help them deeply listen to, and trust, and even think with their heart. It's the key to all real personal growth and social change, and I only learned it when I stopped talking about it and literally came home to live it. And now I am taking it to school. *

Morality and the Teaching of Literature in the High School

By Carol Bärtges

The word "morality" is once again in vogue in educational circles. With the images of Columbine High School fresh in our collective consciousness, teachers and parents are asking how schools can instill a sense of purpose and humanity in young people. And yet, morality is a loaded term—a word as likely to be associated with sullen pedantry or inflexible demand as it is with good teaching. Modern educators often wince at the concept of an ethical education, convinced that it is not the province of the English or biology class and that morality belongs to special seminars on "anger modification," "racial tolerance," or "community awareness."

Iconoclasts in the best sense of the word, Waldorf students turn out to be flexible thinkers, often more intrigued by thinking "outside the box" than in conforming to safe expectations.

To the Waldorf educator, moral education belongs in the classroom. It involves the attempt to help students understand truths beyond their personal parameters, truths that lift them above their narrow concerns and allow them to regard the struggles and quests of mankind with empathy and discernment. As George Eliot observed in her novel *Middlemarch*, "We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves." Eliot's aim is not to rub our human deficiencies in our all too human faces, but rather to emphasize that only when we overcome our self-preoccupation and prejudices can we accomplish anything of note for the world. True judgment is an acquired trait, cultivated consciously and slowly, and in

some cases, painfully, as was the case with the novel's Dorothea Brooke.

In the English class, the study of great writers and their works is one way of helping the students assume a balanced moral stance, outgrow their "moral stupidity," and develop critical faculties that result in a lawful, compassionate view of the world. Only this kind of judgment can resolve the social fragmentation and isolation young people experience today.

We high school teachers are helped by the work that has been done in the lower grades. My colleague Sandra Williams, who taught at the Kimberton Waldorf School, once said of students with a Waldorf background, "Their appreciation and sense for the great ages of mankind is a brilliant tapestry gleaming with images of heroes and saints, with memories of deeds of honor, valor, and nobility. All these have been impressed upon the soul in a grand tableau transcending time and space."

The experience that students will have in a Waldorf high school is not predicated upon their having attended a Waldorf lower school, but students who arrive with those first eight years of Waldorf schooling do bring a reservoir of powerful images on which they can continually draw to enliven their intellect. Iconoclasts in the best sense of the word, Waldorf students turn out to be flexible thinkers, often more intrigued by thinking "outside the box" than in conforming to safe expectations. Building upon what has been given by an extraordinary elementary school education, the Waldorf high school curriculum affirms the students' longing for the ideal in the contemporary world by consciously schooling, developing, and, ultimately, liberating their powers of thought. In their next four years, students learn that freedom in thinking can lead to purposeful moral deeds in the world.

The development of analytical thinking is cultivated in deliberate fashion in a Waldorf English class. Although freshmen and sophomores demonstrate daily that they are more than capable of passing judgment (as they do readily about parents, teachers, and others), a peek into their classrooms quickly shows that young adolescents are not, at this stage, objective. Events are still viewed

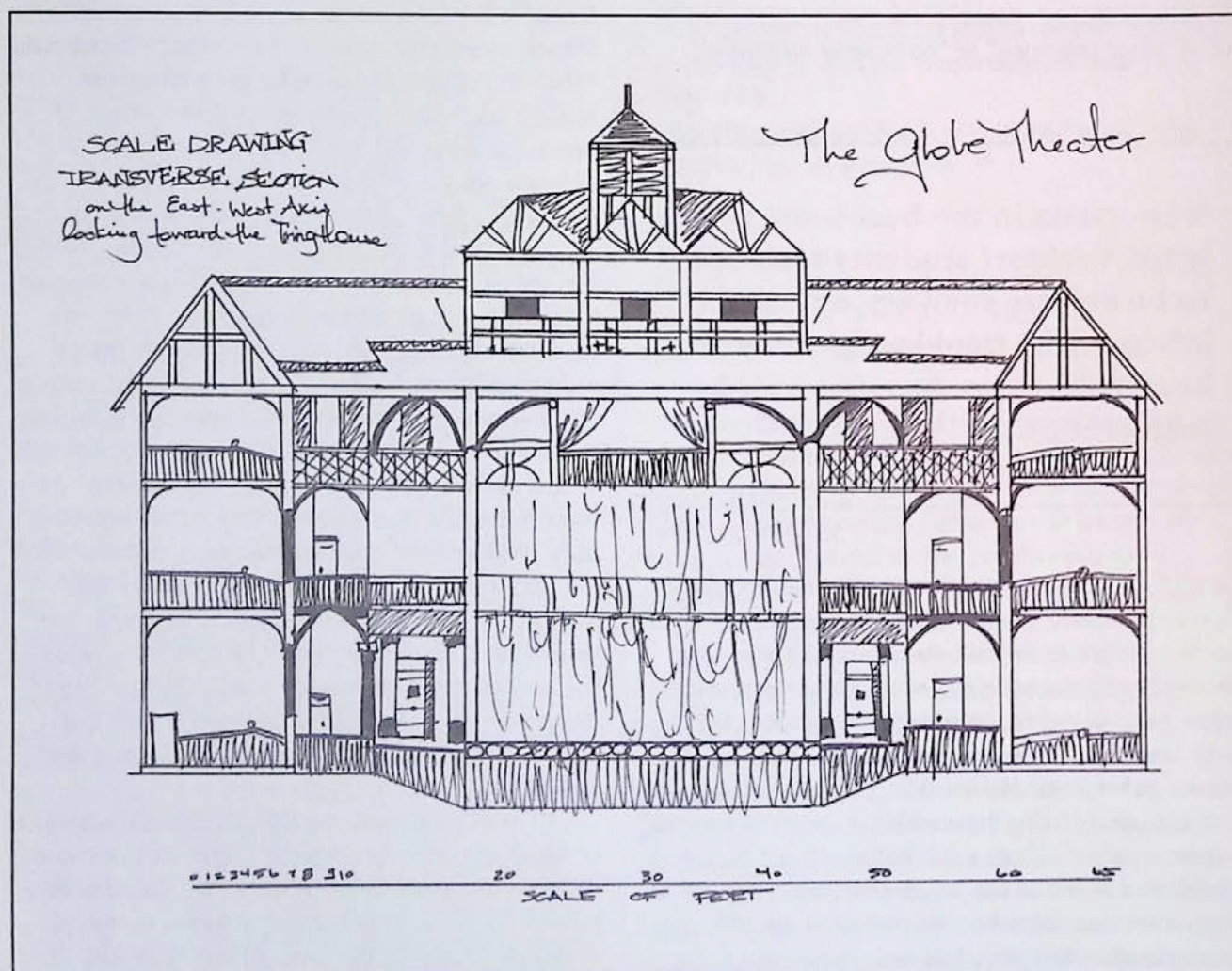
mostly through the prisms of their emerging individualities. Discussing a book or poem with ninth graders from a purely abstract, intellectual point of view results in either a volley of personal opinion or an exchange of banalities. Caught in the pendulum of mood swings that propel them to and fro between despair and exhilaration, ninth and tenth graders are still striving for equilibrium.

Rudolf Steiner described students of this age as needing to look out into the world of experience and to ground themselves in their surroundings. Therefore, the approach to literature is most effective for this age group when it remains concrete, when it can direct the students toward objective observation. In their reflecting upon and comparing known realities, presented by the teacher and the curriculum, a reconciliation of extremes is brought about that is healing to the mind and to the soul. One might compare Egyptian civilization to the Greek, the Athenian world of law to the fairy world of the woods (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), the nobility of Odysseus to the power of Menelaus (the *Odyssey*), vowel

sounds and consonant sounds, or the internal monologue of Dorothy Parker's "The Waltz" to Ring Lardner's monologue in "Haircut."

Literary conclusions reached in this way, through analogy, the comparison of unlike things, are deeply satisfying and real to ninth and tenth graders. They are less apt to make snap judgments when they have lived deeply in two conflicting points of view, for they intuitively find the fulcrum and learn to understand, not condemn, differences.

By regarding the schooling of thought as a slow, evolving process, the Waldorf English teacher helps the students build a sturdy structure in which they will house their slowly developing powers of perception. By senior year, students complete the golden turrets and spires themselves. They have grown adept at making literary connections and analogies of their own. In this way one can honestly describe the experience of the high school English classes as the movement from observation (ninth grade) to insight (twelfth grade).



An eleventh-grade student illustration of the Globe Theatre from the main lesson on Shakespeare.

Not only the teaching approach, but also the actual content of the English curriculum itself brings about emotional equilibrium and genuine moral thought. The careful design of the various main lessons throughout the four years allows us to teach what T. S. Eliot calls the "objective correlatives" of literature, those images that will reverberate most deeply in the soul of the student at his or her particular age. If one studies what Rudolf Steiner asserts about the inner life of a fifteen-year-old, for example, one understands the all-important role that community plays in a student's life at this time. Epic literature, with its depiction of Beowulf or Odysseus as representatives of *aristos* (noble society) engaged in *aristae* (noble deeds), strikes a note in the tenth grader who yearns to conform to a worthy community. The discussion of what constitutes a worthy society addresses this deep and unconscious question for the sophomore. The sixteen-year-old who is more withdrawn takes an inner journey, questing for identity and love while questioning conventions of society. Juniors respond deeply to the archetypes of these experiences presented in eleventh-grade main lessons on *Hamlet*, *Parzival*, or Romantic poetry. Although a ninth grader could certainly appreciate the prince of Denmark, the sixteen-year-old's *gestalt* connects him or her actively to Hamlet's feelings of disenchantment, to the inner struggles of that "profound heart."

