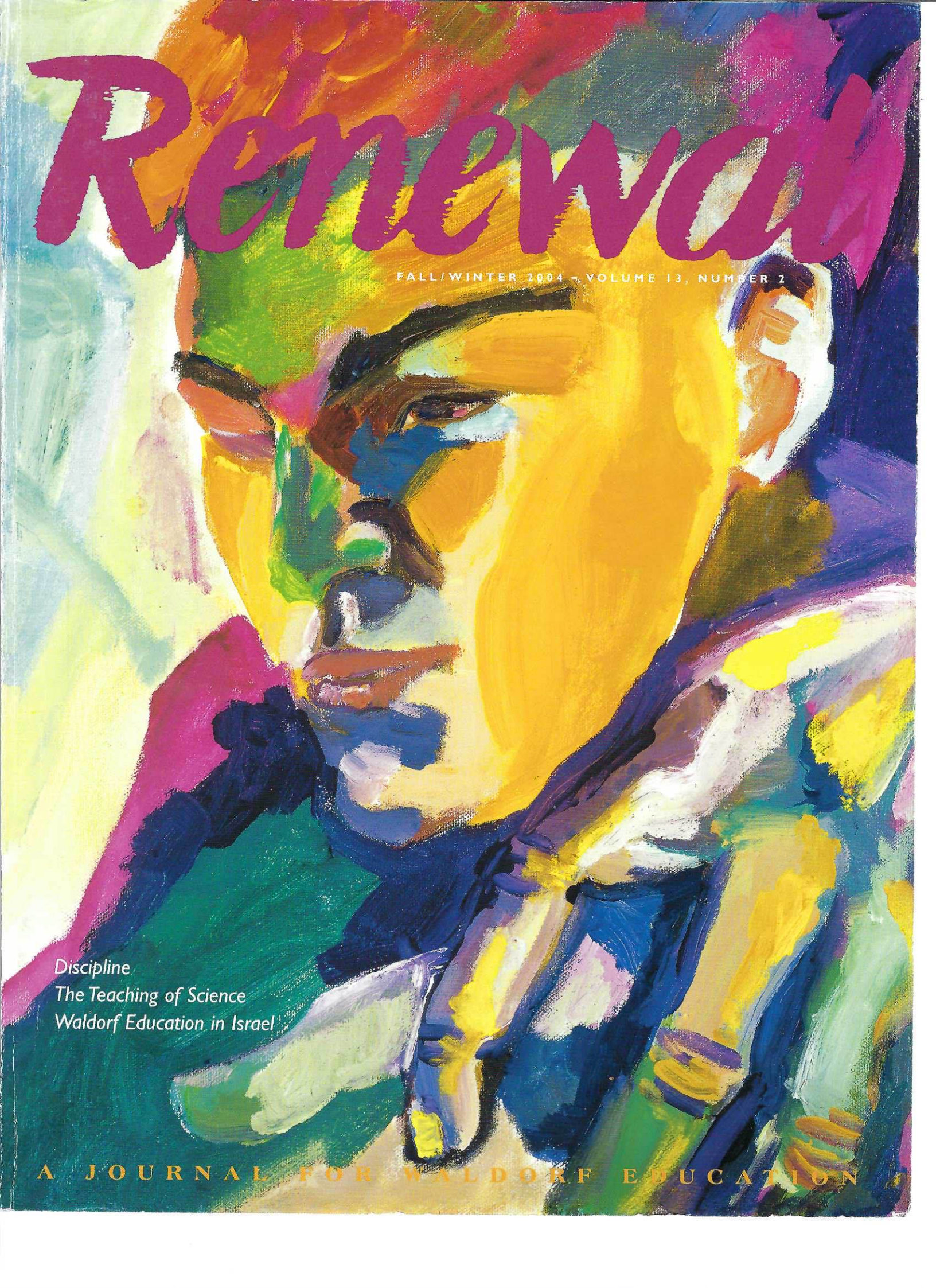


An abstract, expressive painting of a human face, rendered in a style reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh. The face is composed of bold, visible brushstrokes in a rich palette of colors including yellow, green, blue, purple, and red. The eyes are dark and looking slightly to the side, while the mouth is open in a subtle smile. The background is a mix of vibrant, textured colors that blend into the face, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is one of intense emotional expression and artistic energy.

Renewal

FALL/WINTER 2004 — VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2

Discipline
The Teaching of Science
Waldorf Education in Israel

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

Waldorf Education and the Three Great Questions

Three great questions that people of all ages in all ages ask are:

Who am I?

What is my relationship to other people?

What is the meaning of life?

Waldorf Education tries to help students answer each of these questions. In Waldorf schools we establish identity through the studies of history—our own and that of other peoples; geography, both local and of distant lands; and mythology. The children explore their own roots and history, see them in comparison with those of other cultures, and thereby get a sense of their own identity.

In Waldorf schools, children are taught cooperation, mutual help, and mutual respect. Grades and quantified evaluations begin in seventh grade at the earliest. Rather than being taught to compete, the children are encouraged to use their special skills and knowledge to help others. In the annual class play, the children experience what cooperation and working together for a common purpose can create.

Waldorf students study different cultures and religions with their varying views of human life and its meaning. In each religion they discover a common thought: that the human being is a microcosm, representing on a small scale the wisdom, grandeur, and beauty of the cosmos. Also, in the study of nature, the teachers strive to make the students aware of the purposeful, lawful, wonder- and reverence-evoking quality of the natural world.

If young people are thus given the tools to research these three questions, if between the ages of twelve and fourteen they have become aware of these questions and are enthusiastic about finding answers, then we have done something to prepare them for life.

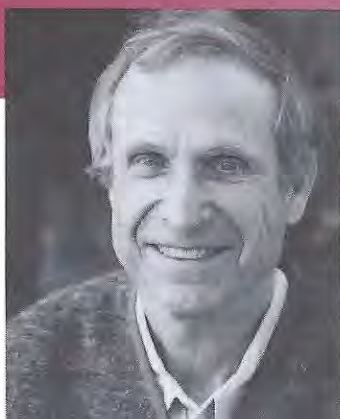
—René Querido

from *Creativity in Education: The Waldorf Approach*,
"How Does Waldorf Education Prepare Children for Life?"



Waldorf Education is based on the teachings of Austrian scientist, philosopher, and spiritual teacher Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925). The first Waldorf school was founded in Stuttgart, Germany, and today there are about 900 Waldorf schools in more than eighty different countries. In North America there are about 150 Waldorf schools and initiatives. Almost all of these are independent schools that do not receive government support. The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) promotes Waldorf Education in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education* is a publication of AWSNA.

COVER ART: A painting in acrylic by Alexander Murray-Clark, Grade 12, for a class on modern art at the San Francisco Waldorf School.



From the Editor

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

The World Waldorf Teachers' Conference • Dornach, Switzerland • April 11–17, 2004

This past April, more than 1100 Waldorf educators from some fifty countries gathered for the quadrennial World Teachers' Conference in Dornach, Switzerland. Dornach is a charming hillside village outside Basel, where the great building called the Goetheanum sits majestically on a high ridge, surrounded by scores of houses and other buildings inspired by anthroposophical architecture. In April the fruit trees are in blossom, and the mountain air coming down from the neighboring Jura Mountains is sweet with their scent.

The conference participants manifested the diverse splendor of the human family. Present were dark-skinned Indian women in saris, a Pakistani gentleman in a long brown coat and circular hat, African women in colorful native dress, teachers from Japan, China, the Philippines, Nepal, Israel, Spain, Russia, Ukraine, Chile, and Argentina, as well as many teachers from Northern and Middle Europe and their somewhat louder, rowdier colleagues from the United States and Canada.

The theme of the conference was the imagination. Keynote speaker Christof Wiechert invoked the image of Pegasus, the winged horse who can take us to the boundaries of the spiritual world. One focus was imagination in the life of the Waldorf teacher and how this capacity can be nurtured and developed. Among the prescriptions were a vital inner or meditative life, ongoing personal involvement in the arts, and exercise of the will forces in physical activity, most notably by long walks in the forest!

Each morning, classes from Waldorf schools (one all the way from Paris) demonstrated typical and not-so-typical school activities. One group of third graders recited their times tables backwards and forwards while rhythmically shifting back and forth on teeter-totter boards. The French children showed an English lesson that featured a dramatized visit by an American family to a French restaurant. And a class that had bicycled for two days from Germany pedaled onto the Goetheanum stage and on their bicycles rode the geometric patterns—such as circles, figure eights,

and concentric circles moving in opposite directions—usually done in eurythmy class.

After a long, two-and-a-half-hour, sensible midday break—typical in Middle Europe—there were artistic classes and workshops to revive and nourish the soul. Participants painted, did eurythmy, sculpted with clay, stone, and wood, practiced speech, and sang. The late afternoon plenum sessions featured individual country reports. Each day, representatives from the countries of a particular continent—Asia, Africa, South America, and so on—sat as a group on the stage. Then, in turn, each person described what was happening in his or her own country. It was moving and inspiring to see how Waldorf Education is thriving in many varied environments and cultures and often in very difficult situations.

The challenges and problems that schools in some countries face—extreme poverty, crime, and violence in the society, opposition from the government—seem overwhelming. They make our concerns in North America—lagging bake sale revenues, the dangers of youth soccer—seem trivial in comparison.

The evening entertainments included a performance of a Mozart symphony with eurythmy by the combined Dornach and Stuttgart stage troupes and, on other nights, performances of scenes from Goethe's *Faust*.

I was in Dornach only in part as a representative of AVSNA and *Renewal*. I have a side career as a standup comedian and was invited to the conference to do a humorous commentary each day and to perform my Waldorf monologue "The Beeswax Conspiracy" on the final evening.

It was a thrill to stand on the stage of the Great Hall of the Goetheanum in front of over a thousand Waldorf teachers from around the world. It was yet a bigger thrill to hear the first cascade of laughter fill the hall. What one

continued on page 20

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For information about Waldorf Education in North America, including a booklet listing all schools and initiatives, please contact:

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AWSNA Reorganization

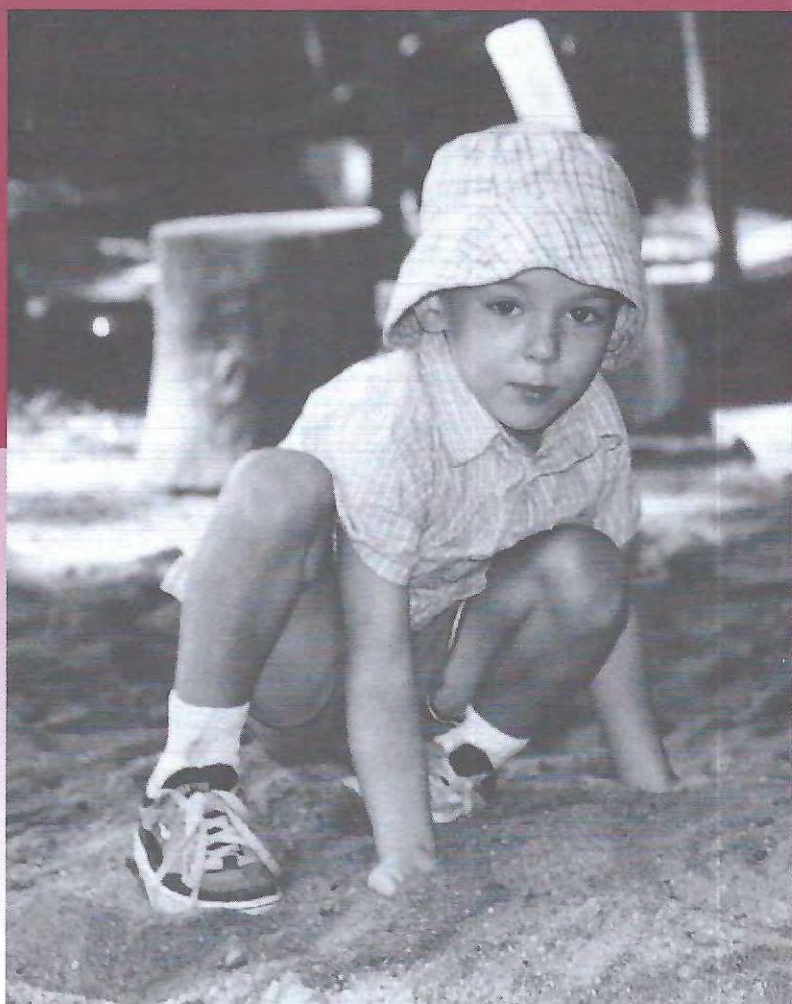


Patrice Maynard (l.)
and Frances Kane

On August 1, 2004, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America implemented a new system of governance and organization.

Three "leaders" will oversee the organization, each with a particular area of responsibility. Frances Kane, formerly administrator at the City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis, is leader for administration. Patrice Maynard, formerly a class teacher at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, is leader for publicity and outreach. The leader for school services is in the process of being chosen.

The regional organization of the member schools has been greatly modified. In its Spring/Summer 2005 issue, *Renewal* will introduce the new leaders and the new organization more fully.



Strengthening the Foundational Senses of the Young Child

BY LAURIE CLARK AND NANCY BLANNING

Rudolf Steiner said that the curriculum and the pedagogy of Waldorf Education are in themselves therapeutic. They are able to balance and heal tendencies in the child that might lead to physical and/or psychological problems. In recent years, though, problematic factors in modern life—such as the breakdown of family life, the mass media, a degenerated food supply, and changes in early childhood care that limit the child's opportunities for movement—have so profoundly affected young children that specific remedial and healing approaches have been created within the Waldorf movement. Notable among these is The Extra Lesson™ work developed by Audrey McAllen of England. The International Extra Lesson Association is an organization of Waldorf educators who use and promote this work worldwide. Many Waldorf schools all over the world use specialists in the Extra Lesson work. There are several trainings in the Extra Lesson approach. Contact information for these can be found at the end of this article. A version of the following article appeared in the newsletter of the Association of Healing Education in April 2003.

—R. E. K.

Many of us who work with young children have noticed that in recent years children have changed in ways that concern and alarm us. More children today are showing physical and social difficulties than we have seen in the past.

In preschools and kindergartens, many children, for example, are thin, pale, and chronically tired. They are nervous, cannot sit still, and are so fidgety that they often fall off their chairs. Movement and play do not come as easily as they once did. Many children are uncoordinated in their movements and seem clumsy. Some move with unconscious and uncontrolled abandon, smashing and crashing into their playmates. Others find a quiet corner and just stay there, avoiding movement at all cost. "Touchiness"—overreacting to the slightest brush against another child—emotional fragility, and difficulties with eating are also common. Many children reject the wholesome, simple foods that are prepared for snack and prefer instead only a few, often highly refined, foods.

Many young children also have trouble listening and processing what they hear. During circle time, the central event in the kindergarten morning, they are distracted and have trouble imitating the teacher's gestures. And when during story time the children are offered nourishment of soul and spirit, some among them cannot inwardly create the mighty imaginative pictures contained in the stories.

Children generally also have an increased difficulty in interacting harmoniously with their classmates. The

peaceful and healthy hum of free play that once characterized each day in the kindergarten is now difficult to create and sustain. In the past, children were more able to create play from their own imaginations. Now they imitate characters from the media. But the roles and the behaviors do not in fact relate to real human relationships, and conflicts and problems arise.

Taken together, these phenomena indicate that children are having difficulty in developing a healthy balance in body, mind, and soul through integration of the senses described above. They lack the basic sense of well-being and harmony in their physical bodies that should characterize childhood.

According to Rudolf Steiner, the human being has twelve senses. Four can be called the foundational senses. These are the sense of touch (the tactile sense); the sense of life; the sense of self-movement (the proprioceptive sense); and the sense of balance (the vestibular sense). It is by means of these that the soul and spirit of the child find their way into the structured physical body.

The tactile sense is the first to be awakened. This happens in the birth process itself when the mother's uterine contractions massage the fetus, giving it a first strong, external stimulus and awakening and toning the sense of touch. A very short labor, a Cesarean section, or a postpartum period spent in an incubator can result in an oversensitivity in the infant and young child. For this child, a normal tactile experience can be like an assault. The child avoids the exploration of the world through touch that is part of the development of the infant and toddler. He is often finicky about the fit of his clothes, about being touched, and about the temperature and textures of food.

Sometimes the tactile sense is overtaxed as in a long and stressful labor. Then the child's sense of touch closes down in a gesture of self-protection. This child can be unaware she had touched another child, that her hands are encrusted with sand and mud, or that her shoes are on the wrong feet. As Steiner points out, touch gives us an experience of our boundaries, telling us where we end and where the rest of the world begins. A healthy sense of touch lays the foundation for a sense of social boundaries.

The sense of life tells us whether our basic physiological processes, such as those involved in eating, sleeping, breathing, and eliminating waste products, are functioning properly. When things are going well, we are usually unaware of this sense and what it is monitoring. When there is a problem, the life sense creates the feeling of being out-of-sorts or unwell. Aches and pains, problems related to sleep and to waking up, to eating (indigestion, food allergies, inability to tolerate a variety

of foods), all register on the life sense. Predictable rhythm in daily life and warm interest from the child's caregiver support the life sense.

The proprioceptive sense, or sense of self-movement, tells us about the position and movement of our body. In each moment it informs us of the location in space of the head, trunk, and limbs and how they relate to each other. It does so by sensing the contraction and stretching of muscles and the compression of joints.

A child with a poorly developed proprioceptive sense may move through a room like a tornado, bumping into people and things. He may love to be at the bottom of a pile of other children. The external stimulus gives him the experience of body position and physical boundaries that his own proprioceptive sense fails to indicate. Such a child can be truly unaware of where his limbs are and how they are moving. He can be sincerely incredulous that with a swing of his arm he has just knocked down a block house that other children have spent twenty minutes building.