Finally, one experiences time and time again that amazing turn in twelfth grade when the students lift themselves out of subjective contemplation and demonstrate a craving for contact with the world of ideas. Now they are ripe for discussions about literary genres, political movements, and the socioeconomic ramifications of scientific research. What powers of thought the seniors bring to such courses as Transcendentalism or Russian Literature, where they are asked to wrestle with the very act of thinking itself and recognize its moral implications in the world of action! In these twelfth-grade courses, as students discuss Nihilism, Orthodoxy, passive resistance, social reform, or Emerson's concept of beauty and the oversoul, they realize that free thought is often the hallmark of moral deeds. Individuals such as Thoreau, Tolstoy, or Gandhi endeavored to conduct their lives and make choices on the basis of truth alone.

In its conveyance of truth and beauty, in nature and mankind, good literature is always, irrefutably, moral. This is why Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his 1972 Nobel Prize speech said the following:

Who will help us coordinate our scale of values?
What will give mankind one single way of reading its instruments both for wrongdoing and doing good,

for the intolerable and the tolerable? Who will make clear for mankind what is really oppressive and unbearable and what, for being so near, rubs us the wrong way? Who is capable of extending his understanding across the boundaries of his own personal experience? Who has the skill to make a narrow,

By regarding the schooling of thought as a slow, evolving process, the Waldorf English teacher helps the students build a sturdy structure in which they will house their slowly developing powers of perception

obstinate human being aware of others' far-off grief and joy, to make him understand dimensions and delusions he himself has never lived through? Propaganda, coercion and scientific proofs are all powerless. But happily, in our world there is a way. It is art and it is literature.

Out of an understanding of Rudolf Steiner's picture of the inner development of the child and the adolescent, English teachers in a Waldorf high school attempt to bring to the students images in literature that organically cultivate objective, moral thought. In this way, we can help young people learn to transcend their own limitations, approach their fellow human beings with compassion, and actively unite themselves with an ever changing world. ✱

Carol Bärtges attended the Rudolf Steiner of New York. After graduating she went on to pursue studies in English and drama at Williams College. Carol completed her graduate work at New York University. She has taught at the Rudolf Steiner School of New York since 1978, serving in a variety of roles—among them class teacher, high school English teacher, and chair of the college of teachers. Her two children attend the school, and her husband serves on its board of trustees.

Addressing Contemporary Issues in the High School:

The Example of Human Cloning

By Craig Holdrege

Today's young people meet myriad important questions, theories, and problems that are related to specialized fields of scientific inquiry:

- Did the universe arise out of a primeval "big bang"?
- Do our thoughts and emotions reside in the brain?
- Can and should human beings be cloned?

- Is global warming actually occurring, or is it only a theory?

Once we begin to investigate any of these questions, we enter a labyrinth of fact and theory that could involve years of study. Dealing with these issues in great detail cannot be the aim of high school education. And yet, our students want to deal with such topics, and we

must therefore address them.

How can we approach these questions? Is it possible for the nonspecialist (in this case, the teacher and the student) to form judgments about issues involving a high degree of specialized knowledge?

The more specialized our culture and its problems, the more critical this question becomes. If the layperson, the average citizen, can only have "opinions" and must surrender the domain of "knowledge" to the specialist, the tendency increases also to hand over the competency in decision making to the specialist.

A major factor in the defeat of a bill to ban human cloning in the United States Senate in 1998 was the opposition of scientists, who argued that scientific progress would be stopped by such a law. This is a case of a group party arguing for its own interest and perpetuation—understandable, but not to the point. The question of human cloning involves much more than technical considerations. It involves our overall conceptions of humanity and of

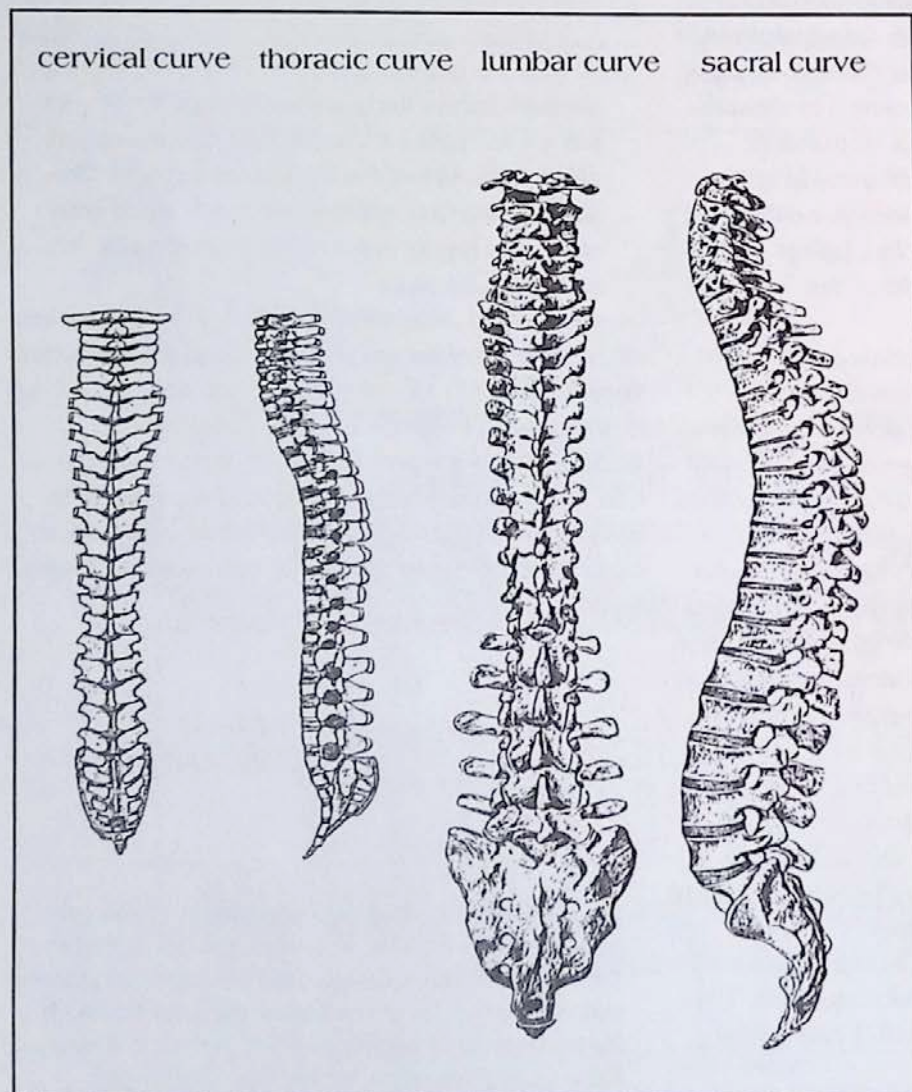


Figure 1. The spine of the newborn and the spine of the adult, each viewed from behind (left) and from the side (right). Not drawn to scale. (Modified after Crelin, 1973, and Benninghof and Goertler, 1980.)

human interactions. In such questions, wisdom is needed, not specialized knowledge. Wisdom is based on rich, lived experience that has been internalized and clarified by the light of thought. Wisdom means gaining an overview, yet remaining connected with life's concreteness. Wisdom is flexible and creative.

We can cultivate the roots of later wisdom in our students if, when dealing with complex issues, we see things in a larger context and avoid getting stuck in the details. The holistic, phenomena-centered approach to science teaching in the Waldorf high school has a key place in this task. I would like to demonstrate the fruits of this approach using the concrete example of the question of human cloning.

In January 1998 American physicist Richard Seed announced that he intended to clone a human being. At that time I was teaching a biology block in the ninth grade. The students asked whether I thought he could and would do it. Will he really be able to create a copy of someone? Should he be allowed to proceed? I had not planned to address the issue of cloning in the block, but the media event and the students' questions led me to change my course. In fact, I realized that exactly the subject matter we were dealing with at the time provided an excellent basis to discuss cloning.

We were considering the factors that influence the development of the human body after birth, focusing on the skeletal system. When a child is born, it is in an open and unfinished state, both physically and mentally. How does the spine, for example, develop the wonderful structure that helps us to stand, sit, twist, climb, and swim, as well as to express our state of being, our moods, and our feelings? Imagine the slouched-over, saddened teenager who has just suffered through the breakup of a relationship, or the strutting, head-held-high sophomore, who is telling himself, "I'm somebody."