Healthy proprioception also provides the ability to begin a movement, to control it, and to stop it. This sense of self-movement enables us to maintain the right amount of muscle tension in a task such as lifting a glass of water. It also allows us to stand upright. A child with a poor sense of self-movement finds keeping an upright posture difficult and may collapse on the floor when the opportunity presents itself, as during circle time. A child, then, who is clumsy, who often bumps into things and other persons, and who readily slumps or just falls down, may have difficulty with the proprioceptive sense.

The sense of balance, or the vestibular sense, informs us of our position in space in relation to gravity. Working

together with the proprioceptive sense, the sense of balance tells us where we are in relation to our surroundings and keeps us in balance, upright in space.

The vestibular sensory organs—the semicircular canals—are located in the inner ear. Ear infections, often chronic in nature, are very common among young children today, having replaced measles, chicken pox, and other inflammatory diseases that are prevented by vaccines. Thus, both the vestibular sense and the sense of hearing are under attack. Some antibiotics used to fight ear infections may actually damage the inner ear and the semicircular canals.

Children with vestibular weakness usually are one of two extreme types. One type is very sensitive to movement of every sort and avoids spinning around, swinging, and being upside down. The other craves movement at all times. A child of this type can spin round and round on the tire swing and never get dizzy. She seems to need constant motion, always fidgeting and rocking in her chair. This child may also be the daredevil who lacks an appropriate sense of caution. The vestibular sense in these children is underresponsive and thus needs a constant stream of stimuli to determine where the child's center of balance is.

The importance of this sense of balance cannot be overemphasized. It is a unifying element in the whole system and seems to prime the entire nervous system to function properly.

The healthy development of these four senses in the young child provides the foundation for all the higher-level skills—cognitive, social, spiritual—in childhood and throughout life. When the foundational senses are functioning well, the child has pleasure and joy in being

The importance of the sense of balance cannot be overemphasized. It is a unifying element in the whole system and seems to prime the entire nervous system to function properly.



in the physical body. He moves in a balanced, coordinated, integrated way. He is eager to explore the world, welcomes every kind of new sensory experience, and is neither reckless nor timid. The child is well-balanced, both literally and metaphorically, and also understands appropriate physical and social boundaries.

In fact, however, many and increasing numbers of children lack the healthy development of these four senses. The incarnation into the physical body through the four foundational senses has been disrupted, and the harmony of young children's movement and behavior is disturbed. There are various explanations for this. Audrey McAllen, founder of The Extra Lesson™, a method of dealing with learning, behavioral, and other problems that is used widely in Waldorf schools, cites the constant and powerful sensory stimulation to which children today are subjected.

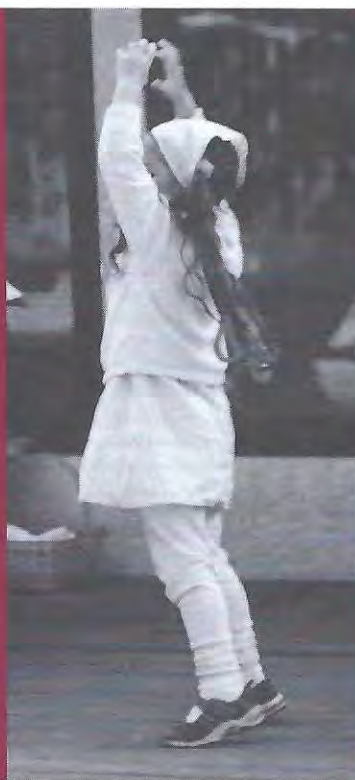
Well-known author Joseph Chilton Pearce elaborates this view by describing the "startle effect" and its use by the mass media. Chilton Pearce writes that children are essentially catatonic while watching television—and thus not really paying attention to the program or to the commercial breaks. Television producers therefore inject loud, unexpected noises and sudden changes in volume and lighting into the programs to shock the child viewer back into an attentive state. These powerful stimuli cause the sympathetic nervous system to release cortisol, an adrenal hormone usually secreted in emergency situations. Cortisol quickens heart and breathing rates, increases muscle tension, and generally prepares the child for fight or flight. Thus, children who spend time in front of a television are relentlessly bombarded with powerful sensory stimuli that keep them in a state of arousal. Music videos, movies, and

computer games also contribute to this chronic overstimulation. Chilton Pearce sees it as one cause of the anxiety and sensory disorders that plague children today.

The extreme sensory stimulation a child encounters in electronic entertainment prepares him for a crisis situation in which responsive action is needed. Since no such situation ensues, the child's body begins to take a certain level of cortisol as normal. What once aroused the fight or flight response (and woke him up for the commercials) becomes inadequate. Thus, in recent years the creators of electronic entertainment have steadily increased the speed at which the images change, the volume of the sound effects, and the shock quality of the images themselves.

The lack of opportunities for movement, especially free, spontaneous physical movement, also affects today's children negatively. Rather than walking or riding a bicycle to school and to visit friends, children today are chauffeured here and there by parents. Because of safety concerns, children are unlikely to enjoy unsupervised play and exploration with friends in the neighborhood. They spend much time being entertained passively by television, movies, videos, and computers. Most are spared the daily chores and household tasks that in an earlier age trained and strengthened the foundational senses.

The daily activities in the Waldorf kindergarten all work to strengthen these primary senses. The periods of free play; the rhythmic games that involve clapping and stomping the feet and other bodily movements; the acting out in gesture of events in the stories told by the teacher; and the participation in the chores and house-



When the foundational senses are functioning well, the child has pleasure and joy in being in the physical body. She moves in a balanced, coordinated, integrated way.

hold activities that take place in the kindergarten, such as sweeping, washing dishes, setting the table for snack, and kneading bread dough, all promote the child's coming into the physical body in a healthy way. Each of these elements in the daily sequence of activities is enhanced by the teacher's warm enthusiasm and by the beauty of the classroom.

Many kindergarten teachers augment these standard Waldorf activities with special movement experiences. These teachers have the children do a series of movements within an imaginative pictorial context. The imaginations give the movement a power and meaning and carry that movement deep into the child's being. These imaginatively enriched movements have a more profound effect than do straightforward calisthenics or physical therapy and can be therapeutic as well as hygienic.

For example, a kindergarten class might be told the story of "Tippery Tim and the Pot of Gold." Tippery Tim is a leprechaun who is guarding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. The class goes on a journey to find Tippery Tim. The children crawl under the roots of an imaginary tree to look for him, walk over a bridge (an elevated balance beam), run under a waterfall (a turning jump rope), and roll down from the top of the rainbow (do log rolls down gym mats arranged to create a small hill) before finally finding the gold. This is done each week over a term, and each week Tippery Tim has a small treasure in his gold pot for each child—a crystal, star, and finally bells like the ones the leprechaun wears on the toes of his shoes.

There are things parents can do to help their children develop these foundational senses in a healthy way.

These include:

- holding to a daily predictable rhythm and pattern so that mealtimes, bedtime, and the times for other important daily activities are consistent;
- providing opportunities for free play and exploration indoors and out;
- taking children frequently and regularly for walks and outings in nature, regardless of the weather;
- encouraging the playing of games that involve running, jumping, skipping, balancing, crawling, and hopping (traditional children's games such as hide and seek, hop scotch, and jump rope are ideal);
- avoiding exposure to the media, particularly television, videos, and computers;
- encouraging children to eat a wide range of wholesome foods.

Today's culture is filled with threats to the healthy unfolding of the foundational senses in the young child. But, if we are conscious of these hazards, we can nevertheless give our children a sound physical basis for life in the world and insure their development into healthy adults.

Further Reading

Kohler, Henning. *Working with Anxious, Nervous, and Depressed Children*. Fair Oaks, CA: AWSNA Publications, 2000.

Kranowitz, Carol. *The Out of Sync Child*. New York: Perigee/The Berkeley Publishing Group, 1998.

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The daily activities in the Waldorf kindergarten, such as participation in household chores, all work to strengthen the primary, foundational senses.



Gradalis Therapeutic Training Course

Web site: www.gradalis.com

Rudolf Steiner College Remedial Program

Web site: www.steinercollege.edu

e-mail: rsc@steinercollege.edu

LAURIE CLARK has taught kindergarten in Colorado for twenty-one years and currently is kindergarten teacher at the Denver Waldorf School. She is a graduate of the Association for Healing Education Training Course. Laurie creates circle time activities that give special emphasis to the healthy development of the foundational senses and shares these ideas as an invited presenter at Waldorf teacher conferences. She does kindergarten mentoring and teacher training, as well as remedial consulting.

NANCY BLANNING is the remedial/therapeutic teacher at the Denver Waldorf School. She taught in Waldorf kindergartens for seventeen years before beginning to do remedial work with students five years ago. Nancy is a graduate of the Gradalis Therapeutic Training Course. Nancy works especially in creating movement "journeys" with children in kindergarten and in the lower grades. Examples of this work have been published in other Waldorf journals. Nancy does remedial consulting with various Waldorf schools, as well as teacher mentoring and teacher training.

CREDITS: Photos by Hallie Wootan. Special thanks to teacher Jennifer Mason and Hidden Treasure Nursery, Carmichael, California.

BOOKS

in Brief

Mirror of the Moon

BY PHILIP THATCHER

REVIEWED BY ANNE GREER

Corona Press

North Vancouver, BC, Canada, 2003

\$17.95 USD • \$21.00 CAN • 271 pages

This novel is the second volume in *The Raven Trilogy*. The author, Philip Thatcher, has been a teacher of English and history at the Vancouver Waldorf School for seventeen years. Philip recently has assumed the office of general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada.

In volume one, *Raven's Eye*, Nathan Solomon, a Native American who has grown up in a small village on Canada's western coast, moves in his early teens to Vancouver. He attends a Waldorf high school, forms close relationships with his classmates, and is deeply affected by the story of Parzival. Like the hero of the medieval tale, Nathan goes in search of his identity and destiny, trying to understand his true name, Gwawinastoo, or "Raven's Eye."

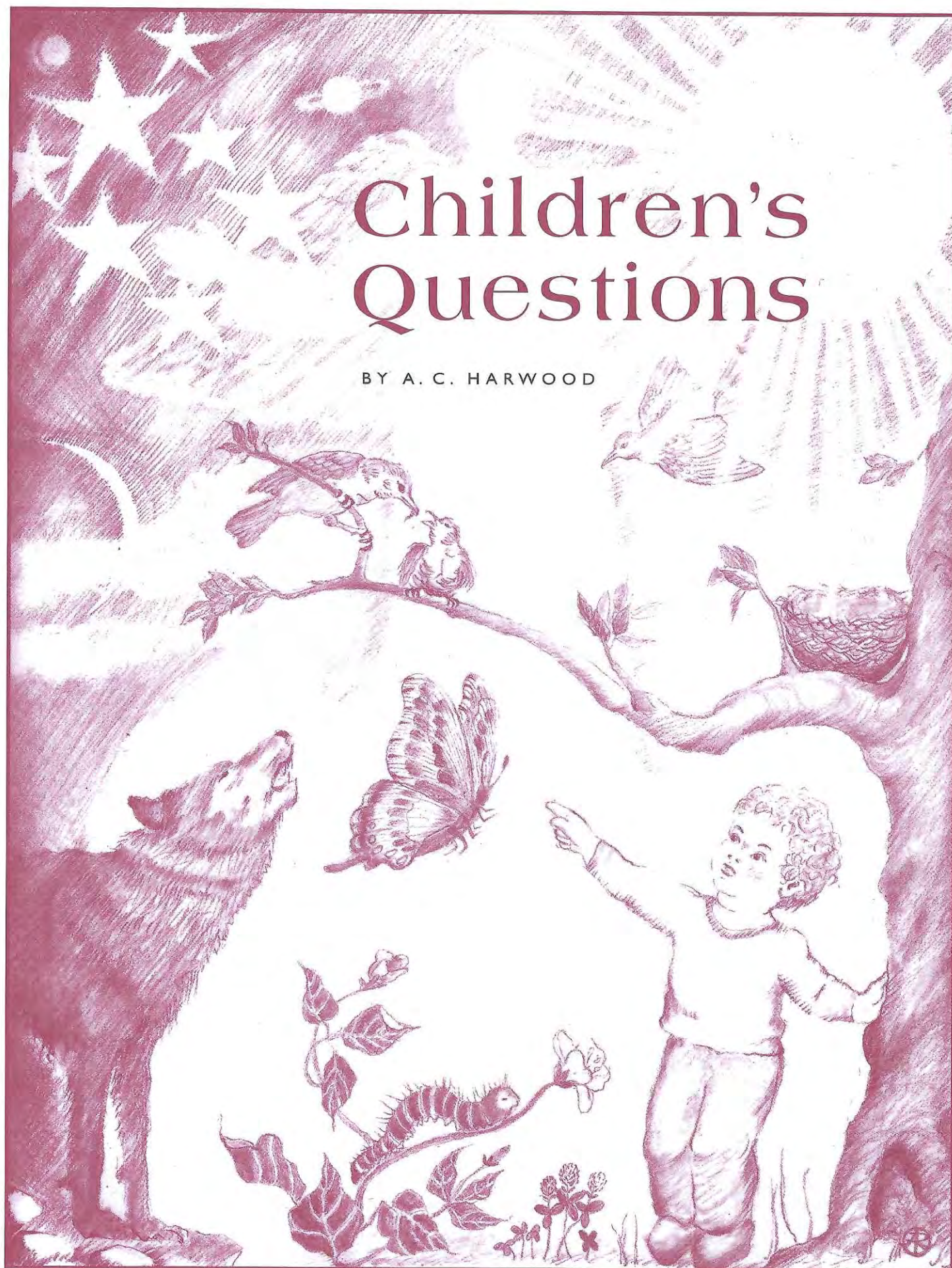
In *Mirror of the Moon*, Nathan returns from a sojourn in Ireland to his native village and then to Vancouver. Wanting to atone for past transgressions, he tries to rescue a childhood friend from alcohol and drug abuse. Nathan begins to find the delicate balance between being responsible to others and realizing one's own life path. Nathan also attends a reunion of his high school class, where amid experiences of betrayal, disillusionment, and reconciliation, the young man has moments of insight and self-discovery.

Also central in the story are Margaret, Nathan's sister, and her husband, Cameron, a university professor. Cameron, in his own search for meaning, has been deeply moved by Native American art and, in the course of the novel, comes across Rudolf Steiner's seminal book *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. Margaret is resentful of her husband's attempt to find meaning in a culture she is trying to leave behind and struggles with anger over dark events in her childhood.

While grounded in a real, particular, and often somber world, *Mirror of the Moon* is radiant with broader truths. It reminds us that we are all seekers after our true self and after our highest destiny. We are seeking the light, but in today's world, that search must pass through shadow and darkness, and the deeper the darkness the more luminous the light that will manifest. And while our search is personal and individual, it is in human relationships and in their breaking and mending that we discover our true selves. We need the mirror of the other. This novel is about being human in the twenty-first century.

Children's Questions

BY A. C. HARWOOD



A. C. Harwood was one of the pioneers of Waldorf Education in the English-speaking world. He was a teacher at Michael Hall, the first Waldorf school in Great Britain, and also the founding editor of Child and Man, the first journal in English about Waldorf Education. This article, written about twenty-seven years ago, is as relevant now as then.

—R. E. K.

From about the age of three, children begin to be full of questions, and it is sometimes very difficult for parents to find the right answers. Every question demands its own particular answer, but it is of great value, in deciding what answers to give, to know what kind of answer is required. For it is altogether wrong to think that a little child should be given—just in simpler form—the same answer as a child of eleven or twelve.

The range of questions that even young children ask is truly astonishing. And young children often ask fundamental and far-reaching ones—about life and death, and life after death—questions that many parents themselves have long since given up trying to answer. A child of four—to cite an actual example—asked the following questions in the space of a few minutes:

Do men die?
Will you die?
Shall I die?
What do the angels say to you?
Are angels shy?
Who made God?
Do you like God?
When you die, do you come alive again?

Such questions are a challenge to parents to become clear about what they think and believe regarding topics that they otherwise may be content to leave unresolved. But we must have some answer, even a tentative one, to reply to such questions. It is too much of a shock to little children when parents declare themselves totally unable to answer fundamental questions about human life.

There are two things, however, to be noticed about the inquiries of little children. The questions are often posed in rapid succession, as if the child were not so much seeking information as just wanting to hear an answering voice. Also, the child seems to listen with more pleasure to a tentative answer, spoken with love and warmth in the voice, than to an assured and categorical reply given in a matter-of-fact tone. When little children pour out their endless questions, they are seeking something much deeper than the mere satisfaction of curiosity. They are seeking to bring around them the living tones of the human voice. For the voices that they hear do not affect only their consciousness, but penetrate even to those deep unconscious processes that are building up and forming the physical body.

According to Rudolf Steiner, there are specific connections between the sounds of certain letters and the organs of the human body. For this reason, eurythmy, which expresses the various sounds of language and music in movements of the limbs, is not only an art, but also a means of healing.

Hence the quality of the adult's voice in answering a child's question is as important as what is said. Words spoken clearly and slowly, the tones full and pure and imbued with warmth and love of speech, give a child a feeling of blessing but also promote a healthy physical development. A child is first nourished by mother's milk, and then by his mother tongue. Today the speech of many people—particularly intellectuals—is dry and clipped, and we need consciously to develop a way of speaking that is soft and embracing.

A child often will supply the answer to his own question, and his answer as a rule is much more full of fantasy than one an adult would supply. For example, a child asks: "Why does the Sun take the water up into the sky?" Then he adds: "Maybe it is for the angels to drink?" Or seeing a piece of wire netting over the funnel of a steamroller, he asks: "Why do they put the netting on it?"—and immediately

**When little children
pour out their
endless questions,
they are seeking
something much
deeper than the
mere satisfaction
of curiosity.
They are seeking
to bring around
them the
living tones of the
human voice.**

adds: "It must be to keep the birds from building their nests there."

An adult typically wants to give an answer that is objectively true, and in any case probably finds the child's level of fantasy hard to replicate. But little children need a living fantasy in the answers they are given. To offer them logical explanations—however literally and objectively true—is like giving them a stone when they ask for bread.

Sometimes little children's questions arise from their desire to unite themselves, through words, to the objects around them. A child sees a caterpillar for the first time and asks: "What is that?" The answer, "A caterpillar," immediately generates a second question, "What is a caterpillar?" From this second query the child wants not a definition of a caterpillar, but the joyous affirmation of the reality before him, i.e., "That is a caterpillar."

After the age of six or seven, children need answers more connected to their questions. Now they need more than just living speech; they need an answer they can consciously grasp. Between seven and twelve, the child asks questions about the heavenly bodies, the nature of the Sun and stars, the creation of the world, and so on. Ready to supply the answers are numerous children's encyclopedias, books on astronomy, biology, and so forth. Typically, these sources reflect the materialistic, scientific world-view, giving some version of the Big Bang theory to explain the universe and showing the human body as a biological machine with the heart a pump, the lungs a pair of bellows, the nervous system a set of telegraph wires.

These views and explanations represent the modern intellectual consciousness. But the seven- to twelve-year-old, in his personal evolution, is not at that stage yet. She has much more of the piety and luxuriant imagination of the Middle Ages. To the child, the stars are clear, shining, beautiful beings to which she feels closely connected; they are not vast spheres uncountable millions of

miles distant in space. The Sun, rising each day and filling children with joy and gratitude, is not a huge stationary mass of burning gases. The portrayal of the heavenly bodies in mythology is more true to children than that of modern astronomy with its colossal dimensions and distances.

The Norse people said that during an eclipse wolves are swallowing the Sun. For a child, possessing a sense of the devouring quality of darkness, the true nature of an eclipse is much better expressed by a rapacious wolf than by a diagram of spheres and shadows. In an eclipse it is really as though wolves are devouring the Sun, and that "as though" is, after all, the only valid claim that can be made by the true scientist. Newton did not say that the planets are attracted to the Sun by gravity. He said they move as though they were so attracted; it is not his fault that men have made a dogma of a hypothesis.

A child should not be given scientific conceptions and explanations of the world too early. These tend to destroy the tender plants of vivid feeling and imagination that characterize and are proper to the years before

puberty. Also, if they are received before the child can follow the thoughts on which they are based, they become matters of faith instead of matters of knowledge. Few adults bother to review the mathematics that support the Newtonian planetary system or modern atomic theories. In a sense, the scientific age is the most credulous of all ages. A thousand years ago, a person could say: "I see the Sun move with my own eyes." Today most of us are reduced to saying: "Somebody proved a long time ago that the Sun stands still. I forget who it was, and I don't know how he proved it, but it's a fact all the same."

In this same period, children begin to ask questions like "How is an automobile made?" or "Where does coal come from?" A descriptive, accurate answer from an adult or from a book may have little real meaning or value for them. There are children's books describing how things are made, but these can



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give children a superficial, trivialized impression of the work human beings have to do in the world. Photographs and illustrations can provide a child a picture of the various processes but little feeling for the real conditions under which the work is done. A child may see a few photos of miners with helmet-lamps hacking at a seam and an illustration of a section of a mine with the cage descending and think that he knows all about coal mining. He will turn the page to discover how a radio works, or what the Great Wall of China looks like.

This way of acquiring information, though, is extraordinarily superficial, muddled, and passive. It is far better for a child to make his own pictures in his mind's eye by listening to a living description of, for example, a coal mine. He can inwardly create and experience the intense silence under the ground, the need to walk for miles in narrow galleries where one cannot stand upright, and the perpetual damp and the dripping of water. In short, the child can create a picture of the innards of the Earth like the one George Macdonald conjures up with his description of the interior of a mountain in *The Princess and Curdie*. Also, the pictures and facts, rather than being isolated bits of knowledge, should be realities seen in a wider context. Information about mining should be related to chemistry, history, geology, and other subjects.

There are two additional dangers in relying on "how things work" books. One is that the child will gather much theoretical information and forget to observe concrete realities in her own surroundings. A child may be able to describe the solar system in an abstract way but not know when or where the full moon rises or be able to point out a planet in the sky. The other danger is that the child gains an understanding of distant and exotic phenomena but is uninformed about common things close at hand. A child may know how an orbiting space station works but be unaware how butter, cheese, or soap is made.

With a younger child, adults should focus on objects close at

hand that can be really observed and experienced. Having the child participate in the making of cheese or soap or maple syrup is ideal.

A certain reticence in answering a child's question is desirable. It is better to give too little than too much. A simple, imaginative, heartfelt but bare-bones answer encourages the child's imaginative faculty to remain active. With this the questioning capacity is kept alive. Otherwise and sadly, the inclination to ask questions tends to fade as the child grows older. Whether a child's questions have been answered in an appropriate manner will be reflected in his continuing to ask questions as an adolescent, the profundity (or lack thereof) of those questions, and the ease with which he is satisfied.

Around the age of fourteen, the intellectual capacity becomes strong. The young person should have a compelling desire to probe every question in life to the bottom and should not be satisfied by theoretical, bloodless answers. For the young person of this age, one episode in the story of Parzival has a particularly deep meaning. The young Parzival meets the wounded and suffering Amfortas but fails to ask the king the

question that should have been asked: "What ails thee, Brother?"

Parents can during this period of time make it clear that they welcome questions and can provide a space and an opportunity for their teenage son or daughter to pose queries, both trivial and profound. Many of the questions the young person has in her heart at this age will indeed only be answered by life itself. But parents, speaking honestly and out of their own experience and saying, "I do not know," when they in fact do not know, can still help children make sense of the world. And in doing so, they will help the young person continue asking questions throughout life. The adolescent stands on the threshold of life, and life will provide the answers that are needed, but only if the right questions are asked.

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The Discipline Dilemma

What's a Parent to Do?

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

The third-grade class was coming to the end of its study block on the Bible. The teacher asked one of her nine-year-old students what he thought was the greatest miracle recorded in the Bible. After a moment's consideration, the child answered, "The greatest miracle is where Joshua told his son to stand still—and he obeyed him."

At times it seems indeed like a miracle when one of my children does what I ask, and particularly when he does so right away. Many parents today share this experience.

No parent likes to exercise discipline. Often our efforts do not seem to work. Hence, many parents today avoid disciplining their children and rationalize their abdication of what has traditionally been an important parental role. Lack of discipline has become a large, perhaps the largest, problem for families and schools. This is the problem that brings more parents and their children to a therapist's office than any other.

The current situation is the result of a long process of social change. Until fairly recently, discipline was handled rather “militarily.” Children were taught to address all adults politely, obey orders promptly, and generally bend to the will—and also the whims—of grownups. If they didn’t, there were immediate and harsh results. Physical punishment was universal, approved of and practiced both at school and at home. Also, the whole community took responsibility for the behavior of its child. If an adult saw a child misbehaving, even a child whom he did not know, the adult would reprimand the child and could expect to be heeded.

In the 1960s and ’70s, many traditional social patterns were questioned. An antipathy to the authoritarian principle of blind obedience became widespread. Authority became a dirty word, and many parents became uneasy about exercising authority over their children. The Woodstock Generation sought to create a kinder and gentler world both outside and inside the home.

Diane Baumrind is a research psychologist, specializing in parental child-rearing styles. Like many other psychologists and teachers, she sensed something is awry in families where the parents are permissive, set few limits, make few demands on the children, and emphasize unconditional acceptance regardless of behavior. Baumrind’s research shows that

the more permissive the family, the greater the tendency in the children as they get older toward behavior disorders, violence, and delinquency.

The outstanding characteristic of children raised in such families is low self-esteem, even in comparison to children raised in authoritarian homes.

Most of us do not want to return to the authoritarian pattern of the past. That pattern often traumatized children and prevented real intimacy, openness, and trust in parent-child relationships. On the other hand, the lukewarm commitment to the role of parent (and the preference for the role of buddy or confidant that usually accompanies it), evident in many families, is an abdication of a key responsibility. Children need guidance, direction, and objective standards in learning how to behave in the world.

What a Child Needs

Rudolf Steiner, the originator of Waldorf Education, had a view of discipline that focuses on the evolution of what he called the “etheric” or “life forces” in the child. As the child grows, these forces are used in forming and building up the child’s physical body. In the first three years of life, these forces are almost entirely devoted to physical growth. Thereafter they are gradually released to other tasks. The change of teeth at about age seven is a sign that the etheric forces have largely finished the task of forming the physical body and are available for their next and more subtle job—providing the energy for thinking and memory.

Children can, of course, learn to read and do math and learn foreign languages before age seven. Steiner’s view—one corroborated by present-day educational psychological research—is that this early intellectuality creates problems.

The freed etheric forces, however, are not entirely used up by the child’s starting to think and remember. Increasingly, after the age of three, these excess energies in the child can create all manner of mischief, sometimes even chaos. Parents need to find ways to help the child direct these energies in positive and socially acceptable behavior and activities. We need to take up the daily, unremitting, thankless task of disciplining our children.

Steiner’s advice to parents at this stage was “Teach the children good habits.” Habits order the “forces of chaos” and begin to teach the child about self-discipline. Habits are the memories of the human will, patterns of behavior that are internalized and embedded in the will. Habit, like memory, engages or ties up the etheric life forces. Habits curb and contain the instinctual, aggressive tendencies in the child until he or she is mature and morally aware and can make informed, conscious, moral decisions. Then the etheric energy is freed and can be used creatively and positively in the world.

One problem with traditional authoritarian discipline is that it can be too good at tying up these surplus life forces. The result is that these forces cannot be released later in life and are not available for adult development. One sees the effect of this, for example, in rigid, dogmatic thinking in religion and politics, and in lifestyles characterized by fearfulness and neurosis.

Punishing children physically ties up the life forces so that they are later very hard to release. Yet despite expert advice to the contrary, a large majority of parents still spank, pinch, or push their children. The word *discipline* has become synonymous with “punishment” or “control.” Rather, it should be understood more broadly as the healthy teaching and guiding of the child to self-discipline.

For generations up through the 1960s, the authoritarian style of discipline dominated in North America. This social phenomenon was due in part to the fact that most men had intense experiences in the military and carried over authoritarian patterns into their later family life.

Since then the pendulum has swung to the other extreme of a too-permissive parenting style. The busyness and hectic pace of life have helped and abetted this. In families where both parents work full-time outside the home and also of course in single-parent families, parents do not have the time and energy to relate in any way to their children, let alone to be the ever-vigilant disciplinarian. To be telling Johnny to sit up straight, put on a clean shirt before he goes to school, to pick up his toys, not to use certain words, or to be nice to his sister is just too demanding. Too much control has given way to too little guidance and discipline for children.

Children do not form habits of good behavior on their own, and the free, unchanneled life forces manifest in lack of manners, rudeness, incivility, lack of basic consideration for others, violence, and aggression.

Inability to concentrate on learning can also in part be traced to overpermissiveness at home.

The result is confusion and chaos at home and in school. Teachers have to deal with more and more children who disrupt the classroom or who cannot focus or pay attention to their lessons.

Many young parents today are clueless when it comes to what a healthy child really needs. As a result, a common vision as to what constitutes good parenting is a subject of heated debate.

A complicating factor is that children today are different than they were even just thirty years ago. Many seem more awake and self-aware at an early age. Many seem like little adults and want and may even demand to be treated as adults. Nevertheless, these children still desperately want and need adult attention, guidance, and discipline.

A new way of parenting is necessary today, one that is neither authoritarian nor permissive. Key elements in this approach include the following factors.

Parental Presence

Israeli psychologist Haim Omen wrote a book entitled *Parental Presence*, emphasizing the importance of the parent's role in the healthy development of the child. His premise—translated into Waldorf terms—is that only an “I,” a mature ego, can guide and shape the etheric forces left over after the growth process has slowed down. Hence, until the child has herself developed a more self-aware, mature ego (at around age twenty-one), a guiding, supervising adult is necessary.

In plain language, this means that you, the parent, are the boss. You need to set aside your antipathy to an authoritarian role, accept your responsibility, and do your job.

Confronted with an unruly five-year-old, you will likely experience confusion, doubt, anger, and the nagging question: Am I being just like my mother? But in the moment and in the longer term, you need to reach down and find the strength and confidence so that you can manifest both care and firmness. “Parental presence” is a name given to this quality of centered focus that the parent must develop in order to carry out Mission Impossible.

Haim Omen points to two dangers common in parenting. One is trying to exist only for the child and becoming the child's servant. This subverts the child's deep need to have as a role model a full, independent human being, a full individual with strong personal aspirations and interests. The other danger arises when the adult avoids many aspects of parenting—failing to exercise discipline, set limits, provide guidance, and teach about life and the world. Here the parent attempts to live as if becoming a parent never happened, focusing on personal and career issues. Parents with only one child can easily succumb to this temptation. True parental presence is a practice in mindfulness while holding both these extremes in consciousness.

Many parents talk to their child as if the child were an adult. This comes out of the parents' discomfort with accepting that they—the parents—need to be in charge, that they need to make decisions (some of which will be wrong), and that there are different rights and responsibilities in a family depending on whether you are an adult or a child. This weakening of parental presence, sometimes referred to as “jellyfish parenting,” takes many forms:

- the parent who is always asking the child what he or she wants or likes
- the parent who wants above all to be his child's friend
- the parent who asks the child if he or she wants to stay in the present kindergarten or school or transfer to another
- the parent who asks a child ten times in a row to do something
- the parent who uses bribery to get even minimal cooperation from a child

As a parent, you should let your child be a child. That is his job. And you should be an adult. That is your job.

This does not mean, however, that the relationship is a top-down, arbitrary one. You can, for example, involve the child in issues connected to discipline. For example, you might let her choose rewards for good behavior.

Or you can ask her help in dealing with a problematic situation: *"It is getting cold in the mornings, and you keep wanting to wear only your short-sleeved shirt. I'm worried about your catching cold. How can we work this out?"*

You might also, on occasion, have a serious talk with a child about a more serious infraction or long-term issue.

This should be done in a private and more formal setting.

It is important to explain briefly to a child why certain rules are important. Also you can help a child become sensitive to the feelings and needs of others. Be careful, though, and avoid the temptation of too much psychologizing, too much soliciting and processing of feelings.

An important part of your task as a parent is to be clear about expectations and limits.

In the long run, this works well both for parents and children.

Rhythm

Providing guidance and discipline for children takes place in time as well as space. A regular daily schedule provides a structure for the child's day, gives the child a sense of security, and helps him stay organized and focused. A daily rhythm assures the child that the world is a safe and sensible place where his needs will be met. It makes the child feel loved and also helps to keep him healthy.

The rhythm that provides all these benefits to a child is very simple to create. It means your child eats and goes to sleep at the same time every single day. Period.

This rhythm is not just a matter of living the day according to a schedule. As important as the regularity of the events are the little rituals and the sharing of experience that go along with the events of the day. Morning and evening meals are ideally spent with the whole family sitting down and spending time together. Bedtime involves a ritual of preparation for bed, story time, and conversation about the day past and the day to come. Both mealtimes and bedtimes can be marked by a prayer or life-affirming verse.

The foundation, however, is the clock and adherence to established times, day after day after day. This is extremely difficult for most families today, and establishing a true family rhythm will involve sacrifices on the part of both parents and children. But its importance, particularly in the child's early years, cannot be overestimated.



Social Skills

Most parents today do not teach their sons to open doors for ladies or to walk on the street side when accompanying a female on the sidewalk. The golden age of etiquette is past, but nevertheless it is important to train children in manners beyond saying "please" and "thank you."

We need to teach our children courtesy, civil speech, the avoidance of foul language, respect for other children and also for adults. That we as a society are not doing this is evident both in the world at large and in school settings.



The deeper issue concerns a child's developing the skills to interact socially in a harmonious way. In the past, a child could walk out the door and be free to play with many different children on her street and in her neighborhood. She learned to interact in a harmonious way with other children, free of adult supervision and direction. Today most young children lack this opportunity and they begin school having had very limited experience, perhaps having played with only one or two

children of their own age. Little children are naturally self-centered, and they need a variety of interactions with other children to help them develop social skills. This cannot happen overnight, and it cannot be accomplished just at school.

Play dates—arranged time with children who live at a distance—are often essential. Parents should begin arranging these before their child is in preschool and may need to facilitate these through the elementary school years. If there is no possibility of spontaneous play within the neighborhood, a play date should be arranged at least once a week. This involves contacting and negotiating with other parents who may or may not be willing to take the trouble. It is not always easy. But it is worth the effort. Parents need to ensure that their young children have the opportunity to develop social skills.

Outdoor Play

One source of behavioral problems is that children just have an excess of physical energy. Being driven to and from school, sitting for hours in cars or in front of a television or computer, they just don't get enough exercise to meet their need for movement and activity. This may find expression in behavior that requires parental discipline. If at all possible, have your child walk or bicycle at least part of the way to school. Organized sports programs after the child is in the fourth grade (if the programs are not too intense and competitive) can be helpful. But, if the local environment allows it, the simplest thing to do is to encourage (or push) the child to go outdoors, again and again, day after day, regardless of the weather. Left to their own devices outdoors, children will create and find things to do that will keep them physically and mentally active. If you can establish this pattern within your household (especially during the hour before supper), you will find that you do not have to be a constant disciplinarian.

One key to discipline is planning ahead and being able to work with a child's energy rather than with your "hard will."

Positive Discipline

We should treat our children with respect, even when they are acting up and we are worn out or irritated. To do this and to avoid the temptation to use corporal punishment, we need to practice anger management and stress reduction. Psychologist Elizabeth Gershoff analyzed sixty-two years of collected data and found that the more often a child is spanked, the greater the risk of childhood aggression and other antisocial behaviors such as lying, cheating, and bullying. Children raised

with spanking are less likely to learn right from wrong and more likely to misbehave behind their parents' backs. If you are at your wit's end with a child, an alternate approach is to hold the child on your lap in a firm embrace until he has settled down. He may struggle or scream or kick, but eventually he will calm down. Use hugs, not hits.