The spine of an adult, viewed from the side, has pronounced curvatures that are related to our upright posture and are essential to flexibility in all types of movement, including the

movement involved in breathing. Anatomists speak of the cervical, thoracic, lumbar, and sacral curves (see Figure 1). The spine of a newborn does not have these curves. It is very flexible, able to form half-circle arches forwards and backwards. When the newborn is lying down, the spine is fairly straight, and there is only a hint of the curves we see in the adult. Also, the individual vertebrae are all fairly uniform in size and shape in the newborn, each differing dramatically from its form in the adult (see Figure 2).

The development of the spine is therefore not just a matter of growth, but of transformation and sculpting. This process takes many years. The curve in the neck begins to form at about three to four months when the infant begins to hold up its own head and to lift its head when lying down. Usually at around six months an infant can sit upright, with a remarkably straight back, for long periods of time. Children at this age never slouch. In the sitting position, the child carries and balances the full weight of the proportionally large head with the neck and rest of the spine. The cervical (neck) curve becomes more structured (the shapes of the vertebrae actually change), the thoracic curve becomes more pronounced, and the lumbar curve begins to develop.

Around its first birthday the child pulls itself to its feet to stand, walk, and fall. The upright posture that began in sitting is now attained with the whole body. When the child begins to stand and walk, the spine is not yet the stable, yet shock-absorbing column that is most

appropriate for upright posture. The necessary structural changes occur within the context of standing and moving in gravity. The bodies of the lower (lumbar) vertebrae, which carry much more weight than the neck vertebrae, become correspondingly larger. The sacral vertebrae fuse, contributing to the

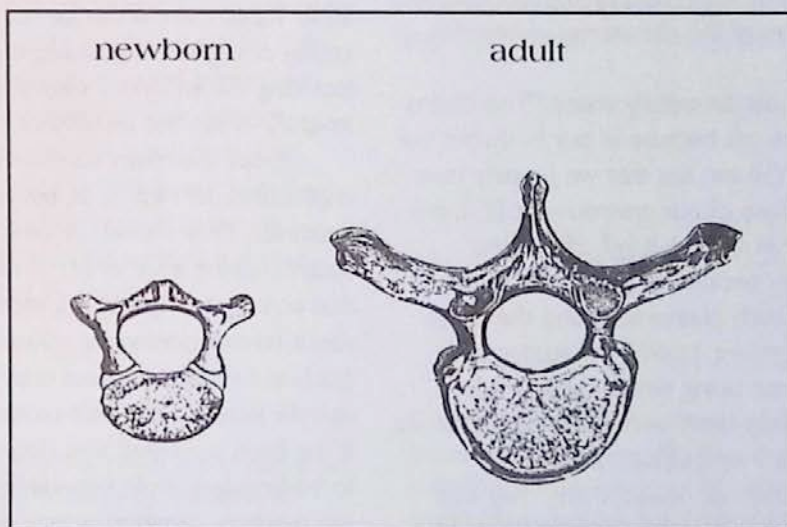


Figure 2. Thoracic vertebrae from a newborn (left) and an adult (right). Not drawn to scale. (After Hamilton, 1957.)

stability of the pelvic girdle. The thoracic (rib-carrying) vertebrae become more tightly interlocked.

With the attainment of uprightness whole new

possibilities of movement open up: running, jumping, skipping, throwing, hanging, and climbing, each involving new demands on coordination. All these movements encourage muscle development, which in turn stimulates the growth and sculpting of the bones. By the time a child enters first grade, the four curves of the spine are all quite pronounced. The spine continues to grow and, with the adolescent growth spurt, a last developmental reforming occurs, especially in relation to the overall increase in bone and muscle tissue.

The question of human cloning involves much more than technical considerations. It involves our overall conceptions of humanity and of human interactions.

This description shows that the spine develops within the context of its usage. This is true for all other features of the body, each in its own unique way. The body is not simply given; the four curves of the spine are not inherited. The development of the body depends on how we live in and model what is given through inheritance. Students are always impressed by the fact that they are more than products of the dichotomy of heredity and environment.

As one ninth grader beautifully stated, "This begins to show us that we are not because of our body, but our body is because of us. We can see that we partially have the bodies we do because of our environment (if one is not allowed to freely run around, it will affect bone development), and lastly because of our habits and likes."

After discussing such phenomena and the conditions of human development, I asked the students: If scientists cloned a human being, would he or she be a "copy" of his or her progenitor? A resounding NO arose from the class. Because they had seen a full-toned spectrum of what constitutes development, they also could see through the empty and inappropriate term "copy."

Even if two people are virtually identical genetically, as would be the case in cloning and is the case with monozygotic ("identical") twins, the actual individuals are not identical. The way they relate to their bodies and their environment, and, reciprocally, the way their physical

and human environments relate to them, is in each case individual and unique.

Nevertheless, in the case of monozygotic twins "sameness" is often urged upon them by others, as the biologist Richard Lewontin describes:

Even the fingerprints of identical twins are not identical. Their temperaments, mental processes, abilities, life choices, disease histories, and deaths certainly differ despite the determined efforts of many parents to enforce as great a similarity as possible. Frequently twins are given names with the same initial letter, dressed identically with identical hair arrangements, and given the same books, toys, and training. There are twin conventions at which prizes are offered for the most similar pairs. While identical genes do indeed contribute to a similarity between them, it is the pathological compulsion of their parents to create an inhuman identity between them that is most threatening to the individuality of genetically identical individuals. (Lewontin, 1997)

Such pressure can also lead to rebellion, with each identical twin forcefully asserting his or her own will to be recognized as an individual.

The formula "clone = copy" is a specter. It is based upon misconceptions and conjures up two polar opposite reactions. On the one hand, there is the illusory vision of the power to create organisms at will, becoming God-like in creating a being after one's own image (as Richard Seed stated in *Time*, January 19, 1998). On the other hand, there is the fear of genetically manipulated copies of organisms peopling the earth. Neither view—including the emotions they arouse—is based upon insight into life and development.

Does this mean that cloning human beings is unproblematic? Not at all, because the real question becomes: Why would we even be interested in thinking about creating another human being? Both the speculation accompanying and the motivation stimulating talk about human cloning are rooted in spectral notions (such as that of the "exact copy") that in turn serve narrow scientific or profit-seeking agendas. For example, it has been suggested that clones genetically engineered to be brainless could provide "spare parts" to replace worn-out or damaged organs and body parts in the "parent." When one views the human body in purely abstract, mechanistic terms, this notion loses its abhorrent quality. One only need add the lure of market potential and, suddenly, cloning becomes a "medical necessity" that will benefit humanity.

To avoid being dragged down this slippery slope we

must turn toward life's concrete reality. When we study processes such as spine development, we build living concepts that illuminate the truly inhuman nature of most of the notions concerning human cloning. But rich and humane concepts cannot originate out of viewpoints serving narrow (and powerful) agendas. For this reason, ninth graders who have gained a deep understanding, based on clear and careful observation of the nature of development, may be in a better position to judge the implications of human cloning than are the experts, who are driven by their specialized paradigms, their grant proposals, or their investments in biotechnology companies.

The idea of human cloning touches something deep in the human soul. Just because it involves superficial and erroneous views of the human being, it stimulates in us a counterreaction that wells up out of our depths and impels us to ask: What is a human being? What is individuality? Who am I?

We can't do justice to such existential questions by addressing them directly. Rather, a teacher can let them form the undercurrent of discussions and inform the way he or she addresses the content. Then we can almost see the souls of the students being nourished. They are building the capacity in themselves to be their own selves. They need this capacity to establish an independent and discerning attitude toward the ever new issues that will confront them. ✱



The upright posture, made possible by the human spine, gives us the ability to walk, run, and jump. These are children at the Nairobi Waldorf School.

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Craig Holdrege is the director of *The Nature Institute*, located in rural Harlemville, New York. The Nature Institute is dedicated to research and educational activities applying phenomena-centered, holistic methods. Craig has been a high school biology teacher in Waldorf schools for the past nineteen years. Currently he teaches part-time at the Hawthorne Valley School. He is involved in teacher training and gives seminars and lectures on a phenomena-centered approach to science. Craig is the author of the book *Genetics and the Manipulation of Life: The Forgotten Factor of Context* (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne Press, 1996).

Life After Waldorf High School

By Abraham Entin

Education toward freedom" is one of the most important principles of Waldorf Education. Many schools use this phrase as a motto or as a key principle in describing themselves in brochures and other public material.

When Waldorf educators speak of "education toward freedom," they refer to the development of individuals who are, out of their own inner strength, able to forge their own destinies and find their rightful places in the world. For parents, one of the most important ways in which this "freedom" can be manifested is in their Waldorf-

educated child having more, rather than fewer, options in their post-Waldorf educational life.

In my work as a consultant to schools, I find this to be one of the most important issues about which parents need reassurance. "If I move, will my child be okay in a public school?" "After eighth grade, how will she do in a non-Waldorf environment?" are often-asked questions. And now, with more than twenty Waldorf high schools operating in North America, the question has become, "If my child goes to a Waldorf high school, will she be accepted into the college of her choice?"

For several years, AWSNA has collected information about "life after Waldorf high school" from the various high schools in North America. I would like to look at the information about college and university admissions for Waldorf students.

The information covers the years 1993-99. It is restricted to students from the United States. During this period, more than 1100 students graduated from Waldorf high schools. Of these, 78 percent immediately entered college after finishing high school. An additional 10 percent were planning to attend, but were delaying their entrance for



Members of a Waldorf graduating class listen to a guest speaker at their graduation.

a variety of reasons. Thus, almost 90 percent of all Waldorf high school graduates during this period continued their formal education after finishing Waldorf high school.

In this context, the crucial question is not whether Waldorf graduates go to college but, rather, "Where are they accepted, and where do they go?"

The simple answer is, "Everywhere." They go to schools from Amherst to Yale and from The University of Maine to the University of California at San Diego. They go to local community colleges and to elite Ivy League universities. The top students go wherever they want, and the ones who struggle go wherever they can. Some go to design school or to schools that concentrate on music or the visual/performance arts. Some even go to West Point. The California graduates are accepted at every campus of the university system, and the students in other states attend public universities in their areas.

It is important to point out, though, that schools of a certain type actively seek out Waldorf graduates as potential students. These are some of the top strata liberal arts universities and colleges. They appreciate the cultivation of thinking and individual initiative that takes place in a Waldorf environment. Waldorf students are consistently accepted at and attend schools such as Sarah Lawrence, Vassar, Bard, and Oberlin, as well as St. John's College and the Claremont Colleges in southern California.

These institutions, as well as many others, have become increasingly suspicious of the value of standardized testing in measuring anything beyond a student's ability to do well on standardized tests. They are willing and able to look beyond these tests in assessing the abilities and aptitudes of their applicants.

Nevertheless, these tests still play an important role in college admissions. This is especially true for state universities, which receive large numbers of applicants and which rely on "the numbers" (grade point averages and SAT scores) as criteria for acceptance.

It is important to point out, though, that schools of a certain type actively seek out Waldorf graduates. These are some of the top strata liberal arts universities and colleges.

California, for instance, has four Waldorf high schools. It also has a state university system that is predicted to be overwhelmed with applicants over the next several years. Many parents who opt to invest their income in high school education for their child or children will want these students to have the opportunity to attend less expensive, state supported universities. What can and should our schools do to help prepare students for this aspect of the college admissions process? Beyond this, what more can our schools do to help expand the freedom of our students to pursue the academic—or other—career of their choice?

I hope that, as the Waldorf movement grows and more schools complete their development with the addition of a high school, attention will be paid to developing the

position of college/career counselor at the Waldorf high schools. Perhaps workshops on this topic could be included within the context of teachers' conferences. Perhaps the DANA (Development and Administrators' Network of AWSNA) or AWSNA itself could sponsor seminars in this area. Perhaps experienced counselors would be willing to share their expertise with schools and individuals that are just beginning this work.

The gifts that a Waldorf high school education can bring are of benefit to the individual and the community. It is gratifying that the value of this educational experience has been recognized by so many leading academic institutions. As the number of Waldorf high school graduates continues to increase, we are hopeful that these individuals will grow into positions of leadership and responsibility, in which their education can play a role in their positive work in the community and the world. ✱

Abraham Entin and his wife, Rachael Flug, have been parents at Highland Hall Waldorf School in Los Angeles since 1978. They have two children who graduated from that school's high school. One has graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz, and the other attends the University of California at Berkeley. They also have a child still in lower school. Mr. Entin currently consults to Waldorf schools on enrollment issues and on strategic planning, and has conducted numerous AWSNA-sponsored workshops on enrollment.

Receiving the Gift within the Task:

A Picture of the Sierra Waldorf School

By Pamela Williams-Gifford, Bill Roberson,
and Judith Weldon

The Rawhide Valley is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in central California, east of San Francisco. Along the northern and eastern rim of the valley are "table mountains"—long, flat lava deposits. From a distance, one imagines a barren, hard volcanic waste up there. But after hiking through grazing fields and making the final, scrambling ascent, one finds a chain of long, shallow pools and a variety of drought-resistant scrub plants and wildflowers—lupine, popcorn flowers, goldfield, and shooting stars. From this surprising vantage point, the valley unfolds. Ranchlands spread from the foot of the lava tables, dotted with scattered houses, barns, stables, and yards. The remnants of three gold mines—active and productive during the 1860s and '70s—are there too, as well as a long, blue schoolhouse built for the goldminers' children. Behind the schoolhouse, low foothills roll like a bumpy blanket south and west toward the San Joaquin Valley.

Today the old Rawhide School and its grounds are home to the Sierra Waldorf School. Beginning its eleventh

year, the school has more than 140 children in three kindergartens and grades one through eight. While each year has brought growth, the sweetest gifts have often been born out of challenging tasks.

In the early 1980s a study group in Waldorf Education was started in the area. By September 1985, a kindergarten of nine children began in the home of a parent who willingly became the teacher. Although successful, the venture seemed premature, and the school was dissolved in June 1986. Almost three years later, in January 1989, the study group sponsored a one-day workshop with veteran Waldorf teacher Keith McCrary. As a result of the workshop, many people joined the study group, eager to open a Waldorf school in Tuolumne County as soon as possible.

By March of that year, a board of trustees was elected and committees were set up to search for a site and to recruit students and teachers. Although the intention was to found a Waldorf school, it seemed presumptuous to use "Waldorf" in the school name, so the original name of the 1985 endeavor—Sierra Country

School—was used. In May teacher interviews were held, and three teachers were hired, one for kindergarten, one for a combined first- and second-grade class, one for a combined third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade class. By June a working budget was adopted. Teachers would receive \$15,000 for the year, and tuition would be \$2000, with provision for assisting families in need. Thirty-two children were enrolled. Now only a site was needed. The old Rawhide School had been recently sold by the school



The Sierra Waldorf School as it appears today.



The original Rawhide School and the children who attended it early in the 20th century.

district, and fortunately the new owners—who lived in an adjacent house—were eager to have the school filled again with children.

The site was remote but serene and beautiful. The original schoolhouse, built in 1875, was being used as a storage facility and was filled from floor to ceiling with broken desks, chairs, and other discarded items. Having shifted and settled over the years, the building was bereft of square corners—a fact that has led in the years since to its often being lovingly referred to as a perfect example of “living architecture.” A second building, constructed in the 1950s, was large enough to be divided into two classrooms. The site was leased, and the work to prepare for opening day in September began.

The school pioneers began rather naively. Starting a school with kindergarten through fifth grade was impulsive. Like the '49ers who dropped everything to search for gold, they dropped everything to realize the dream of a Waldorf school. Else Gottgens, one of the early Waldorf mentors, remembers—with affection—that it was months before the teachers learned that each school day should begin with a morning verse. Soon, though, Else could see that the little school was indeed a Waldorf school, and in 1992 its name was changed from Sierra Country School to Sierra Waldorf School.

One reason that the school has grown and thrived as a Waldorf school is that it has consistently sought the help of veteran Waldorf teachers. In addition to Else, experienced teachers such as Nancy Poer, Patrick Wakeford-Evans, Ruthann Jahoda, and Tom Schaefer, as well as Thomas Proctor from New Zealand, have visited.

observed, and offered their counsel and suggestions. These visits have also helped the school to be confident of its identity as a Waldorf school and to feel part of the broader movement.

The earth in the Rawhide Flats is dry, hard shale. There is no fertile topsoil. It has been stripped away in the search for gold. To grow something, the soil has to be prepared and enriched. For the teachers and parents of the school, preparing the school's soil has from the beginning included the study of Anthroposophy and of Waldorf Education. It has been a slow process, though. In the early years, the soil was still hard and resistant. Attracting and retaining trained Waldorf class teachers was difficult. Several experienced teachers came and, after having trouble "digging into the soil," decided to move on. Members of the school community—parents and teachers—have persisted to deepen their understanding and their work with the children. Study groups have continued over the years, with teachers and parents studying, learning, and developing together. Today the soil has become fertile enough to support a healthy school.

As with the soil of the hills, keeping the soil of the school fertile is not easy. It requires patience—patience that allows one to live with a question or a problem until there is clarity about it. It requires mutual understanding and respect, and the school use of consensus decision making has fostered these attributes. It requires the ability to be objective about what the school is, what it needs to become, and what efforts need to be made to that end. It requires the ability to see all the many steps in a plan and to carry them out consequently. And it



Teacher and students prepare the soil for a raised bed garden in the hardpan soil of the Sierras.

requires recognizing and using the holding power of form. Faculty meetings follow a format that includes a time for anthroposophical and child study. Sometimes in the press of business it is tempting to leave such study out. When that happens, though, the result is as if the soil of the school community has not been watered and has begun to revert to hardpan.

In the valley the air is in constant movement. It is a place of light and pleasant breezes. And in the school, also, there is an airiness and a pleasantness. Members of the school community move and flow around each other, keeping personal impulses in check, avoiding conflict and friction. This atmosphere of harmony and friendship helps fulfill the innate human desire for love and recognition, but it can also harbor dangers.

One mentor cautioned that within the strength of this friendliness and mutual fondness there might also be a weakness. In fact, we have come to experience the truth of this observation.