Another psychologist, Aletha Solter (whose Web site contains some very helpful articles on discipline), advocates no punishments of any kind and no rewards or bribes in discipline. Solter's "aware parent" does set reasonable boundaries and limits and gently guides the child toward acceptable behavior. This gentle approach requires a bit more time, more patience, and self-control on the parent's part. Solter suggests that the parent ought to act out of an awareness of the underlying needs of the child and work to guard the child from stress and trauma.

Chores

My neighbor has a bad back. I sometimes wince when I see him out mowing the lawn or shoveling snow, because I can see he is in pain. Often he has had to give the task over to his wife, because he cannot go on. This has been going on for years.

What really amazes me is that he has two sons living at home, a nineteen-year-old and a twenty-one-year-old, and over the last ten years they have almost never helped out. Something is wrong with this picture.

By the time a child is six, it is important that she begin to help out with household chores—setting or clearing the table, taking out the compost, feeding pets, and so on. It is probably easier for you as a parent to do it yourself and not add another thing about which you need to remind your child. However, chores make the child into a responsible and contributing member of the family and strengthen the rhythm of family life. Don't pay children for doing chores. They should understand that helping out is a necessary part of family life. By the time children are ten, they can truly be a help around the home. Such tasks as washing dishes, shoveling snow, and mowing the lawn can become their domain.

Teenagers

According to a recent study by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, seven out of ten teenagers live in homes where parents set few rules or none at all. This "neglectful parenting" quadruples the likelihood that teenagers will smoke, drink, or use drugs.

The remaining thirty percent of teenagers live in homes where "hands-on parenting" is practiced. Here, in

contrast, parents consistently intervene in the lives of their teenage children. They ban music CDs with offensive language; they keep track of where their children are after school; set curfews; assign regular chores; turn off the television during mealtimes; and eat dinner with their children at least six days a week.

Interestingly, teenagers in the study told researchers that although they did not always like parental attention, they felt that they needed it.

According to related studies, it is crucial that parents know where their children are at all times and that families agree that the parents have the right to know what children have in their bedrooms.

Obviously, after a child reaches age fourteen or fifteen, the parental reins have to be loosened a bit. But parents should not completely abdicate their involvement in and responsibility for their teenagers' lives. "Parental presence" has to be continued.

One might say that we human beings are put here on Earth to learn about love. We learn a little in our growing up, but it is in our adult years that we start to appreciate love's subtleties and its secrets. We meet and settle down with a life partner and get through the challenges of that relationship and realize (or fail to realize) certain intimate truths about this mystery. Our choosing a vocation in the world also is related to this endeavor.

But for many of us, it is through practicing the various forms of selflessness that being a parent demands that we really learn what love is. Mastering the art of discipline with children requires that we be strict both with our children and with ourselves. We need to find the right balance of the two sides of love—the firm, guiding hand and the warm, caring heart; structure and feeling; form and flow. We need to be strict wisely. We need to be attentive and aware of all our children's needs, not just the ones that are easy to meet.

THOMAS POPLAWSKI, staff writer for *Renewal*, is a psychotherapist living in Northampton, Massachusetts. Thomas, a trained eurythmist, writes and lectures on parenting, Waldorf Education, and related topics. His wife, Valerie, also a eurythmist, is a kindergarten teacher at the Hartsbrook Waldorf School in Hadley, Massachusetts. Thomas and Valerie's two sons, ages nine and eleven, are students in the school.

Book Review

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Navigating the Terrain of Childhood A Guide for Meaningful Parenting and Heartfelt Discipline BY JACK PETRASH REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

In the introduction to this readable and practical book, longtime Waldorf educator Jack Petrash makes several key points. He begins by observing that today many parents confuse discipline with punishment. Not liking the latter, they do away with the loving but firm guidance that true discipline can provide and substitute ongoing discussions and negotiations.

At the outset, the author acknowledges a debt to John Gardner, a leading Waldorf educator of an earlier era who wrote about discipline. Petrash then points out that

effective discipline should always begin with a parent's self-discipline. . . . [The] primary responsibility is with us and our adult behavior. When parents lead by example, discipline proceeds in a way that works for both parents and children by accentuating guidance and downplaying punishment.

The author continues:

The word *discipline* has the same root as the word *disciple*, reminding us that as parents we continually need to provide our children with a worthy model of behavior. This model is provided by the family patterns and structures that we establish and by the way we act as adults right from the beginning of our children's lives. Effective discipline begins long before the first disciplinary situations arise, and always contains a large portion of the essential ingredient—parental self-discipline.

Although effective discipline starts early and continues into young adulthood, it must always evolve. The way in which we interact with our young children—the kind of parental guidance that establishes good patterns of behavior with children who are three, four, or five—is only minimally effective with school-age children and usually not effective at all with adolescents. Parenting and discipline have to evolve continually on the long journey of childhood.

For discipline to evolve, parents need a sound understanding of child development. All children make their own unique journey across the terrain of childhood. But regardless of their individual paths, they invariably reach certain predictable developmental milestones, and for this reason any book on the subject should provide parents with a comprehensive understanding of child development so that they are ready for the dramatic but predictable changes that will occur.

In his book, Jack Petrash does just this. He weaves together an account of the development of the child with suggestions on how parents should handle discipline during each developmental period. He uses a journey across the United States as a metaphor for the journey that children and parents take together. The period from birth to six takes place on the cozy and structured East Coast, the early grade school years in the emotionally warm "heartland" between the Appalachians and the Mississippi, and the teenage years in the Wild West.

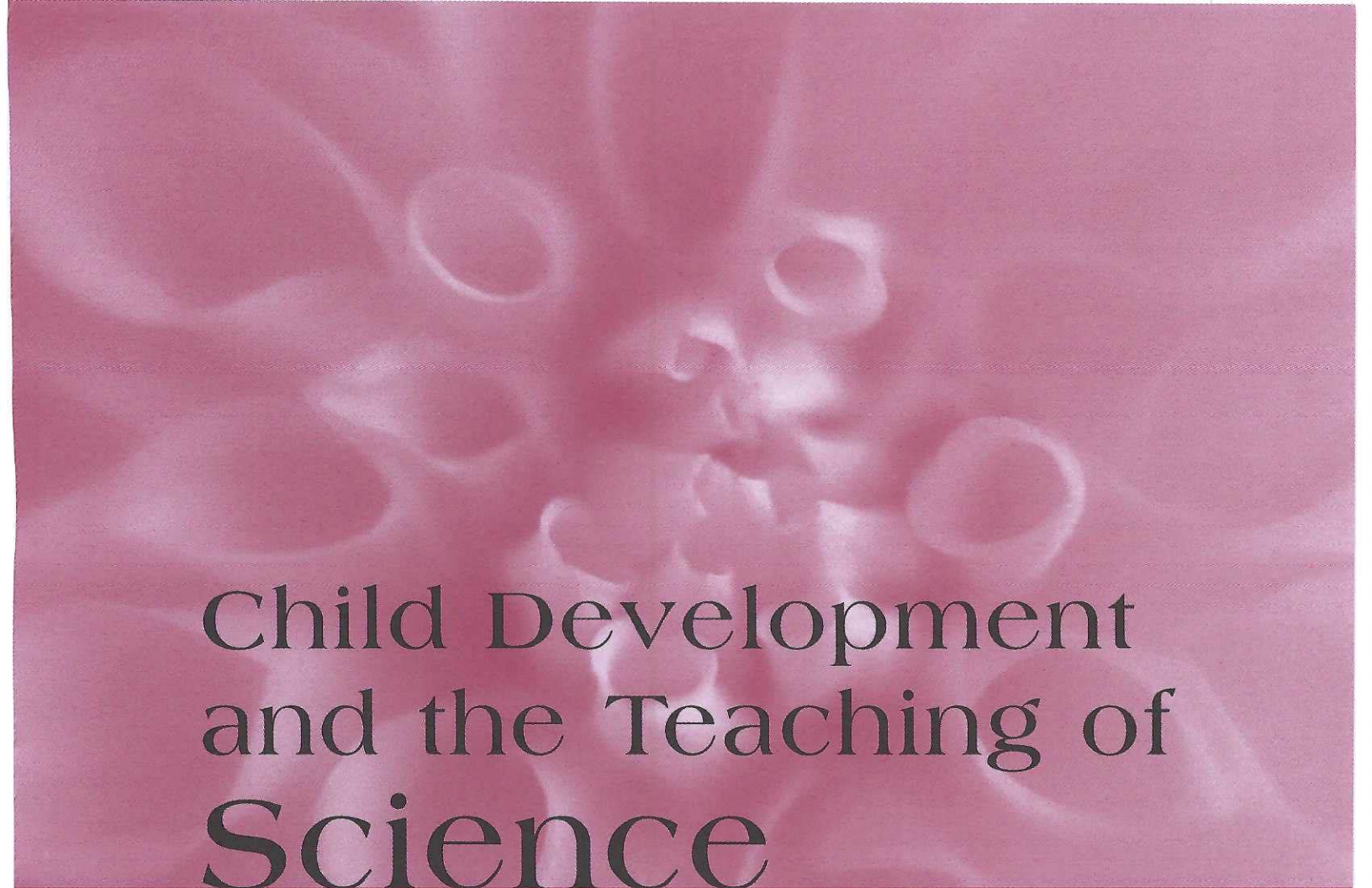
This book offers many helpful insights into how children develop and how parents can respond successfully to each stage of development.

From the Editor, continued

experiences as a Waldorf teacher in Tennessee is not that different from what one experiences as a Waldorf teacher in Bangkok, Nairobi, Dusseldorf, or Delhi. People got the jokes: about Waldorf salaries—these start at the poverty line and are adjusted downward according to individual need; about the teacher's home visit—the mother should be at her spinning wheel wearing a gingham dress and a Mennonite bonnet; and about Waldorf meetings—the experienced Waldorf teacher copes by learning how to sleep sitting up and with her eyes open.

Before the conference, I spent two weeks in Israel. I arrived in Jerusalem the day that the founder of Hamas, Sheikh Yassin, and six other Palestinians were killed by an Israeli helicopter missile in Gaza. The country was in a state of high alert for the twelve days I was there. There were soldiers everywhere, most of them men and women just nineteen or twenty years old, and several times—because I looked foreign and was carrying a day pack—I was stopped and questioned.

I met many gifted, intelligent, generous, and good-hearted people—both Israeli and Palestinian—during my stay. But the miasma of distrust, fear, anger, and hate that besets that land was pervasive and palpable. I left wondering whence will come the mutual understanding, compassion, forgiveness, and love—able to transcend tribal and ethnic boundaries—that will someday end this century-old conflict. The Waldorf movement seeks to educate human beings who possess imagination and compassion and who are capable of acting in freedom and out of selfless love. That aspiration is perhaps not unrelated to the resolution of this conflict and of others in the world.



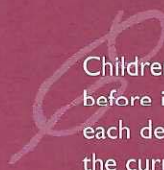
Child Development and the Teaching of Science

From the Stimulation of the Senses—to
Astute Observation—to Rigorous Training in
Thinking—to Phenomenological Thinking

BY DAVID MITCHELL

In a Waldorf school, the natural sciences—like virtually all other subjects—are taught differently than in most other schools. Parents and others are often mystified by the phenomenological approach that emphasizes observation and direct experience more than the ingestion of predigested laws and theories. In this article and in the one following, two of the leading authorities on the teaching of science in Waldorf schools explain the why and the how of the Waldorf science pedagogy and curriculum. While, at a few points, the articles overlap, each has its own perspective and insights. Together they provide, we hope, a demystified view of science study in the Waldorf school.

—R. E. K.



Children grow through developmental stages as they mature into adults. Each stage builds upon the one before it, and the harmonious unfolding of the child's personality depends on the healthy maturation of each developmental stage. Waldorf Education works with these developmental stages in every part of the curriculum, including science. Appropriate activities in the early grades and even in the preschool years can lay the foundation for a strong capacity for scientific thinking later on.

Preschool children learn about the world through their bodily or sensory impressions. What they see, hear, touch, taste, and smell in the world passes directly into their physical, sensory organism. These impressions are stored as cellular memory as the organs of the body are being formed. Young children have a feeling of oneness with the world, and the world is their teacher. These early sensory engravings can be the basis for scientific cognition later in life.

Parents can help children by surrounding them with beauty, providing a daily rhythm, and offering activities that appropriately stimulate the senses. Also, parents should filter all that comes toward the child from the environment—loud and/or discordant sounds and music, bright lights, strong tasting foods, and other intense sense impressions—that can overstimulate the child's senses and put them out of balance. The task of parents is to provide security and safety so that the child's individuality can gradually awaken.

Parents and preschool teachers can constructively aid a child's development by providing a variety of sensory experiences, such as of different smells (acidic, sweet, pungent), tastes (salty, sweet, sour), and surfaces (smooth, rough, soft). They can make the child aware of these different experiences but should avoid too much conversation processing the experiences. Such structured activities are helpful but should not be overdone. A child left to freely explore her environment, especially the natural part of it, will have many, varied sensory experiences.

Other activities that benefit the young child are balancing on logs and stones, playing jump rope, and playing any game that requires rhythmic movement and

spatial awareness. Just as children should have living experiences of warmth, coolness, heat, and tepidness, they should understand—through conscious activity—lightness, heaviness, bigness, and smallness. All the primary senses need to be brought into play.

A good place to engage the senses of the child is in the kitchen. There the child can experience, in traditional kitchen tasks, a variety of "scientific" phenomena: the rising of yeasted bread with its accompanying aroma and its transformation in the oven; the jelling of preserves and jellies when fruit is boiled with pectin; the caramelizing of sugar; the separation of whey from milk; the setting of custard when it is baked; and intensified aromas of a spice like nutmeg when it is warmed. In the kitchen, the mother and father are chemists, whom the child can observe and imitate. If the parents do their work with love, they will fill the child's soul with warmth and help him develop a love of learning and experimentation. Such early participatory activities comprise an important stage in the development of conscious scientific thinking.

Between the ages of three and five, children are learning to comprehend weight or mass, but are doing so directly through their limbs and senses. Once, at a birthday party for one of my children, I made the mistake of cutting the birthday cake disproportionately. My four-year-old daughter complained to me that her older sister had received a larger piece. Quietly, I reached over and cut hers in half and said, "There, now you have two." She was immediately placated. This would not work with a child past the age of seven.

Parents should not try to answer a child's query about things in the world with dead or fixed concepts. A

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young child cannot comprehend scientific abstractions. Children need living pictures that fill their souls with wonder and surprise; they do not need dead, abstract reasoning. An explanation that awakens reverence enlivens their power of imagination. In Waldorf Education reverence and a sense of wonder are the foundation stones on which the science curriculum is built.

The word *science* is derived from the Latin word *scientia*, which means knowledge. In science, knowledge is acquired through observation. Parents and teachers of young children should provide opportunities for children to experience wonder and love at what they meet in the world.

Almost every Sunday when our children were small, my wife and I would take them for a walk around the neighborhood “ring road” in wooded southern New Hampshire. The children darted from side to side, discovering new growth, noticing patterns in the flow of the small stream, discerning that the sound of our feet shuffling through snow changed according to the temperature, wondering at the shape of seed pods, and realizing that in January once-supple plants are dead and brittle. My wife and I said little but acknowledged each discovery and treasure. This free and spontaneous exploration of nature in early childhood nurtures capacities needed for science when children reach puberty.

In the early grades, children should be taken into nature and encouraged to notice the many beauties, small and large, that meet them: the seeds in the swaying grasses, the patterns of bark on different trees, the glitter within a rock, the shapes of leaves and flowers, the reflection in a puddle of water.

The basis of the science curriculum in the Waldorf school is observation. The word *observation* contains within it roots that relate to two other words—*object* and *to serve*. This is the key to the activity of truly looking at something: we must serve the object. Thus when we have the children observe a natural phenomenon, we ask them to put aside their own feelings, their sympathies and antipathies, and their preconceived notions and to let the phenomenon speak directly to them, to fill their soul.

At this stage, the children should be encouraged to observe, to articulate what they have seen and experienced, to refine their observations, draw comparisons, and to experiment, perhaps—to see what happens if one does such and such. And at this stage, they do not need explanations or fixed concepts. Without overt adult direction or instruction, children need only to freely and directly experience the world of nature. The late-eighteenth-century German poet Friedrich Schiller said such exploration leads in later life to a thinking capacity that he called *Spieltrieb*, or playful thinking.

Some years ago, I gave a lecture on patterns in water movement at Harvard University. After the lecture, Philip Morrison, noted scientist and then chair of the physics department at MIT, remarked to me, “Many of the most important scientific discoveries have been made by scientists at play.” He was referring, no doubt, to just this playful thinking.

In the Waldorf first grade, children receive the wisdom embedded in fairy tales. In the classroom are various types of minerals and crystals, as well as a terrarium and indoor plants. The children help to take care of these and thus become conscious of the mineral and plant



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worlds. They learn about the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into a butterfly. The teacher, in presenting the phenomena of the natural world, tries to create pictures of living organisms, rather than presenting dry facts, so that the children's imaginative powers are developed. The "oneness" of the world and its being a safe and secure place are emphasized.

In the second grade, the class is introduced to fables. After relating a fable such as "The Wolf and the Lamb" by Aesop, the teacher can ask questions that the children answer from their own observations. How do the wolf and the lamb walk? Both walk on four feet. What are their skins like? The lamb has soft, white, fluffy wool, and the wolf has rough, matted, shaggy fur. What are their teeth like? The lamb has small chisel-shaped front teeth—incisors—which it uses for cutting grass. The wolf mostly has sharp pointed teeth—canines—which it uses for ripping meat. Both have flat, strong back teeth—molars—for grinding and chewing. How do they live? The lambs live in groups or herds and are dependent on each other for safety. The wolf is a loner and hunts independently for his daily meal, but sometimes hunts in a pack to overwhelm large prey. In this way, the second-grade teacher can create objective and accurate pictures relating to the animal kingdom. These will come into play again when the children study zoology later on.