The school is now going through a transition that may necessitate finding a new home. The situation was caused in part by lack of professional distance in the school's relationship with its landlord and by a failure—in the spirit of friendliness—to clarify and document agreements. For example, when the site for the school was found, we entered into a casual relationship with the landowners. Business was done over coffee. The landowners generously took on the role of guardian angels to the school, and we have been deeply grateful to them. This close relationship, however, made negotiations

about the lease and about eventual purchase very challenging. Over the years, the relationship has offered many opportunities for growth in clarity and professionalism.

Within this challenge of balancing the personality with the impersonal task, there is a gift of movement toward a place of loving honesty. Our work with each other moves into the work with the children. If we consciously attend to and solve our own social conflicts, we provide the children with an excellent model.

Water is always an issue in the Rawhide Valley. Sometimes there is drought, sometimes there are floods. Wells go dry or

become contaminated. When the rains come, one is inspired to dance in them. One year the school was faced with closure unless it could comply with county fire requirements regarding water availability. A 101,000-gallon water storage tank had to be installed. This involved a huge expenditure of time, money, and energy—not to mention a huge, less-than-appealing corrugated steel structure. But the gifts of that task became apparent when we held our first auction. Our little country school managed to organize an elegant and lucrative fund-raising evening at the historic Opera Hall in nearby Sonoma, and the event provided an occasion for the community to express its support of our school.

Another unexpected gift was the "music" of the workmen who came to put together and install the tank. Each in his hammering of rivets beat out a rhythm shared by the other workmen, and the result was a "performance" that captivated children and adults alike. The spirit of the workmen and their way of working together demonstrated that it is not the job one does, but how one does it that makes the difference. The water tower, now a shiny landmark in the valley, is a dependable source of irrigation for yards, class garden plots, and our future community garden—a promise of life.

Finally, there is the warmth that permeates the area and the school. Even in winter, cold stormy days alternate with crisp sunny ones. Summer lasts from the end of May through October. Two summers ago the school community hosted ninety visitors—participants at a conference at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, on a

rest stop during their bus tour of the Gold Country. It was 107 degrees in the shade. It was hard to see why anyone would want to visit in the August heat, but every effort was made to provide a pleasant experience. There were canopy tents to shelter the guests from the sun, as well as an industrial-sized sprinkler on the end of a fire hose. The two buses—one of them without air conditioning—arrived an hour late. The guests deeply appreciated the beauty of the place and were grateful for the refreshing meal and stop.

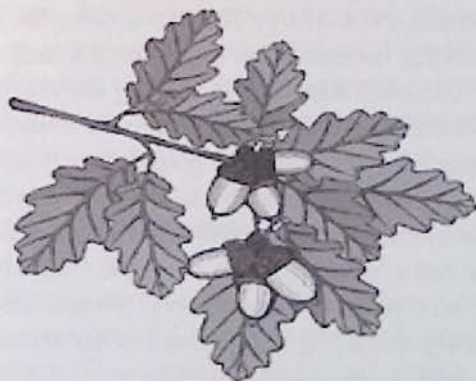
It had been difficult to mobilize faculty and parents in the middle of the summer, but each received a gift that evening. Each, in opening his or her heart to these strangers, saw the school with new eyes. It was in fact the beautiful and serene place envisioned more than ten years ago. The western sky was brilliant, coloring the eastern slopes of Table Mountain with its reflection. The fellowship with kindred spirits allowed all to transcend the heat, to feel part of a larger community with a common vision. Once again in meeting a challenge we had been blessed by a gift unforeseen.

Through simple human gestures and in conscious relationship with the elements of its natural environment, the Sierra Waldorf School has grown and become strong in what some people think of as a most unlikely place. ✱

Pamela Williams-Gifford, a native of California, completed teacher training at Rudolf Steiner College and began teaching at the Sierra Waldorf School in 1993. She has served on the board of trustees and has acted as faculty chair.

Judith Weldon, a native of California, is a founding parent and has been a class teacher for the past nine years. She has served as a board member, faculty chair, and acted as the school's first administrator.

Bill Roberson, a native of California, is a songwriter and musician. He has worked with preschool and kindergarten-age children for twenty-six years. He is a founding teacher, has served on the board of trustees, acted as faculty chair, and has been teaching kindergarten for the past eleven years.



From the Editor

continued from page 1

On the other side are the warming and nourishing elements. These are founded on intuition and feeling, a desire for simplicity, and on a love of nature. Again, they are not as such good or bad. Carried to the extreme they can become problematic. But today, engendering vitality and flexibility, they are perhaps especially needed to counteract the dominating coolness. My again idiosyncratic list includes:

organic and biodynamic food; home-cooked meals eaten with family; sheepskins; wool, silk, linen, and cotton clothes; a real, live cat asleep on your lap; fountain pens; ballroom dance, contra dance, and other nonrandom types of dance that actually have steps; bicycles; face-to-face conversations with friends; fixing something old rather than buying something new; playing music with friends; singing in a choir; prayer; worship; and the conviction that the spirit precedes and determines the physical and that our life is eternal.

Over eighty years ago, Rudolf Steiner could see that the crisis of the future would be a crisis of "warmth." He incorporated into Waldorf Education a host of elements that warm and nourish the human body, soul, and spirit. These include:

the handshake and greeting with which the class teacher welcomes each child each day; the morning verse; the use of organic forms, of color, and of organic materials in school design; the emphasis on the making of music and the doing of arts and crafts rather than the passive consumption of the creations of others; and the new art of eurythmy. Important too are the operative assumptions about the child and about education, namely, that the child is a free and unique spiritual being, and that the role of education is to help the child discover and realize her or his unique destiny.

Rudolf Steiner said that, in the future, education would have to be a therapeutic activity. Waldorf Education, in working to rectify the imbalance that most children today bring with them from the outside culture, is indeed a therapeutic—a healing—education. ✱

Why I Am Going Back to School

By Eric Utne



For thirty years Eric Utne has been active on what might be called the cutting edge of the alternative culture. In the early 1970s he was an editor at *East West Journal*, at that time a journalistic pioneer in examining and providing alternatives to the assumptions, values, and patterns on which American culture is based. In 1974 Eric left EWJ to found *New Age Journal*—a magazine with a similar focus. In 1984 he founded *Utne Reader*.

Gathering and reprinting articles from a wide range of alternative periodicals and newspapers, *Utne Reader* has become a successful and influential national magazine. Last spring, the City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis was looking for a teacher for its about-to-become seventh-grade class. They asked Eric, who for some years has not been actively managing *Utne Reader*. Eric accepted the job. The following piece appeared in this year's September-October issue of *Utne Reader*.

It seems far too soon to say why I accepted the invitation to become the seventh-grade teacher at my children's Waldorf school. The decision was quick and intuitive, based more on gut and heart feelings than on rational deliberation. But I've come to trust this way of making decisions.

I started *Utne Reader* in 1984 with the explicit intent "to promote personal growth and social change," so if you think that I'm moved to teach by my abiding interest in social change—you're half right. Longtime educator and activist Bill Ayers, author of *Kind and Just Parent* (Ballantine 1998), said recently, "People who have worked on issues of social justice all their lives find themselves today working in schools." In an interview on Chicago public television, Ayers said that schools are where the real action is—where we still have a chance to influence, even save, lives, while people are young and still forming.

Waldorf Education, founded in 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany, has a distinguished history of social activism. Emil Molt, director of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, asked the scientist, philosopher, and visionary Rudolf Steiner to design a school free of government control and open to all children, rich or poor,

those destined for university as well as those destined for factory and shop. Steiner produced a curriculum intended to enable students to create a "just and peaceful society." In the 1980s, in Germany, many Waldorf school teachers and graduates took part in the creation of that country's Green Party.

But social change is only part of my motivation. I'm also doing it to save my own soul. I left *Utne Reader* three years ago because I needed to get out of the magazine and, frankly, the magazine needed me out. After promoting "personal growth" in countless articles over the years, I realized it was time for me to practice what I was preaching. So I set off on what I called a "walkabout" to find, feel, and follow my heart. Along the way I learned to meditate, did lots of therapy and "inner work," took singing lessons and joined a gospel choir; enjoyed lots of leisurely conversations for the first time in years, and volunteered at a local health crisis resource center. A year and a half ago, my wife, Nina, and I exchanged roles. She now runs the company and I am at home shopping, cooking, and trying to keep track of our three school-age

please turn to page 42

Biodynamic Agriculture: The Basis for a Better Bouquet

By Thomas Poplawski

Something peculiar is happening in the world of winemaking. Until recently, virtually all producers were concerned about pure yeast strains, high-tech filters, and the chemicals used on their vineyards. Recently, though, many vintners have become more interested in the cycles of the moon, optimal methods for building compost heaps, and in the plowing of their vineyards with horses. For over two decades a veritable revolution has been taking place in the wine regions of Europe, California, and other parts of the world. It began with experimentation in more natural and chemical-free approaches to farming but has more and more been influenced by the "Rolls Royce" of organic agriculture, the biodynamic approach. Venerable winemakers such as Domaine Leflaive in Burgundy and H. Chapoutier in the Rhône are just two of those who have embraced this method. Biodynamic agriculture was developed by Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy and of Waldorf Education.

Biodynamic agriculture is widespread and well-known in central and northern Europe. In North America, though, despite the growth of organic farming it is little known outside anthroposophical and biodynamic circles. Biodynamics, while a form of organic agriculture, goes beyond standard organic practices. It practices the good stewardship toward the Earth that motivates all organic agriculture, but carries it a bit further. What is this method that the vintners have come upon and embraced so enthusiastically?

In 1924 the Austrian Rudolf Steiner was approached by a number of German farmers, soil scientists, and veterinarians. They asked him to address various

problems they were experiencing in their work. Even at that time, there was concern about the use of chemicals in agriculture, the deteriorating quality of food, the health of livestock and crops, and about the viability of seed stock. In response to this request, Steiner gave a series of eight lectures to a group of about 100 agriculturists who had gathered in the village of Koberwitz, near Breslau. These lectures are now published under the title *Agriculture: Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture*.

From this meeting there arose an "experimental circle," whose members worked to put into practical application the indications that Steiner had given. By 1928 there were almost seventy farms based on biodynamic principles, as well as many gardening and research operations. Biodynamics was the first of the modern organic agricultural movements. Already in 1930 it had an accreditation standard, bearing the trademark name "Demeter." Although the Second World War caused a major disruption, the movement continued to grow, especially in Europe but also around the world. Today there are biodynamic farms and

commercial gardens in many different countries, including South Africa, Japan, the Dominican Republic, and Australia.

In 1940 Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, a German biochemist who had been one of the leading researchers of biodynamics after Steiner's death, came to the United States. Pfeiffer founded a research laboratory in Spring Valley, New York. He later was an adviser to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in their attempts to develop large-scale municipal composting. Pfeiffer also authored several books on biodynamics. In recent years, the North American biodynamic movement has been instrumental





Biodynamic gardener, Harald Hoven, tending plants in the Rudolf Steiner College garden.

in spreading community supported agriculture (CSA) in North America. In a typical CSA arrangement, members pay a farmer or gardener an annual subscription fee in exchange for weekly supplies of biodynamic or organic produce. While the biodynamic movement has grown, it is still only a small part of the larger organic movement. At the present time there are several hundred biodynamic farms and commercial gardens in North America.

Rudolf Steiner's approach to agriculture is based on the idea that the Earth as a whole is a living organism and that the soil, plants, and animals comprise an interrelated whole. The aim of agriculture then is not merely to produce food in the most efficient and inexpensive way, which is the case in the agribusiness model of today. Nor is the aim to produce food as efficiently and cheaply as possible without using artificial chemicals. Rather, biodynamic agriculture seeks to promote the vitality and health of the whole ecological system that includes the soil, plants, livestock, the surrounding natural environment, and the human being.

The biodynamic farmer focuses on the health of the soil. He is a "soil doctor" seeking to create soil that is alive, balanced, and fertile. He incorporates organic matter (compost) into the soil and uses other techniques to enhance its life forces. He may apply substances, such as phosphorus and potassium, but only to establish a mineral balance, not to provide fertilizer for this or that crop. In biodynamics, it is not the plants that are fed; rather it is the soil that is nurtured. To the biodynamic farmer, the soil is a living organization that lives, breathes, and eats, and he seeks to foster that life, respiration, and digestion. If the soil is healthy, it will produce crops that are plentiful but also of the highest quality. The crops will be capable of surviving climatic extremes and of resisting—without chemicals—diseases and insect pests. And the farm animals—and the human beings—who eat these crops will also benefit.

Cultivating the life forces of the soil is a unique and somewhat radical biodynamic practice—although it was recognized as essential in archaic times. Steiner counseled against using chemical agents that poison the environment. He also advised against feeding the plants—rather than the soil—because this can unbalance and weaken the ecosystem over time. He also gave indications for strengthening the life forces of the soil and of the animals and insects that are part of the farm environment. These techniques may seem magical or superstitious to some, but much careful research as well as the anecdotal experience of many very practical farmers demonstrates the efficacy of the preparations that Steiner recommended.

The biodynamic preparations are compounds that are administered either as field sprays or as ingredients in the compost mixture that is spread on the soil. The raw materials of the compounds are simple substances such as cow manure, quartz crystal (silica), chamomile, dandelion, valerian, horsetail, stinging nettle, and yarrow. These are brought together in various combinations and are prepared according to specific techniques. The preparations are numbered from 500 to 508.

The preparations and the way they are made may at first seem peculiar. The first are made by filling a cow's horn with either manure (#500) or silica (#501) and burying it in the ground over the winter or summer. The horns are dug up, emptied into buckets of water, the mixture stirred in a special way, and then sprayed on the fields. The other preparations are injected into compost piles that are later used to fertilize the soil.

Over time, the superior results of biodynamic agriculture over standard organic agriculture have been demonstrated in various studies both here in North



Third-grade Waldorf students help pull the plow as they prepare to plant a biodynamic garden.

America and abroad. Not only is the quality of produce better but the soil has more organic matter, and the bulk density of the subsoil is greater. This means that the soil is available for root growth to a greater depth and that earthworms are active, aerating the soil, at a deeper level.

On a more subtle level, as the French vintners have found, the enhancement of the life forces brings a higher content of the essential oils, delicately enhancing both the taste and bouquet of their product. For this reason, biodynamic agriculture has also become popular with growers of herbs and flowers for essential oils, for flower remedies, and for perfumes.

The biodynamic farmer thinks in terms of forces that enliven the soil, not substances that feed it. Thus the compost and the preparations are not viewed as carriers of nitrogen or potassium or some other nutritive substance. In practice, the actual amount of the preparations that is administered, especially in the field sprays, can be very small. Their activity and effect can be understood only as being homeopathic in nature. This is another unique—and for some persons hard to understand—aspect of biodynamic agriculture.

Timing is another important factor in biodynamic agriculture. The German researcher, Maria Thun, remembered how the old farmers in her village had adjusted their planting and harvesting according to the cycles of the moon. And Rudolf Steiner had stressed the need to

attend to lunar and zodiacal influences and to learn to work with and not against these subtle forces when working with the land. With this in mind, Thun spent almost forty years studying how plant growth and health are influenced by the cycles of the moon and by the planets and stars. Her experiments have been replicated and verified by some researchers.

Each year an agricultural calendar based on Maria Thun's work is published. It recom-

mends the best days of the month for planting each particular type of crop—leafy vegetable, root vegetable, legume, grain, and so on. Those who use the calendar swear by it. They say that they have higher germination rates and a more consistent and higher quality product that resists plant diseases and pests. Beekeepers also use the calendar for insight into lunar influences on their sensitive colonies. By choosing the right day to do their work with the bees, they can improve the health and productivity of their hives.

Biodynamic farming views the human being as an integral part of the farm/garden organism. Organic agriculture in general tends to be more labor intensive—especially because of the demands of weed control. This is a factor in biodynamic farming as well and increases the cost of the product. But as stated before, cheap produce is not the main concern of the biodynamic farmer. The inexpensive produce offered by chemical-based, large-scale agriculture is possible only because it does not reflect the real costs—in environmental pollution and in hazards to human health—associated with it.

The ideal biodynamic farm is a self-contained organism that creates all of its own fertilizer. This necessitates some form of livestock for manure, hence, the wine producers' use of plowhorses. Within this organism the farmer is the guide and director, who listens to both the Earth and the cosmos. Over the last decades, the advent

of huge biodynamic farms in Australia, with crop dusters spraying the preparations over large areas and with the mechanized stirring of the sprays, has challenged the centrality of the human element in biodynamic farming. Nevertheless, within biodynamic agriculture the relationship of the farmer and the land remains a personal, intimate one and involves a respect for the spirits and creatures of that particular part of the Earth.

The biodynamic movement is growing in North America. In time it may become a more visible part of the organic movement here, as it already is in other parts of the globe. This might be of great benefit. The biodynamic farmer can address in a practical manner some of the challenges society and agriculture face today: genetically engineered plants, the decreasing diversity of the seed pool, the irradiation of food, and so on. The current aim of mainstream agriculture is to produce the greatest quantity at the cheapest price. Perhaps this will be replaced someday by the biodynamic vision, in which the aim of agriculture is to ensure the vitality and health of soil, plant, animal, nature, and the human being. ✱

RESOURCES:

The central organization for biodynamics in North and South America is:

The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Inc.
Bldg. 1002B, Presidio, P.O. Box 29135, San Francisco, CA
94129-0135; Tel. (415) 561-7797; Fax. (415) 561-7796
biodynamic@aol.com; www.biodynamics.com

The association provides information about regional biodynamic organizations; regional resource centers (some of which sell compost starter and the preparations by mail); training opportunities; apprenticeship opportunities; and community supported agriculture. It also sells books about biodynamics and related topics, including two helpful introductions: *Biodynamic Agriculture* by Willy Schilthuis (Hudson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1994) and *Culture and Horticulture: A Philosophy of Gardening* by Wolf Storl (Wyoming, Rhode Island: Biodynamic Literature, 1974).

The Biodynamic Association also annually publishes and sells a version of Maria Thun's planting calendar adapted for use in North America, under the title *Stella Natura*.

Thomas Poplawski is an avid gardener who writes on a variety of topics. Please see his piece on warmth in this issue.