In the third grade, the children are involved in farming, gardening, housebuilding, analyzing soils, identifying grains, measuring, weighing, and in other practical activities that develop and solidify their scientific knowledge. During this year, most of the children are going through especially significant physical changes. Their heart rate slows so that the ratio of pulse to breathing is 4:1, which is the same as for an adult.

Also at this age there are profound psychological changes. The children experience a separation between their inner self and the world. They begin to lose the complete trust in the world that they had in the early years of childhood. The children's imaginative, moral experience of the kingdoms of nature gives way to a more objective relationship to natural objects in which they seek to understand the phenomena in and of itself. The child's favorite tree loses its status as a special friend with a name. It is now a tree, an objective reality that needs to be comprehended. The child is ready to study science more objectively.

In the fourth grade, the main lesson block on zoology meets this need. This study continues into the fifth grade when botany is also added. The teacher should present each plant as an integral part of the natural environment—not as an isolated phenomenon—and again create living pictures for the children, rather than convey dry, dead facts. Essential questions for the teacher are: What is expressing itself in the plant? and What is the plant's relationship to its environment?

While teaching botany to my fifth-grade class one day, I asked what a seed is. One particularly imaginative student replied, "A seed is a little box with its lunch inside." The image contained in this statement is greater than the fact it conveys. It is an example of metaphorical thinking. This type of thinking is another component of the scientific reasoning that will blossom in the teenage years.

In the sixth grade, the children study mineralogy by learning about the different geological substrates and how each affects the landscape. For example, a limestone-based landscape such as the Mammoth Cave area in Kentucky might be compared with a granite-



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based landscape such as the White Mountain area in New England. The children would study the different qualities of granite, which is acidic; limestone, which is basic; the plants distinctive to each landscape; how the different areas react to acid rain; and so on.

Physics—including optics, acoustics, heat, magnetism, and static electricity—is introduced in the sixth grade as well. The children's study of optics is based on their experiences with watercolor painting, and their study of acoustics on what they have done in music. The teacher demonstrates certain phenomena, such as the creation of bands of color when a boundary between black and white surfaces is viewed through a prism. The children are asked to accurately and dispassionately describe what they have seen and heard. These observations lead to the discovery of the laws that underlie the phenomena.

In the seventh and eighth grades, students study chemistry, astronomy, and human physiology and continue their work in physics. In each of these branches of science, the ability to observe the phenomena precisely and accurately—rather than the inclination to figure out what hidden cause is behind the phenomena—is encouraged and developed.

The Waldorf approach to science is different from that used in mainstream schools. There, the teacher typically presents a hypothesis of cause and effect, and the students carry out an experiment to test the hypothesis. This method is linear and has predictable results.

Physicist Victor Weisskopf objected to this sterile approach when he said, "Science is not flat knowledge, formulae, names. It is curiosity, discovering things, and asking why. . . . We must always begin by asking

questions, not by giving answers. . . . You can teach only by creating interest in what is around you, by creating an urge to know."

The German poet and scientist Goethe said even more strongly, "Hypotheses are lullabies for teachers to sing their students to sleep!"

For this reason, a science class in a Waldorf school begins with the consideration of a phenomenon. For example, a white light and a colored light are shined on an object at the same time but from different angles. The shadow from the white light is the complementary color of the colored light. The students observe carefully, internalize their observations, and then describe verbally or in writing what they perceived with their senses. The class shares, considers, and discusses the various observations, perhaps repeats the experiment, and then tries to reach a conclusion. What caused the phenomenon? Where did the complementary color come from? What is the quality of the colored shadow as compared with the other visible shadow?

In this process, the students' thinking is active. They arrive at the concepts by thinking about what they have observed. The students discover what a Cavendish or a Priestley discovered first, but the discovery and the concept are now theirs, not something that has been given them. This ability to think actively and creatively and to base one's thinking on observed phenomena will be of use throughout their lives. It will serve them whenever they encounter a problem, scientific or nonscientific, that requires discrimination.

In science study in the ninth and tenth grades of a Waldorf school, careful observation and accurate



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description of phenomena are still central. The students also study logic and learn how to think in a disciplined and ordered way. And they are required to grasp complex processes and phenomena. They learn how an internal combustion engine works. They study the glands of the endocrine system and the role of each in the body, the properties of metals, and chemical actions. In seeing how human beings through thinking are able to comprehend the laws of nature and to apply them in practical ways, the students come to appreciate the human ability to think. They also learn to value their own thoughts.

Once the foundation of careful observation and disciplined thinking has been established, the Waldorf high school science teacher—while still strengthening these—adds a new type of thinking. This is phenomenological thinking. First, the student carefully observes the phenomenon. Second, she thinks about her observations in a rigorous and disciplined way and tries to connect it with previously acquired concepts in science. Third, the student puts aside all perceptions and concepts, clears her mind, and allows the phenomenon to speak. Quiet, receptive, and focused, the student notices what comes to her from what stands before her. Finally, she records in writing the thoughts, feelings, and impulses to action stimulated by this contemplative experience.

This type of thinking is not bound to the sense world and to sensory impressions. It gives the individual access to high and noble and moral thoughts. This phenomenological thinking can be the basis of a “new” science of the twenty-first century.

The primary aim of Waldorf Education is the healthy development of the child. It introduces various fields of

knowledge to the child, but it does so in such a way that a harmonious, natural development takes place.

The Waldorf science curriculum gives students a sound schooling in all the basic sciences. It also preserves and develops a sense of wonder and gratitude toward the world and trains powers of observation and logical, disciplined thinking. In addition, it teaches the young person how to achieve an inner quiet, into which the gifts of imagination, inspiration, and intuition may come. It is through the exercise of these faculties that the problems of the world—scientific and nonscientific—will be solved.

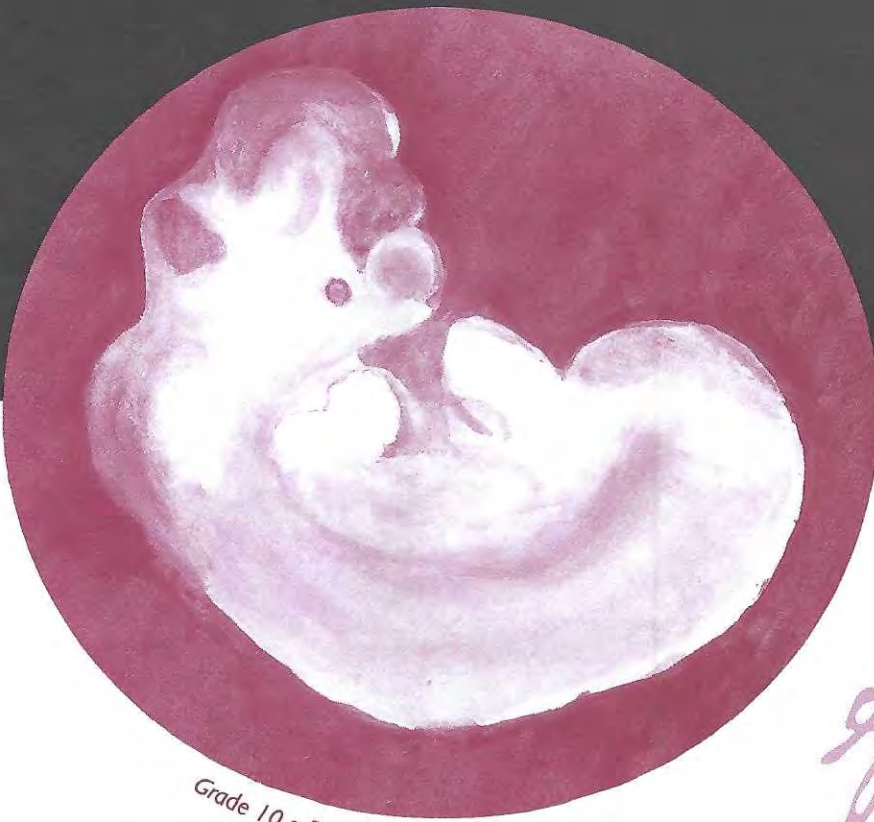
DAVID MITCHELL is chairman of AWSNA Publications and served for over a decade on the Coordinating Committee of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. He was a founding teacher of the Pine Hill Waldorf School, where he took the first class from grade one through grade eight. He then joined High Mowing School as a teacher of the life sciences. He assisted in the founding of the Waldorf graduate program at Antioch College, where he taught science to aspiring teachers. In 1992 David moved to Colorado to help found the Shining Mountain Waldorf High School. In 1997 he was selected as one of Amgen Corporation's two “outstanding teachers in Colorado.” He has been selected to eight different Who's Who publications. David has edited numerous books and has authored the following: *Will-Developed Intelligence*; *The Wonders of Waldorf Chemistry*; and *Resource Guide for Waldorf Teachers*. Together with John Petering, he has written and edited the *Waldorf Science Newsletter* since its inception twenty issues ago. David and his wife, Anniken, have four grown children and live in Boulder, Colorado.

In seeing how human beings through thinking are able to comprehend the laws of nature and to apply them in practical ways, the students come to appreciate the human ability to think. They also learn to value their own thoughts.



Phenomenology and the Waldorf Science Curriculum

BY MICHAEL J. D'ALEO



Grade 10 • Embryology

A few years ago, while waiting on line in a large store, I saw a woman trying to amuse her young child. She picked up a toy—a painted wooden cutout of a sheep—and exclaimed, “Look, this is a sheep!”

“No,” I wanted to exclaim. “That is not a sheep. That’s only a cutout painted to represent a sheep. A sheep is a large, skittish animal that has a particular smell and makes a characteristic sound. Its body is covered with a material that feels soft and somewhat oily and leaves a funny scent and taste on your hand. Sheep are fast and run in flocks and can jump. Please, take your child somewhere where he can experience a real sheep!”

I didn't say anything, but I realized something important. There is a big difference between a concept that we have been given ready-made and one that arises out of our own sensory experience and observation.

Waldorf schools use the phenomenological approach to the study of nature. This approach emphasizes the exact and careful observation of phenomena, unburdened by preexisting conceptual frameworks. Phenomenology as a method of scientific inquiry has its roots in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Europe. Various versions were developed and elaborated by noted scientists and philosophers such as Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), Johannes Mueller (1801–1858), and Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), strongly influenced by Goethe's thought, saw unique benefits in a phenomenological approach. When he founded Waldorf Education, Rudolf Steiner stipulated that phenomenology be the basis of the science curriculum.

Even before it was articulated as a philosophically grounded path to understanding natural phenomena, phenomenology was the modus operandi of many great scientists. According to their own writings, Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, Kepler, and other great scientific researchers all made their discoveries by observing a set of phenomena with fresh eyes and by discerning a pattern or lawfulness that had not been noticed before or, if noticed, had been ignored.

For example, in Galileo's time—the early 1600s—it was commonly believed that a heavier object falls faster than a lighter one. Galileo sensed an inconsistency in the arguments used to support this, went back to the phenomena, and was able to demonstrate that all “heavy” objects (discounting such things as feathers and dust) in fact fall the same distance in the same time, that

each object's speed increases at the same rate, and that the rate of acceleration is constant.

A century earlier, Leonardo also was advocating an experiential approach and basing his own work on the keen observation of nature. At the time, however, scholarly debate focused on the interpretation of the work left by the Greek “masters” rather than on direct study of phenomena in the world. In his notebooks, Leonardo describes the difficulties he had with his contemporaries.

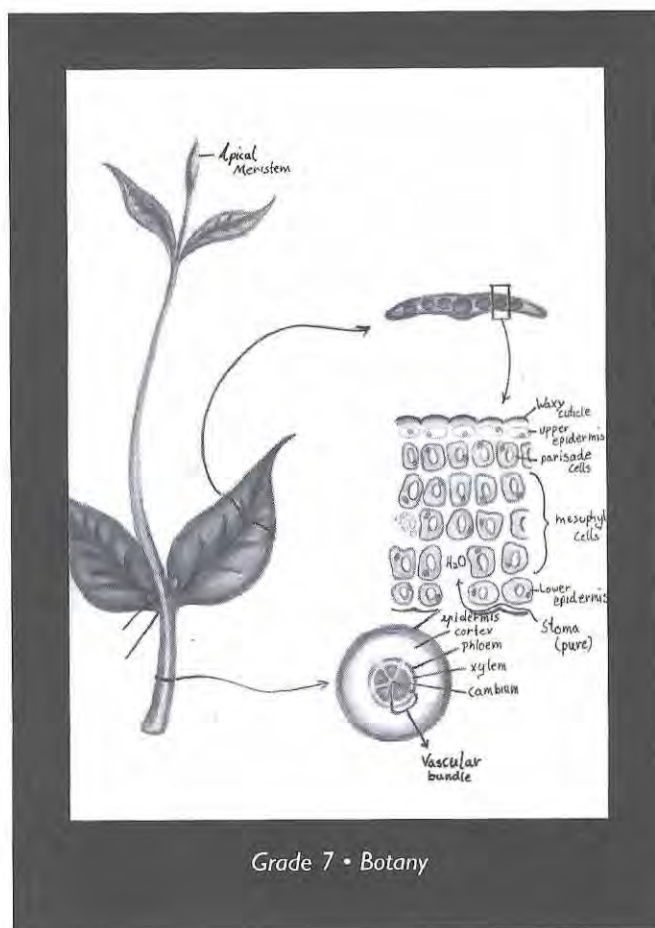
In *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* as translated by Edward McCurdy (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1938), the first entry reads:

If indeed I have no power to quote from authors as they (i.e., the scholars) have, it is a far bigger and more worthy thing to read by the light of experience, which is the instructress of their masters. They strut about puffed up and pompous, decked out and adorned not with their own labours but by those of others, and they will not even allow me my own. And if they despise me who am an inventor how much more should blame be given to themselves, who are not inventors but trumpeters and reciters of the work of others.

The underlying premise of the phenomenological

approach to science is that all empirical knowledge begins with sensory impressions. We form a concept, such as that of a sheep, by combining the sense impressions we have of a sheep, and also by applying concepts we already have, such as that of “animal.” We do this in everyday life as well as in scientific experimentation. The sense impressions include what we receive from our five basic senses, but also can include information from other senses, including our sense of motion, of balance, and so on.

In *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, Rudolf Steiner points out that when we enter an unfamiliar environment we notice certain phenomena within the environment, focus on them, and extract them from the total



Grade 7 • Botany

environment. We do this because, while there are a myriad of things to observe, we can focus only on a limited number at any one time. Having selected the objects of our observation, we then seek an order or pattern of relationships among them. We also find relationships between the specific phenomena that have been extracted and the whole environment from which they were removed. Initially, one can think of the observations as sense-based perceptions and the relationships as thought-based concepts. Later on, when the capacity to distinguish between percepts and concepts is more clearly developed, one can also take thought as the basis of perceptions as well. In other words, we can observe and form concepts on the thinking process itself.

Finding relationships between perceptions is neither a linear process nor a logical one. Rather it is an intuitive process. It is through intuition that one conceives a conceptual framework that unites a set of perceptions within itself or a set of perceptions with other concepts. This is the "aha" or "eureka" experience of the scientist, inventor, artist, or investigator. In that moment a new relationship is seen. It is then and only then that logic can be rightly applied to determine if the relationship will hold true in the context of the other relationships that are known. This process of looking for a relationship among phenomena is the true activity of thinking. Thinking is not simply the recollection of previously known facts.

Herein lies the biggest distinction between a phenomenological educational approach to science and the conventional one. With the phenomenological approach, students are given an experience of phenomena and then have to struggle to discover the order that they demonstrate and/or the relationships between them. To do this, they must be actively and creatively engaged. In the process, they acquire the capacities for true thinking. In the conventional approach, the laws or relationships are provided at the outset, and the student is guided

through a proof that demonstrates their validity. In that approach, the students learn only how to follow a logical argument to its conclusion, to take in, retain, and access data. They do not have to use and develop their own thinking capacities.

Although it is often ignored in conventional science education, the phenomenological approach has played a dominant role in science. Almost every new idea and invention in the history of science has resulted from a

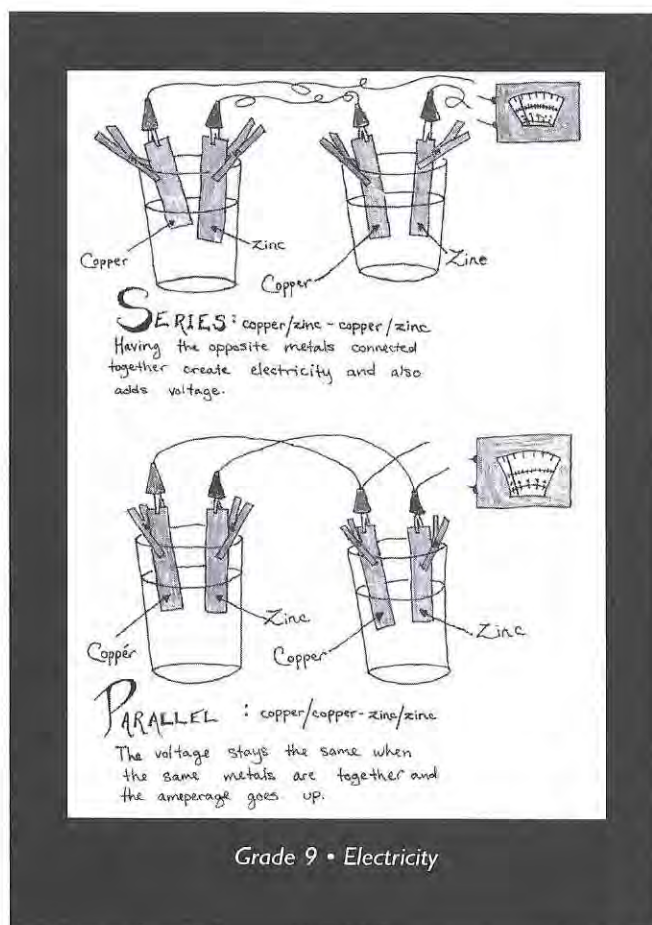
person consciously or unconsciously using a phenomenological approach. Often a scientist was working with an old concept—one passed down and assumed true for years, even centuries. Suddenly, he saw something new and unexpected in the phenomena, something that didn't fit the existing conceptual model. He set aside the old, fixed concepts and tried to make sense of what he had experienced.

This is the kind of thinking that the teaching of science in a Waldorf school seeks to develop in the students. This type of thinking is important whether or not a student becomes a scientist later in life. The sciences give Waldorf teachers an opportunity to develop in each student the capacity to enter a new situation

and make sense of it, by making observations, finding relationships between them, and forming concepts. It is hoped too that the students will learn to trust their powers of observation and have the courage and ability to discard old concepts and create new ones when their experiences do not fit into the existing framework.

The Young Child

One can help a young child be able later to develop these capacities for observation and thinking. One does so by providing opportunities for many, varied, but not overwhelming, sensory impressions. The child does not



need to be taught anything, only placed in the proper environment, one that is rich in sensations and deep in context.

Perhaps no environment can surpass nature in its richness of sensations or depth of context. The key is not to teach the child to see the observations and then tell them the concept, but rather to allow this process to occur naturally while the senses of the child are developed. A child's experience of a sheep in a farm meadow, a sheep that can be smelled and touched and seen within a larger context, is one thing. His experience of a sheep as represented by a piece of painted wood is quite another. And his experience provided by a computer program in which animated images of sheep move across a flat screen accompanied by digitized sounds is yet another.

The Middle School Child

By the sixth grade, students have naturally become very observant of their surroundings. They notice the "odd things" about the adults in their lives and are self-conscious about their own appearance. The teacher can work with this unfolding capacity by having the students experience a phenomenon, asking them to recall specific observations that they made, ordering these observations, and encouraging the students to discover relationships (concepts) between the observed phenomena (perceptions).

A science lesson using the phenomenological approach usually proceeds more or less in the following way:

With little or no introduction, the class is brought into an environment containing the phenomena to be observed. There need be no elaborate scientific setup. Using a regularly encountered environment is often preferable, since it relates the phenomena to everyday life.

As the process or activity takes place, the students observe the phenomena without proddings and promptings from the teacher to notice this or that. The

students should not talk to one another or ask questions.

At the end of the class, the students are asked to recall the sequence of events.

The following day the teacher has the students recall the demonstration. He asks for their observations, what they saw and heard, without yet asking for their thoughts about relationships or cause and effect. This allows ample time for each student to consider all of the

observations without feeling she has to come up with "the right answer" before her classmates.

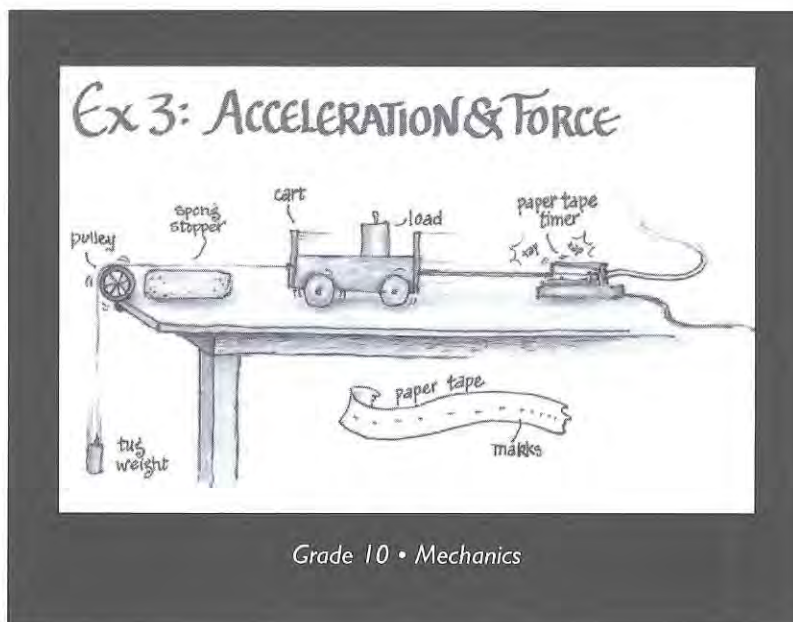
The teacher should not have a too developed preconception of what the students "should have observed" and "what they should conclude." If one has cultivated the right atmosphere in the class, the students not only will arrive at the observations and conclusions that

were anticipated, but also will bring unexpected observations and discover new relationships. The teacher must allow for new ways of seeing a phenomenon and fresh ways of expressing a given relationship. The students should experience that they are really involved in forming the concepts and not simply saying what the teacher wants or expects of them.

Once all the observations have been made, the search for relationships and concepts begins. The teacher does not label comments as "correct" or "incorrect" but allows the class to judge if a suggested relationship holds true. While ultimately responsible for the lesson reaching its general destination, the teacher lets the students take initiative as much as possible and guides the discussion only as much as necessary.

Sometimes at the end of a class a student asks, "Well, if that's true, then what about . . . ?" This is often a good opportunity to introduce the next demonstration. It is also a sign that the students are engaged.

Each student keeps a record of all the demonstrations, his observations and conclusions. This may consist of



text or drawings or both, depending on the child and the demonstration.

An Example

In the eighth grade, the students have a block on optics. One day we were observing the refraction phenomenon called “colored fringes” by looking through prisms at objects that had light surfaces that bounded dark surfaces. In class, we oriented our prisms in the same way so that everyone would see the same colors when they looked at the same boundary—red, orange, yellow when the light surface was above the dark, and blue and violet when the dark surface was above.

For homework, the students had to use a prism and draw a “scene” of their room at home. The following day, one girl announced: “It didn’t work. I don’t know what happened, but I started to do the assignment and everything was going well, and then it stopped working! Maybe something is wrong with my prism. I started to draw my wall with the window, and at first there were the colors just like yesterday. Then after a while the colors started to get fainter and sort of disappeared, so I gave up. Then when I came back later to try and do it again, the colors were back, only this time, the warm and cool colors were now switched from where they were before!”

I pondered her statement for a few moments. I imagined her house, the time of year (December), and, sensing what might have happened, began to ask her questions:

“What time of day did you begin?”

“Late afternoon,” she replied.

“Specifically, what time?”

“I started about four in the afternoon and worked for half an hour.”

“Is that when the problem started?”

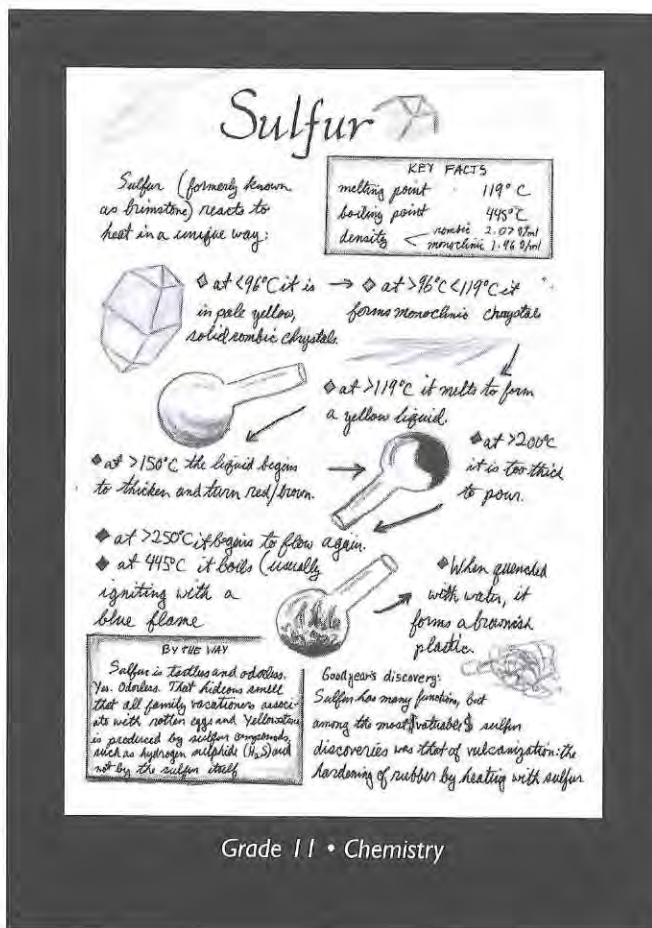
“Yes, so I stopped and then tried again after dinner. That’s when the colors switched.”

I then turned to the class and asked them what had changed during that time. Eventually, the students realized that their classmate had been working in a room without a light on, at the same time that the sun was setting. Under these conditions, the light-colored window (there was snow on the ground, her house was in an open field) and the relative darker coloration of the walls (the room was lit only from the sun outside) gave her one orientation of colors. As the sun set, everything in the room and the window began to appear dark, so there were no longer any light/dark boundaries visible. When she returned from dinner, it had become very dark. The class eventually realized their classmate had turned on her bedroom light, so that now, the window was dark and the walls were light. These were the opposite conditions than she had started with and the reason for all of the difficulties that night!

The process of discovery that occurred in this class shows the potential of the phenomenological approach in teaching science. One student had

observed something that at first appearance made no sense. Gradually, she and her classmates were able to discover what was in fact going on. The teacher’s task was simply to find the questions that helped the students discover the relationship *out of their own effort*. The girl and her classmates gained a deeper understanding of the refraction phenomena and also gained confidence in their ability to observe and to comprehend the world around them.

In conventional science education, one usually begins with “the law” and then performs experiments to demonstrate its validity. With such an approach, it would have been easy to dismiss the student’s



observation as something that did not fit "the law of refraction." However, this would have sent the students the message that the senses cannot be trusted. Yet, it was because scientists in the past had used their senses, and carefully so, that the lawfulness was found in the first place.

During the middle school years, the students are able to understand that there is a distinction between the world as observed and the world as conceived. They are not ready for a philosophical exploration of the foundations of knowledge, but they can learn the difference between what one experiences through the senses, and the feelings and thoughts that arise from these sensations. The teacher need only point out this distinction within the context of comments made by students in the class. Without philosophizing or moralizing, she can convey the important lesson to the young adolescent that there is a difference between sensory impressions we have of the external world and the feelings and thoughts that we have inside.

The High School Student

In high school, Waldorf students have at least four major science blocks each year, studying chemistry, physics, zoology, earth sciences, botany, and physiology. The approach is phenomenological, and with their developed skills in observation, the students can delve into almost any topic in science and understand it in context.

The Waldorf high school physics curriculum is as follows:

In the ninth grade, the students begin the study of thermal phenomena by performing experiments that help them make the distinction between the concepts of heat and temperature. This is a modest beginning, but by the end of the second week of the block, the class is solving basic algebraic problems in thermal physics. They

can calculate the increase in temperature of a known mass of cool water in a bucket when a specific piece of hot copper is plunged into the bucket. In our school, the students perform this calculation having already witnessed the phenomena in their practical arts class where they each made a hammered copper bowl. In the same block, the students disassemble a four-stroke internal combustion engine from an automobile before they are given any explanation of how it works. By the end of the block, they have a good sense of what is

happening under the hood of the family car.

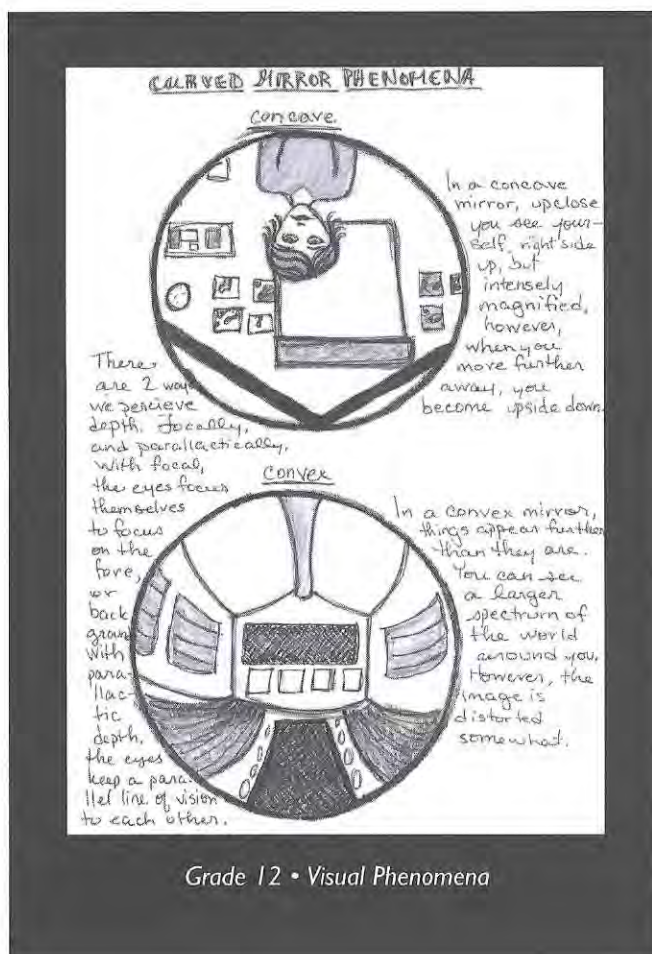
In the tenth grade, the students experience and discover the laws of mechanics, including those, which Galileo discovered, pertaining to falling bodies.

In the eleventh grade, they deal with nonmaterial phenomena such as electricity and magnetism. Now the students form concepts from phenomena that manifest only indirectly. What we describe as electrical or magnetic phenomena is initially observed in the main lesson block as the motion of sensible objects with no apparent sensible cause of motion.

In our school the eleventh-grade students also study atomic theory. They now have the mental maturity to understand that the theory is a conceptual model based

on limited sensory phenomena, but that the phenomena and the conceptual framework created by human thought are often very different things. They can appreciate that this is especially the case when the phenomena in question are not sense-perceptible to human beings and require information gathered by machines. As a result, the students are ready for a more sophisticated version of the atomic theory and can grasp the conceptual framework of more current research in which the phenomena lack the qualities we normally associate with matter.

In the twelfth grade, the students study visual phenomena. This includes the phenomena associated



with color, reflection, and refraction, as well as some of the physiological and psychological relationships that are important in constructing a "picture" of the world. Now the students have to deal with basic philosophical questions such as: How do we know what we know? What is the foundation for knowing?

By the end of their Waldorf schooling, students have developed the capacity to make sense of any new phenomenal situation. Should they choose to further their study in the sciences, they are well prepared to take on the new questions and research that arise, as well as to shed new light on what is currently understood. Yet all students, regardless of their future ambitions, will find that they are capable of more directly meeting life and finding a harmonious relationship between themselves and the world.

MICHAEL D'ALEO teaches physics and physical sciences at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs in Saratoga Springs, New York, and is an instructor in the summer high school teacher training program at The Center for Anthroposophy in Wilton, New Hampshire. After being a class teacher for grades six through eight, Michael coauthored a book with Stephen Edelglass, *Sensible Physics Teaching, a guide for teaching physics in grades six to eight*. Prior to teaching, Michael worked as a design and development engineer in the electronics industry and is listed as an inventor on seventeen U.S. patents. He is currently the director of research for SENSRI, a nonprofit scientific research group that investigates methods and applications of phenomena-based science.

CREDITS: *Shining Mountain Waldorf School* and *David Mitchell* for the image on page 27; the *Austin Waldorf School* for the image on page 28; and special thanks to *John Petering* and the *Sacramento Waldorf School* for the images on pages 29–32.

BOOKS

in Brief

The Flexible Giant Seeing the Elephant Whole

BY CRAIG HOLDREGE

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

The Nature Institute
Ghent, New York, 2003
65 pages • \$10.00

This fascinating little book in full of remarkable facts about the elephant:

- An elephant's pregnancy lasts 22 months.
- The male elephant is not fully sexually mature until between age 25 and age 30.
- An adult male elephant can weigh 10,000 pounds, of which 2500 pounds is skeleton.
- An adult elephant eats about 400 pounds of vegetable food per day.
- The elephant's trunk is flexible enough to pick up a single berry but also strong enough to uproot a tree.
- The elephant walks on the tips of its toes. The bones of the foot do not touch the ground; only the toe tips do, supported by a column of muscle.
- Elephants enjoy playing, in the water but also on land, wrestling, nudging, and chasing each other.
- Elephants continue to grow physically throughout life.

The aim of the author, however, is not just to provide interesting facts about this largest of all land mammals. Craig Holdrege, veteran Waldorf high school biology teacher and also director of The Nature Institute, studies nature using a phenomenological approach. He begins with the close observation and study of the phenomenon itself without preconceived ideas and without the intention to come up with simple, monocausal explanations. Rather, he strives to bring the individual facts together into a coherent whole. Here, Holdrege wants to start to answer the question, "Who are you, elephant?"