Thanks to Harald Hoven, master gardener at Raphael Garden in Fair Oaks, California, for his help in the editing of this piece and in the compiling of the resource list.

Why I am Going Back to School

continued from page 38

sons. Over the past few months I've been listening for what might be next, for where I might be needed. Now it feels right to take another step, out into my community.

Teaching in a Waldorf school is soul work. Waldorf teachers see their work as a spiritual calling. Their task, Rudolf Steiner said, is to "accept the children with reverence, educate them with love, and send them forth in freedom." Waldorf teachers ideally stay with their class from first grade all the way through eighth, a commitment that requires them to keep growing and learning along with the class. In the early grades they teach art, music, and handicrafts, as well as reading, writing, and arithmetic. This year, as a seventh-grade class teacher, I'll be teaching the life of Leonardo da Vinci, human physiology, Western European geography, perspective drawing, chemistry, physics, astronomy, prealgebra, nutrition, English grammar, and creative writing, to name some of the subjects.

I've been around Waldorf Education for twenty-five years as a parent. I'm not, though, a certified Waldorf teacher. The standard training for a Waldorf teacher is a rigorous full-time two-year training or a part-time training over a longer period. When this is not possible, as in my case, summer intensive courses and weekend workshops provide a basis of formal training. Then the balance is "on the job." This summer, I took two one-week courses in teaching the Waldorf curriculum for the seventh grade, one at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, and one at Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York. I also did one week of a three-week intensive arts program that Rudolf Steiner College has each summer in Santa Cruz. There I had classes in clay modeling, painting, drawing, eurythmy, and singing.

I feel that life has been preparing me to teach for years. One particular experience comes to mind. Twenty-five years ago, I was just finishing my studies in Chinese medicine when I visited Findhorn, a New Age spiritual community in northern Scotland. Shortly after arriving, I was asked to lecture the entire 120-member community about acupuncture. Normally shy in front of groups, I was emboldened by the positive interest everyone projected not only toward me and my subject, but toward each other as well. In the midst of my lecture I had an epiphany. I realized that my disposition and orientation toward life was to notice and recognize what is wrong with people, whereas the people at Findhorn were learning to notice and to encourage what is right with people.

please turn to page 24

Waldorf Around the World:

The Children of Nepal and the Tashi Waldorf School

By Ronald Koetzsch with Meyrav Mor



Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. Most of its 20 million people are illiterate and live in poverty. Early childhood education has only recently become an issue of concern in the country's educational and development communities. It is not recognized as an important part of the educational process by parents or by the society generally.

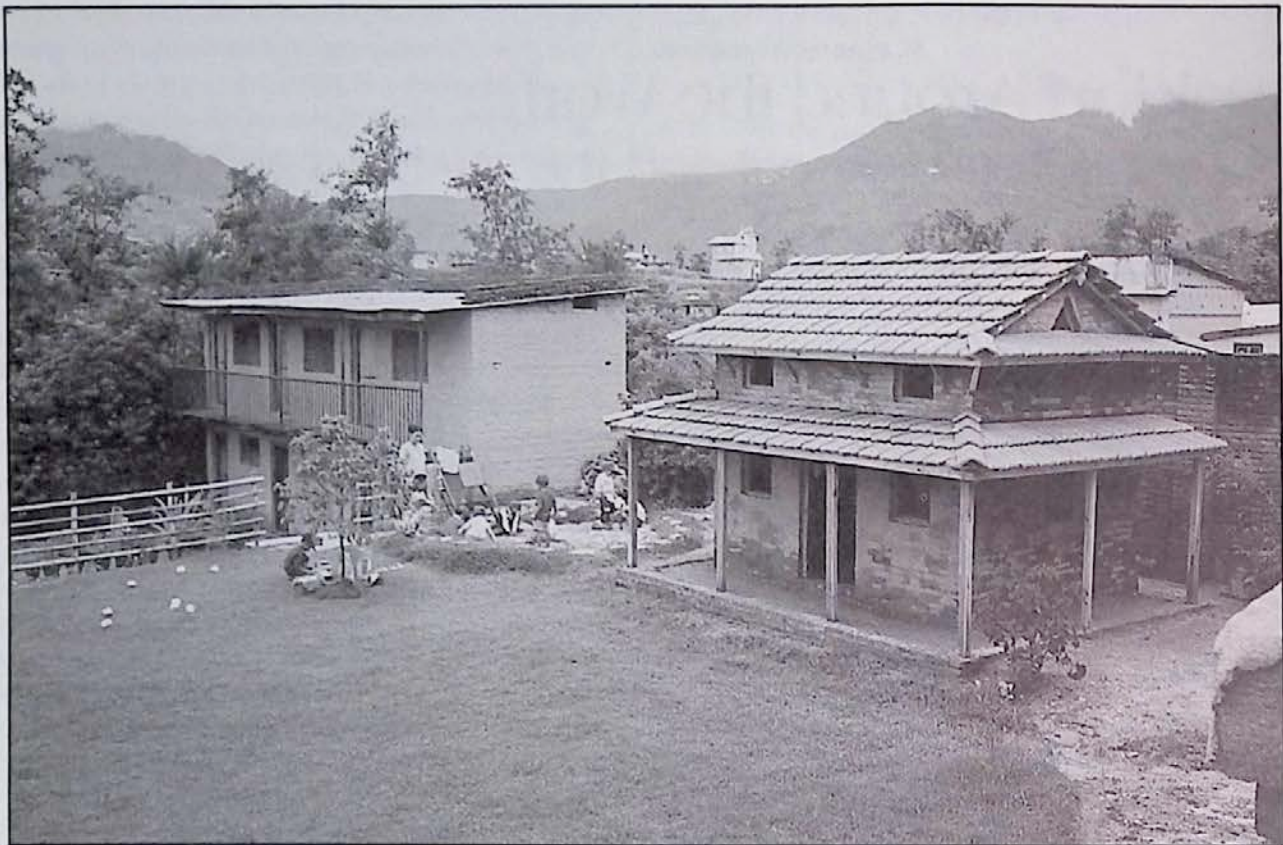
Meyrav Mor, a trained Waldorf teacher, originally from Israel, has been working for some years in Nepal and has founded an organization called Children of Nepal (CON) to promote Waldorf Education in the

country. Over the past three years CON has helped establish a Waldorf kindergarten at the Bal Mandir orphanage. As of February 2000, the kindergarten, which serves sixty children aged three to seven, has been owned and operated by the orphanage and is continuing its work on its own.

CON also has recently established the Tashi Waldorf School for children aged three to six, as a working example of a Waldorf kindergarten. The school is located in the northern part of Kathmandu, with a beautiful view of the Himalayas and much green space all around for the children to be away from the dust and grime of the city. A Tibetan community leader, Tashi Dhondup, made available a half acre of land with a building (a former carpet factory), two smaller adjacent buildings, and additional vacant land to use as a playground. So far, a kitchen and two classrooms have been constructed, as well as the playground. The construction of three more classrooms, an art studio, a eurythmy hall, and a craft studio is awaiting additional funds.

In Nepal there has traditionally been separation according to social and economic class. This has hindered the development of the nation. The children attending the Tashi school will come from a variety of backgrounds. All children, regardless of the resources of their families, should have access to a strong education. This is important for the development of each individual child and for the development of the society.

There are also plans to establish a teacher training in Waldorf preschool methods. The training will emphasize integration of Eastern and Western values through education in the arts. The Western way of thinking emphasizes the transformation of outer material and social conditions as a solution to human problems. The Eastern approach has traditionally emphasized the necessity of transforming one's own mind in order to overcome suffering and the cause of suffering. These two paths must come together to meet the challenges of our time.



Above: The play yard and buildings of the Tashi Waldorf School in Nepal. Below: Teacher and nursery children outside one of the school buildings.

It is hoped that in the Tashi Teacher Training East and West will meet through the experience of the artistic traditions of each. In particular, Himalayan (Nepalese, Indian, and Tibetan) arts as well as Western anthroposophical arts will be incorporated into the training. While much research has been done, and the training is largely developed, there is a hope and a need for experienced Waldorf teachers who would be willing to spend a period of time in Nepal and help to further deepen the work. In particular, teachers trained in eurythmy, music, the arts, and speech are needed.

Nepal is a beautiful country blessed with some of the most magnificent mountains in the world and with remarkable children. In spite of the impoverished conditions, the scarcity of food, clothing, and medical care, the spirits of these children shine through in the light that illumines their eyes and their smiles. Trained Nepalese Waldorf teachers will be able to work with, reach, and help thousands of children to receive the benefits of Waldorf Education.

Waldorf teachers interested in spending time in Nepal can contact CON at General Post Box 8123,

Kathmandu, Nepal; Tel: 011-977-1-371711; Fax 011-977-1-419237; e-mail: meyravmor@wlink.com.np.