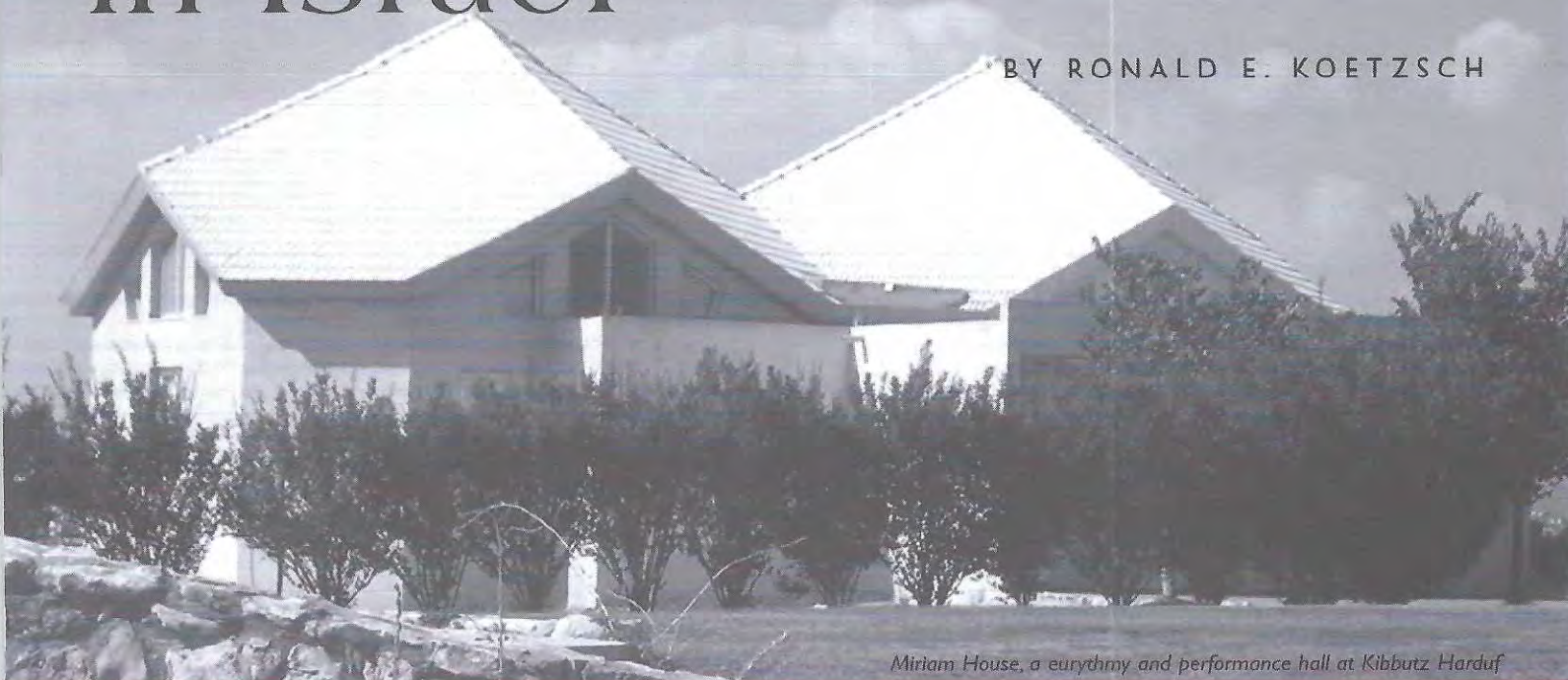
The answer that emerges includes the characteristics of flexibility, lifelong growth, and the juxtaposition of sensitivity—tactile, aural, and social—with great size and power.

Holdrege also points out that elephants and human beings have much in common. Both have a long, slow maturation process, have a vertically oriented physical structure (the head of an elephant, for example, is round and wide—like a human skull—rather than long and narrow), can adapt to various environments, and are capable of learning throughout life.

Holdrege sees the phenomenological approach not only as a way of understanding nature but as a path of human development. The careful observation of nature can lead to an appreciation of the whole and of each detail as an expression of the whole. This can lead to a respect for the wisdom of nature, an experience of connection, and also a sense of responsibility.

Waldorf Education in Israel

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH



Miriam House, a eurythmy and performance hall at Kibbutz Harduf

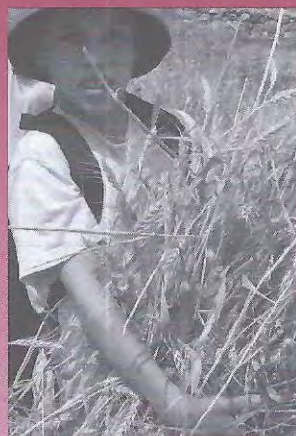
Waldorf Education is, relatively speaking, a recent arrival in Israel. The first Waldorf kindergarten was started in Jerusalem in 1986. Three years later, the first school was founded in Harduf, an anthroposophical kibbutz in the country's north. In 1992 a Waldorf teacher training was started in Jerusalem, and the following year the Adam School was established there. Today, however, there are six schools in Israel and about fifty kindergartens, which for a country of six million is impressive. It is as if New York City had fourteen Waldorf schools instead of just one.

The Adam School

The Adam (Waldorf) School in Jerusalem has much in common with a typical Waldorf school in North America. Housed in a former public school building in an affluent neighborhood, the school has lazured classrooms, a much used woodworking and crafts room, and walls covered with colorful watercolor paintings done by the students.

On a given spring morning, the second-grade class is learning arithmetic with the help of clapping and stepping games; the fourth-grade students are practicing recorder; and the eighth-grade class is beginning rehearsal of its class play—William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The children are full of energy and seem to enjoy what they are doing. The teachers are dedicated but overtaxed, perhaps, and looking ahead to spring vacation. In dress, appearance, and behavior, both students and teachers are hard to distinguish from their counterparts in North America. As one teacher said to me later, "In many ways, Israel is the fifty-first state."

But there are differences as well. Although all the teachers speak English fluently and the older children have a working knowledge of the language, the language used here is Hebrew. Also, all the



Harvesting in Grade 2, the Adam School

students and almost all of the teachers are Jewish, ethnically at least. And while life in the school seems peaceful, secure, and happy, the shadow of the conflict that besets the country falls upon it. In the past two years, several suicide bombings have taken place near the school. On January 19, 2004, a city bus was bombed less than half a mile away from the school, and a former student at the school was killed in that blast. A high fence surrounds the school grounds, and two uniformed guards stand at the school gate and check all visitors and their bags. Parents drive their children to school to obviate their having to take a city bus.

Eyal Bloch, a class teacher, remarks to me, "We live in a high-risk situation. One never knows what may happen. We try to reassure the students and make them feel safe, but there is always an underlying anxiety. When there has been a bombing, we usually suggest that the children remain at home. But they come anyway. They say they feel safer in the school."

By law, there are no private schools in Israel, so all schools, including Waldorf schools, have to be connected to the government. This has its benefits. The Adam School, which now has 240 students in its eight grades, receives considerable financial support from the government, as well as the use of the school building and its grounds. Hence, parents have to pay only about \$1000 a year tuition per child, and the school is accessible to families with modest income.

With this aid, of course, come certain requirements that can interfere with its functioning as a Waldorf school. For example, the government stipulates that there be a school principal who has real administrative authority. This causes difficulty in realizing the Waldorf ideal of a faculty-run school. Also, there are academic requirements and standards that this principal has to enforce and that are at odds with the Waldorf curriculum.

Regarding the school's curriculum, Eyal Bloch, who did his two-year teacher training in the United States, explains:

Our curriculum is basically the same as the Waldorf curriculum. Of course, though, we use the Jewish holidays to mark the course of the year. And we use the Jewish Bible as the source for stories that show the evolution of human consciousness. Also, we tend to use stories and folk tales from this part of the world, rather than Grimm's fairy tales. There is a tremendous resource of Jewish stories, Persian tales, Sufi stories, and so on, that carry the same wisdom and archetypal images as the European fairy tales, and that somehow fit better here. We are a Waldorf school with a Jewish and Middle Eastern accent.

In Israel, Jews and Arabs have separate schools. But the students at the Adam School study Arabic language and culture. Also, the faculty has formed a relationship with an Arab school outside Jerusalem, a school whose principal formerly taught Arabic at the Adam School. Between twelve and fifteen times in the course of the school year, two classes from each school—about sixty children in total—gather on a Friday for a group project or activity. The third-grade classes do gardening, art, and music together; the fifth-grade classes do the ancient Greek pentathlon events using a cooperative, noncompetitive model; and the sixth-grade classes do music and arts and also study Jewish and Arab culture. Since the two communities are polarized and isolated from each other, maintaining this relationship demands courage and perseverance from both sides.

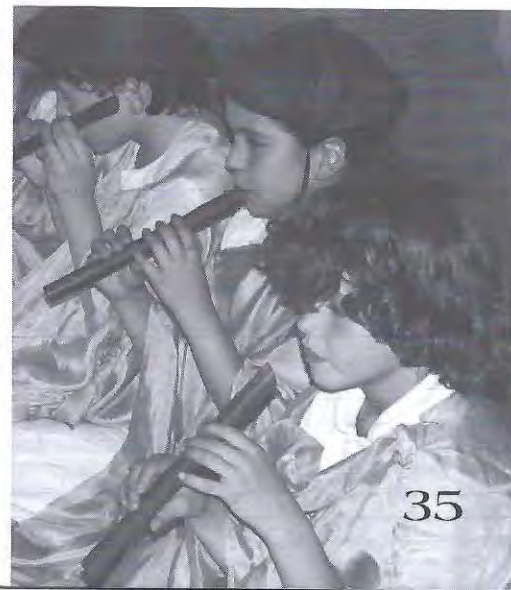


Crafting a peace totem in Grades 7 and 8, the Adam School



Observing nature during the Grade 2 weekly outing, the Adam School

Grade 2 students playing Chori flutes as part of the end-of-year dramatic presentation, the Adam School





Grade 1, Harduf
Waldorf School

therapeutic residence for adolescents with behavioral and social problems; a vegetarian restaurant; and a large and thriving Waldorf school that goes from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The school is located in a cluster of buildings on the hilltop. The high school has a brand new two-story building as its main classroom building. The children come from the kibbutz and from nearby Jewish settlements. Over the years, the school has developed extraordinary—for Israel—relations with some of its Arab neighbors. Its physical education teacher is Amin Suwaed, an Arab of Bedouin stock who lives in a village at the base of the Harduf hill. Amin learned about Waldorf Education from people at the kibbutz and then studied Spacial Dynamics® with Jaimen McMillan in Europe. In September of this year, Amin's seven-year-old son entered the Harduf school and became the first Arab child in an Israeli Waldorf school.

Also, several years ago, teachers at the school decided to make Waldorf Education available to the Arab community. They opened a Waldorf kindergarten teacher training for Arab men and women from the nearby city of Schefaram. At the same time, they began plans for a kindergarten in the city. In September 2004, the Olive Tree Kindergarten, staffed by graduates of the Harduf kindergarten teacher training, opened to serve young Arab children. The hope is that this will develop into an Arab Waldorf school and that the graduates of this, a decade or more hence, will attend the Harduf high school and thereby create an integrated Arab-Jewish school.

The Harduf school also is, of necessity, to some degree under the jurisdiction of the state education authorities. It receives financial support from the government and must abide by government regulations. As one teacher observed, "We are a kind of thorn in their side, though. They like what we are doing, but their main interest now is in consolidation, larger and larger schools, efficiency of scale. And we don't fit into that at all."

Despite a polarized and segregated population, an intense and ongoing political and military conflict, and an education ministry that insists on replicating the failed American experiments of the 1960s and 1970s, Waldorf Education in Israel is thriving. It seems to be a hardy desert plant destined to survive and grow in a challenging environment.

Presentation in
Grade 11
drawing class,
Harduf Waldorf
School



The Harduf Waldorf School

In the early 1980s, a group of idealistic young Israelis who shared a commitment to Anthroposophy received a generous land grant from the government to start a cooperative community. Today the kibbutz they founded on a hilltop in the rolling barren hills of Galilee, three hours north of Jerusalem, has several hundred residents. Kibbutz Harduf includes a large biodynamic farm that grows and distributes grains, vegetables, fruits, and other agricultural products; the largest commercial organic dairy operation in Israel; a fully equipped medical clinic staffed by physicians practicing anthroposophically extended medicine; a



Building pots by hand
in ceramics class,
Grade 9, Harduf
Waldorf School

RONALD E. KOETZSCH is a faculty member at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California. Ronald was educated at Princeton and Harvard, receiving a PhD degree in the History of Religions from Harvard in 1981. He was for many years a senior writer for East West Journal and also an instructor at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School. Ronald is the founding and current editor of *Renewal*. He has a deep and abiding interest in the hope for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

CREDITS: The Harduf Waldorf School and Nir Eliav for the top photo on page 34 and the photos on page 36; and The Adam School and Daniel Goldschmidt for the bottom photo on page 34 and the photos on page 35.

Video Review

Kane-Lewis Productions
Sedgwick, ME, 2003
\$40.00 • 55 minutes

M. C. Richards: The Fire Within

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

Mary Caroline Richards (1916–1999) was a poet, potter, painter, author, a student of the artistic process, and an important figure in twentieth-century American art. She was also a student of Anthroposophy and an avid supporter of Waldorf Education.

M. C. was born in Idaho, grew up in Portland, Oregon, and attended Reed College there. She received a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley in 1942, taught at the University of Chicago for a few years but then went on to radical, arts-oriented Black Mountain College in North Carolina. There she was a key figure in a coterie that included Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Willem de Kooning, Robert Rauschenberg, Buckminster Fuller, and others who just then were beginning to bring significant new impulses into American art and culture.

Later in her life, M. C. took part in an arts-centered intentional community at Stony Brook, New York, became well known as a potter, and wrote several books. *Centering* (1964) made an important contribution to how imagination and the artistic process are understood. Her book about Waldorf Education, *Toward Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America* (1980), extolled Waldorf schools as places where creativity and imagination are protected and developed. M. C. spent the last part of her life in a Camphill Village in Kimberton, Pennsylvania, living with and teaching art to adults with special needs.

The Fire Within is a tribute to M. C. filmed during her last years. It includes reminiscences from many of the notables who knew and worked with her, and also much of M. C. herself. Flamboyantly attired in tie-dyed shirts and a red-orange beret, M. C. holds forth on art, color, clay, community, the cosmos, the meaning of flowers, and the unfettered, childlike imaginative powers of the villagers with whom she worked. She talks about

bringing art into the mundane activities of daily life—in cooking a meal or setting a table. M. C. sees art as a means of self-discovery and a means of entering the spiritual realm—“the space behind the color.” For her, in the cultivation of imagination lies the future of the planet and of humanity. “The world will change according to our imagination of it,” she once said.



For anyone interested in art and creativity and their relation to the challenge of being human, this film offers much that is nourishing and thought-provoking. For Waldorf educators, the film offers insights into the meaning of art and corroboration of the importance of art as a basic, essential, meaningful human activity. To order this video, please contact Kane-Lewis Productions at kanelewis@aol.com or 207-359-2320.

CREDITS: Photo by Miklos Gratzner taken in 1997 of M. C. Richards in front of her painting *The Green Shed*. Many thanks to Dick Kane of Kane-Lewis Productions.



All in Peace

An International Olympiad for Fifth Graders

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

There is no dearth of conflict on the world stage. In Palestine, Israel, Cyprus, Kosovo, Serbia, Iraq, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Sudan, and many other places, ethnic and religious communities are involved in serious and often violent and deadly struggles against one another. The “news” disseminated daily by the media is largely accounts of the latest battles and casualties in these conflicts.

Yet there are glimmers of light here and there and reasons for hope. One is the All in Peace initiative (also known as OlymPeace in many countries) that has grown out of the work of a number of dedicated Waldorf educators. In four international events in the past three years, All in Peace has brought together about six hundred and fifty children from various communities to participate in athletic festivals that foster mutual understanding, cooperation, and cultural exchange.

At the All in Peace festivals, the fifth graders train together in the five events of the ancient Greek pentathlon—running, long jump, wrestling, discus, and javelin—do group artistic activities as well, and then take part in a one-day Olympiad-like festival. The athletic events are structured and judged so that there are no winners and losers and so that no participant benefits from the failure of another. At the heart of the All in Peace festivals is a revival of the ancient Greek truce. The truce allowed for undisturbed travel to and from the Olympic games for the athletes from states

at war and in effect transformed warriors into athletes dedicated to grace, beauty, and peace.

The idea for a multinational All in Peace festival was born just five years ago in the summer of 1999. Two Waldorf teachers in Israel attended a conference on world peace in the Sinai Desert sponsored by the Institute for World Affairs (IWA) and directed by Amos Davidowitz. (IWA is a not-for-profit organization, based in Washington DC, that supports peace initiatives, and Davidowitz, a major in the Israeli army, is a peace activist and the IWA representative in the Middle East.) One was Eyal Bloch, a class teacher at the Adam School in Jerusalem, who had done his teacher training at Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York. The other was Amin Sawaed, an Israeli Arab and teacher of movement and physical education at the Harduf Waldorf School in northern Israel.

The main goal of the conference was to generate practical proposals for world peace. The idea came to Eyal and Amin that understanding between Jewish and Palestinian children and among children from other communities in conflict could be promoted by their participating in noncompetitive athletic events. The two turned to Jaimen McMillan, a pioneer in movement and sports education for Waldorf schools, founder of Spacial Dynamics®, director of the Spacial Dynamics Institute (SDI), and Amin's former teacher.

Thirty years ago, Jaimen, then a teacher of physical education in an American Waldorf school, began to look critically at the effect that team and individual competitive sports have on children and on their later attitudes and behaviors as adults. He realized that a strongly competitive approach creates an "us versus them" attitude in which one's opponents are the "enemy" to be vanquished. McMillan went on to develop Spacial Dynamics, an approach to movement education and sports that is used in almost all Waldorf schools in North America. The Spacial Dynamics curriculum focuses on the needs of the child in each stage of development. It includes age-specific exercises, group games, and movement activities that promote cooperation, sensitivity to others, and conflict resolution.

The fifth-grade Waldorf curriculum includes the history and culture of ancient Greece. In the mid-1980s, Jaimen began promoting the Greek pentathlon events for Waldorf fifth-grade boys and girls and organizing Olympiad-like events for students from different Waldorf schools, primarily on the East Coast of the United States. Meanwhile, Thom Schaefer, a Waldorf class teacher in California, was doing the same thing on the West Coast.