Those wishing to make a financial contribution may do so through The Rudolf Steiner Foundation, Bldg. 1002B, Thoreau Center, Presidio, P.O. Box 29915, San Francisco, CA 94129-0915; Tel: (415) 561-3900. Please write "The Children of Nepal" in the memo portion of the check. ✱



Book Review

The Common Vision: Parenting and Educating for Wholeness

By David Marshak

Peter Lang Publishing (New York, Washington, D.C.,
and European cities), 1997
246 pages

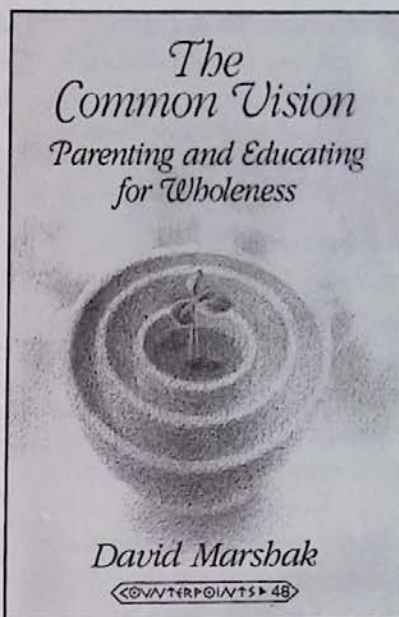
Reviewed by Ronald E. Koetzsch, Ph.D.

David Marshak is a professor in the School of Education at Seattle University. His book *The Common Vision* is a comparative study of the educational philosophies of three important spiritual and intellectual figures of the early twentieth century—Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, and Hazrat Inayat Khan. It is a well-written and informative book that will be of interest to Waldorf teachers and parents. It shows Waldorf Education within a larger philosophical context.

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was born in Austria. Gifted with natural clairvoyance (vision into the realm of the spirit), he developed this into a capacity for objective spiritual vision. Formally educated as a scientist, Steiner began to teach on spiritual and esoteric topics in 1899. In 1914 he founded the Anthroposophical Society, and in the years following he founded a number of practical and artistic initiatives, including biodynamic agriculture, eurythmy, the Threefold Social Order, and anthroposophical medicine.

Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950) was born in Calcutta, India, into an upper-class Hindu family. At the age of seven he was sent to England, where he was educated and where he remained until the age of twenty-one. He returned to India and became involved in the political movement for independence. In 1910, after several spiritual illuminations, he established an ashram in Pondicherry. He lived there until the end of his life, teaching and writing about Indian culture and about modern, Western science, religion, and psychology.

Inayat Khan (1882–1927) was born in Baroda, India, into a Muslim family. His grandfather was a famous



musician, and Inayat Khan himself became a well-known performer on the veena, a traditional stringed instrument. Spiritual experiences led him to join the Sufi order within Islam.

Through music and lectures, he spread the Sufi message of the spiritual unity of humankind. In 1914 he founded an international Sufi organization. Inayat Khan presented Sufism, not as a branch of Islam, but as an ancient, universal religion that comprehends and transcends the differences between the various world faiths.

Each of these teachers expounded a view of the human being and of the development of the human being from birth to adulthood. Each also had a clear and developed view of the theory and practice of education. Steiner's views on education led to the founding of the first Waldorf school in 1919 and to the international system of Waldorf schools, now numbering over 800 in 55 countries. Aurobindo founded a school in his ashram for the children of members of his community. This school, based on Aurobindo's teaching, is still in operation. (The book includes an interesting account of the author's visit to the school.) Although Inayat Khan did not found any schools, his teachings have inspired the establishment of schools in Sufi communities on this continent and elsewhere.

A main point of David Marshak's book is that there is considerable harmony among the views of these three men, who came from quite different philosophical and religious traditions. Despite minor differences in concept and terminology, there are clear areas of agreement that, taken together, can be called "the common vision."

Regarding the nature of the human being, each holds that:

- The human being is comprised of distinct but interrelated and interdependent dimensions (what

Marshak calls "subsystems of energy"). Steiner for example spoke of the physical, etheric (life formative), astral, and spiritual "bodies." Only one of these dimensions—the physical body—is material and palpable.

- The individual spiritual being, as well as all life on earth, is in a process of evolution toward the manifestation of spiritual energies.

Regarding the development of the human being, they share the following ideas:

- The period from birth to age twenty-one can be divided into three distinct periods: birth to age seven, seven to fourteen, and fourteen to twenty-one;
- In each seven-year epoch the child is developing different capacities and has different needs in terms of activity and education;
- The process of human development involves above all the unfolding of inherent potentials;
- Each child has an inner teacher that can direct its own development at an appropriate pace.

About child raising and education, Steiner, Aurobindo, and Inayat Khan agree that:

- Each dimension of the child's being—physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual—should be nourished and developed;
- An environment of love, support, and structure is important for the child to develop its capacity for freedom;
- The teacher's and parent's human qualities—particularly those of wisdom and love—are crucial in the healthy development of the child;
- The parent and teacher must be constantly striving to develop;
- The role of parent and teacher is not to mold or shape the child but to help the inherent capacities of the child develop and to help the child discover its own identity and destiny.

Taken together, these ideas comprise what might be called a holistic and spiritual view of the child and of education. This vision is quite different from the view—seldom explicitly defined—of much modern secular education, public and private. In that view the assumptions of materialism, behaviorism, determinism, and pragmatism pertain. These include the following ideas: The human race is the result of a mechanical and blind process of evolution. The individual human being is the result of genetic roulette, environment, and other external determining factors. The material precedes and determines the nonmaterial—i.e., human affect, thought, and aspiration are all epiphenomena of physical processes. Education is equipping the OIP (organic information

processor)*—known as the student—with sufficient information and functions to serve the interests of the economy and the state. Love, freedom, and the fulfillment of individual destiny are not primary concerns here.

For Waldorf parents and teachers, this is an important and useful book. The section in which David Marshak focuses on Rudolf Steiner's views is a succinct, clear, and accurate presentation of Steiner's ideas about human nature, child development, and education.

Also, Marshak's presentation of Steiner in relation to Aurobindo and Inayat Khan is very telling. In the context of modern secular culture, Steiner's ideas about human nature, and his theory and practice of education, can seem idiosyncratic, even aberrant. ("You mean, no computers and you don't push reading until the third grade?") But, as this book makes clear, Steiner's ideas have parallels in other cultures. In fact, Steiner—along with Aurobindo and Inayat Khan—is part of a grand and ancient spiritual and philosophical tradition that has been present in every cultural stream. These three men revived, renewed, and added to ancient wisdom about the human being, the development of the child, and about the aims and methods of education. In effect, it is not Waldorf Education that is an aberrant, ephemeral trend of the moment, but modern secular education. ✱

*Term coined by the reviewer.

Ronald E. Koetzsch, editor of *Renewal*, teaches at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, and is the author of, among other books and articles, *The Parents' Guide to Alternatives in Education*, published by Shambhala Publications in 1997.

Ex Operibus Rudolf Steiner

Rudolf Steiner considered agriculture of immense importance in human life and human development. In 1924, when asked about the difficulties his associates and students were having in developing spiritually and in carrying out in a practical way the teachings of spiritual science, Steiner replied:

This is a problem of nutrition. Nutrition as it is today does not supply the strength necessary for manifesting the spirit in physical life. A bridge can no longer be built from thinking to will and action. Foods no longer contain the forces people need for this.

The following excerpts are from the lectures on agriculture that Rudolf Steiner delivered between June 7 and June 16, 1924, at Koberwitz, the estate of Count Carl von Keyserlingk in northern Germany.

The Plant as a Being in the Cosmos

The concerns of agriculture are connected in all directions with the widest spheres of life. Indeed there is scarcely a realm of human life that is outside our subject. . . .

To understand a beet you must understand the living together of the beet with the soil, with the field, the season of the year in which it ripens. Its growth depends on countless conditions, not even only of the Earth but of the whole cosmic environment. It is affected by the whole universe. To understand plant life we must bear in mind that everything happening on the Earth is but a reflection of what is taking place in the cosmos.

Plant life . . . today can only thrive in the equilibrium and cooperation of two forces, or to choose two typical substances [embodying those forces], of limestone and silica. Limestone is connected to the processes of growth and reproduction in the plant. Silica is

connected to the development of the plant so that it can provide foodstuff for human beings and animals. . . .

Everything that lives in the silicious nature contains forces that come not from the Earth but from the distant planets—Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—the planets farther from the Sun than the Earth. Influences from these planets work through the silica substances into the plant and thence into human and animal life. On the other hand, the forces of the inner planets—Mercury, Venus, and the Moon—work through the limestone and similar substances into the plants.

Truths like these, derived from a broad perspective, lead us from knowledge into practice. We must ask ourselves: If forces come into the Earth from the Moon, Venus, and Mercury and affect the life of plants, how can we hinder or assist these forces? How can we hinder or assist the influences from Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars?*

The Plant as Giver

Organically speaking, the plant is an inverse of the animal. What the consumption of food is for the animal, the secretion of air and warmth is for the plant. This is the virginal quality of the plant. By nature, it does not want to con-

sume things greedily for itself, but on the contrary, it gives away—air (oxygen) and warmth—what the animal takes from the world, and lives by doing so. Thus the plant gives—and lives by giving.

*The unique aspects of biodynamic agriculture, such as the production and use of the preparations and the planting of crops according to the phases of the Moon and other astronomical factors, can be understood in part as answers to these questions. —Ed.