When Thom began the Spacial Dynamics training with Jaimen in the late '80s, the two began to work together. Jaimen and Thom together fashioned a new model for the celebration of the pentathlon. Jaimen adapted the five events so that they are age-appropriate and cooperative. He also created a method of judging that eliminates competition among the children and instead helps them to recognize what is most noble in the other person. Thom, a serious student of ancient Greek culture, integrated elements of ancient Greek dress, poetry, and myth, creating an experience both of history and of the timeless drama of human striving. The resulting Olympiad-like festival had, by the late '90s, been adopted by many Waldorf schools all over the world.

When Eyal and Amin contacted Jaimen with their idea about using the Spacial Dynamics/noncompetitive model with children from communities in conflict, Jaimen was receptive and enthusiastic. Thom Schaefer joined the project, and once the four Waldorf educators decided on an Olympiad-like festival, they were able to make the idea a reality in an amazingly short time. Over the next two years, five training sessions were held to prepare teachers and adult leaders from the various communities. The way the events were to be organized and judged was refined so that even though, because of language differences, many of the fifth graders could not communicate easily with each other, they would still have a meaningful experience together.

The first festival was held in Olympia, Greece, in the summer of 2001. Two hundred children from ten countries, including Palestine, Israel, Greece, and Cyprus attended. In the summer of 2003, another All in Peace festival was held in Delphi. About two hundred fifty children from twelve countries attended. Both festivals



Ecuador, 2004

were collaborations of SDI and IWA and were made possible by a tremendous amount of dedicated volunteer work by Jaimen McMillan, Eyal Bloch, Thom Schaefer, Amin Sawaed, by more than thirty-five SDI graduates, and many others.

In May 2004, the first Pan-American All in Peace Festival was held in Quito, Ecuador. Some one hundred fifty children from Mexico, Ecuador, the United States, and Costa Rica attended. In July 2004, a festival was held in Central Park in New York City. For the week preceding the event, the fifty participants trained at the Spacial Dynamics center in Mechanicsville, New York. In conjunction with this festival, there was a ceremony at the United Nations in New York honoring All in Peace and also a photo exhibit there of the earlier festivals. The exhibit continued until the end of August, closing at the same time that the international Olympic games in Athens ended.

For the festivals, the fifth-grade boys and girls are divided into teams that include representatives of each community. The teams practice and train together for several days to a week. The individuals and the teams establish a best record for each event. The performances are judged on form, dynamics, and grace, and each category has several aspects. In the javelin throw, for example, form includes posture, angle of gaze, arc of throw, how the javelin lands, how the thrower accompanies the javelin, how he is standing when it lands, and also the distance. In one of the running events, the team runs as a group. On the day of the festival, the individuals and the teams compete against their own best

record rather than against each other and the other teams.

Past participants of All in Peace continue to build relationships. The international youth leaders (ages eighteen to twenty-five), who are the "big brothers and sisters" to the fifth graders, remain in

frequent contact via e-mail. In the festivals in July 2003 and July 2004, graduates of the two festivals in Greece came back as junior leaders.

It is hoped that the All in Peace/Spacial Dynamics model for cooperative sports will be taken up by educators in the various countries. This is already starting to happen. Teachers who have participated in the festivals have organized similar events in their own communities. One Kosovan official, who participated in the 2003 event and is now head of the Kosovan Olympic Committee, has compared his country's approach to physical education to a "preparation for war." He has suggested a gradual conversion to a noncompetitive model and has solicited help from All in Peace organizers. Sports and military officials from Ecuador, after having participated in the Quito festival, are interested in changing how sports are taught and learned in their country. They have made plans to work together with the Spacial Dynamics Institute.

All in Peace is a small beginning. But it attests to the fact that people from communities in conflict can come together and, through shared experiences in athletics and the arts, develop a mutual understanding, respect, and perhaps friendship. And it demonstrates that ideals and practices that are part of Waldorf Education can be applied successfully in the larger world.

CREDITS: Photos courtesy of the Spacial Dynamics Institute.

Returning to Rudolf Steiner's *Vision* of the Waldorf School

Some Thoughts on Governance, Finance, and Parent-Teacher Relations

BY ANNE WOTRING, PhD

Rudolf Steiner had a radical aim in mind when he created Waldorf Education. He wanted to create a force for the renewal of society, one that would help transform the world from a place of misunderstandings, conflict, and war into one of peace, cooperation, and brotherhood. However, in its eighty-five years, the Waldorf school movement hasn't gained the power and momentum necessary to seriously challenge prevailing educational practices, let alone to be a force for social renewal. Today, as the need for fundamental cultural reform is critical in the face of greater global strife, Steiner's ideas about education need to be available to society at large. Yet Waldorf Education is often described as "the best-kept secret in education."

Those of us involved in Waldorf Education today are stewards of Steiner's vision, and we need to ask why Waldorf Education is not more of a factor in the educational and social life of our time. The reason may be that in Waldorf schools we ourselves do not follow the principles that Steiner proposed. Governance, finances, and parent-teacher relations are key areas where we may not be doing as well as we should.

Rudolf Steiner saw a republican form of governance as appropriate to Waldorf schools. This is a more evolved, complex approach than pure, egalitarian democracy. In this representative form of democracy, all members

of governance that Rudolf Steiner suggested for Waldorf schools. Its elements include:

- the sacrifice of [individual] freedom for the sake of a higher freedom;¹
- the designation of the most capable person to do a particular job;²
- the complete harmony of the committee member in charge with the whole;³
- the sufficient confidence of the whole in the mandated committees, since the school's welfare depends on inner harmony.⁴

The frequent failure, in Waldorf schools, to delegate authority and to respect decisions made under mandate hinders the work of each school and the movement as a whole.

choose particular individuals and invest them with the authority to make decisions and govern on their behalf. Republican governance does create a certain type of authority and hierarchy. Certain individuals, for a certain length of time and for certain tasks, receive a mandate to make decisions in the best interest of the group. It is assumed that the group will accept and go along with these decisions unless they are egregiously and obviously counter to the general welfare.

Many Waldorf schools work out of the misconception that pure democracy is at the heart of Waldorf Education. The desire to respect the absolute equality of all individuals and the value of all opinions leads to every person having a voice and a vote in every decision, however specialized, however small. Consensual decision making, which has been adopted by many schools in recent years, is congruent with Steiner's republican model but has been practiced incorrectly in an egalitarian rather than a truly republican way. The higher consciousness inherent in the newer forms fundamental to Waldorf Education and republican governance is lost. In many Waldorf schools, there is a concomitant distaste for authority and for a decision-making hierarchy.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with hierarchy. Nature itself is fundamentally hierarchical, with organisms arranged in systems that include the simple, the complex, and the sophisticated, what are called in science nested or growth hierarchies. Human beings imitate this natural structure when they combine their individual abilities in a collective, complex endeavor such as a Waldorf school. In the highest form of consensus decision making, there is a progression from the simple (the hearing of all views) to the complex (the appearing of a higher level of order and understanding in the group) to the sophisticated (the choosing of the most enlightened course of action).

Ernst Lehrs and Francis Gladstone, two writers on Waldorf Education, both advocate the republican form

The larger group gives a mandate to a smaller group for a specified task, choosing the most qualified persons. Those persons endeavor to serve the needs of the whole, and the larger group fully accepts their decisions. This promotes confidence, trust, and harmony. It also creates an environment in which individuals can function beyond their capacities and in which the organization can flourish.

The frequent failure, in Waldorf schools, to delegate authority and to respect decisions made under mandate hinders the work of each school and the movement as a whole. The interminable Waldorf meeting, in which everyone expresses his or her opinion and feelings about the issue at hand, and where no decision or action is taken because of the concern that someone will be excluded or marginalized, has become a self-parody. We are being paralyzed by our egalitarianism.

Another constant challenge to the Waldorf movement is money. Almost all schools are dependent on tuition alone to meet operating expenses, a fact that gravely limits the schools' healthy growth. Generally speaking, teachers are underpaid. This puts them under financial and personal stress and contributes to teacher burnout and to the general shortage of trained Waldorf teachers. Many Waldorf parents also have modest incomes, so the problem of finance is not easy to solve.

Finances were an issue in the early days of Waldorf Education as well. In a discussion with parents on May 9, 1922, Steiner addressed the question. First he pointed out that idealism and money are not mutually exclusive. Steiner said:

The fact remains that if we want to go forward [with the school], we need money. Yes, we need money! Now, people are saying, "Where is the idealism in that? What are you anthroposophists doing, telling us you need money and pretending to be idealists?"

Ladies and gentlemen! Idealism does not stand on firm ground if it makes grandiose statements but says, "I am an idealist, and since I am an idealist, I despise my wallet. I do not want to get my fingers dirty. I am much too great an idealist for that!"⁵

Steiner then emphasized that teachers need to be paid adequate salaries, since they cannot do their job properly unless they are free of financial worries. This is still the case today. Teachers are considered idealists who don't need an adequate salary. But schools pay the price in distracted teachers and in teachers who leave their vocation for financial reasons.

Steiner also stressed the importance of "spreading the idea of [Waldorf Education] further in order to find the idealists out there" who would support it through both interest and money.⁶

Steiner's thoughts apply today. Our schools would be greatly strengthened by idealistic philanthropists. Their interest and financial support would lift financial burdens from teachers and parents. We need to reach out to these people, presenting Waldorf Education and its advantages in a language that is free of jargon and arcane concepts and that they can understand. Joseph Chilton Pearce in his recent book, *The Biology of Transcendence* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 2002), does just this. Using the latest brain research and terminology, he clearly shows why the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy promote the healthy development of the child.

Steiner said that

we need help in every respect. We need the support of an ever-growing circle so that we can overcome the prejudice against our method of education. . . . We need for them to stand energetically behind us so that this cause can win additional support and become more widespread.⁷

It is noteworthy that Steiner includes teachers and parents in the "we" of the preceding statement. He felt very strongly that the success of Waldorf Education is dependent on the close collaboration between parents and teachers:

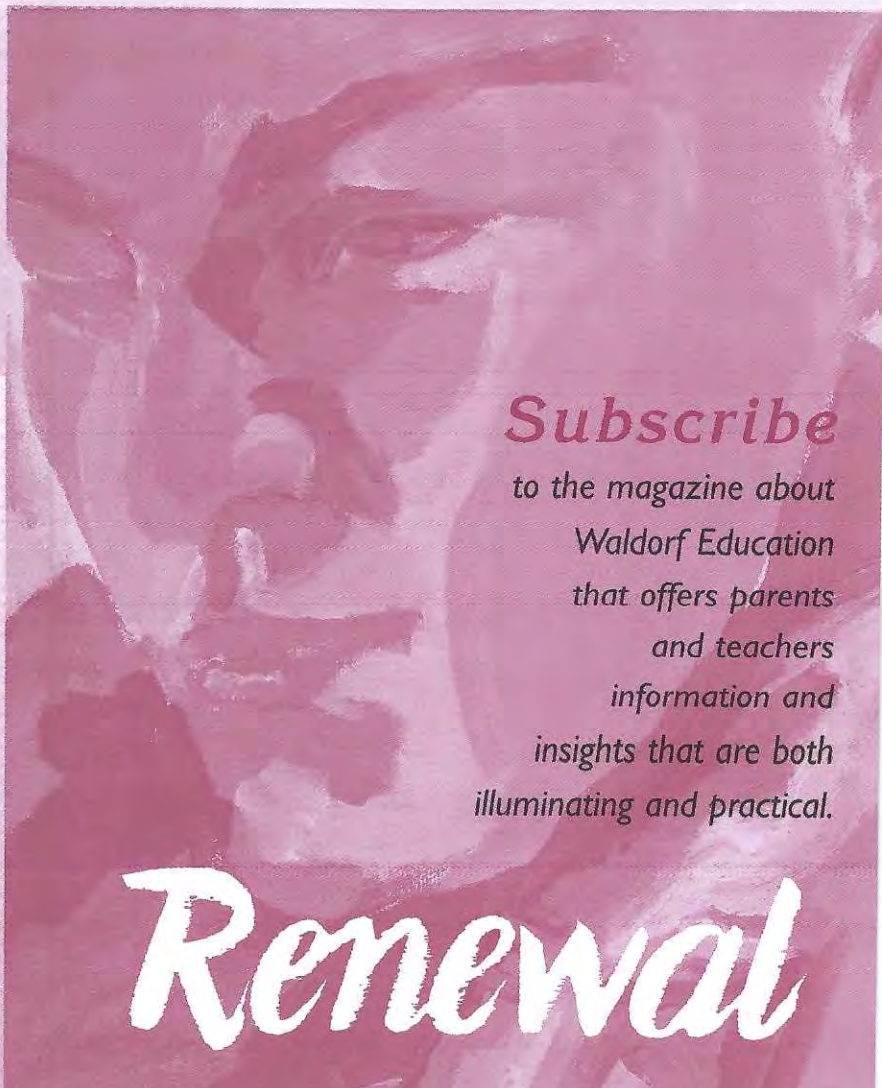
I would like to be understood on the far-reaching issue of our need to be in cordial harmony with the parent body if we are to function effectively in the Waldorf School. I particularly wanted to point out that need for

this because it actually already exists to such a great extent, and we will be best able to find possibilities for progress in this area if the groundwork has already been laid. . . . [L]et us take with us the impulse for cordial harmony among teachers and educators and the parent

Our schools would be greatly strengthened by idealistic philanthropists. Their interest and financial support would lift financial burdens from teachers and parents.

body. You parents certainly have a profound vested interest in this harmony because you have entrusted the most precious thing you have to the faculty. . . . [O]ut of this collaboration may the spirit which has showed itself in the Waldorf School to such a satisfying degree continue to flourish. The more the unity thrives, the more this spirit will also grow and thrive.⁸

This call to cooperation and unity is as pertinent today in Waldorf schools as it was more than eighty years ago.



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Parents with expertise in law, banking, grant writing, computers, publications, art, finance, marketing, merchandising, management, community building, mediation, construction, maintenance, and other skills can strengthen the school on a practical level. Parents have worldly contacts with influential people who might also be interested in Waldorf Education. Parents can also contribute to the cultural life of the school as

In acknowledging and sharing strengths and talents, teachers and parents can help implement Steiner's verse expressing the essence of the social life:

The healthy social life exists,
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection,
And when in the community
The creative virtue of each soul lives.

**In teacher-parent relationships, as in school
governance and finance, we can renew
Rudolf Steiner's original vision.**

specialty teachers in their particular field of expertise as tutors, as leaders and members of study groups, and so on.

Waldorf teachers and parents share a commitment to a developmentally healthy education for children and to Waldorf Education as a model for such an education. In teacher-parent relationships, as in school governance and finance, we can renew Rudolf Steiner's original vision.

Waldorf Education may then become the vital and recognized transformational force in education and culture it was meant to be.

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NOTES

1. Ernst Lehrs, *Republican—Not Democratic* (Fair Oaks, CA: AWSNA Publications, 1987), 7.

2. Francis Gladstone, *Republican Academies: Rudolf Steiner on Self-management, Experiential Study and Self-education in the Life of a College of Teachers* (Sussex, England: Steiner Schools Fellowship Publication, 1997), 22–23.

3. *Ibid.*, 23.

4. *Ibid.*, 24.

5. Rudolf Steiner, *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School: Lectures and Addresses to Children, Parents, and Teachers* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1996), 122.

6. *Ibid.*, 139.

7. *Ibid.*, 138.

8. *Ibid.*, 139–140.

ANNE WOTRING, PhD is a specialist in organizational development, administration, leadership and community building. She works primarily with Waldorf schools and other not-for-profit organizations that seek to work according to Rudolf Steiner's ideals. Anne integrates this aspiration with cutting-edge best practices that promote healthy organizations and working conditions. She has been a teacher and Waldorf school administrator. Her two children graduated from the Washington Waldorf School. Anne can be reached at a.wotring@verizon.net.

Book Reviews

Geometry is
knowledge of the
eternally existent.

—Plato

Two Books on Geometry

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

Geometry Lessons in the Waldorf School

Volume 2: Freehand Form Drawing and Basic
Geometric Construction in Grades 4 and 5

BY ERNST SCHUBERTH

AWSNA Publications

Fair Oaks, CA, 2004

86 pages plus CD ROM • \$17.00

Ernst Schubert is a leading authority on the teaching of geometry and mathematics in the Waldorf curriculum. A Waldorf graduate, a PhD in mathematics, a former Waldorf class teacher and professor at the University of Bielefeld (Germany), and at present a trainer of Waldorf teachers, Ernst is in the process of writing a multivolume presentation of the geometry and mathematics curriculum. This new volume deals with the fourth and fifth grades.

In the first three grades, children in a Waldorf school experience the elements of form, drawing curved and straight lines and rhythmic patterns containing these. They also learn about symmetry and do symmetrical and mirror drawing. This initial stage is called active geometry.

In the second stage, comparative geometry, the focus is on the geometric forms and their relationships with each other. Thus in the fourth grade, the children learn about the basic geometric forms usually as emerging from a circle. They make freehand, colored pencil drawings of circles, ellipses, triangles, squares and other quadrangles, and of complex patterns involving these forms.

In the fifth grade, the students continue freehand geometric drawing but now learn to use the straightedge ruler and the compass. They do various basic constructions using these tools, including the bisection of a line, the bisection of an angle, and the construction of a parallel line to a straight line through a given point. In these exercises—which require clarity of mind, the ability to follow a sequence of steps, an attention to detail, and fine motor coordination, the use of color maintains the aesthetic element.

The book is clearly written, contains many helpful diagrams, and comes with a CD ROM that includes colored versions of the diagrams. These are strikingly beautiful and show that in the study of geometry, as in all subjects in the Waldorf school, the warmth and inspiration of artistic approach aids the learning process.

Geometry Lessons in the Waldorf School is meant primarily for class teachers, providing a general structure to help them prepare their geometry main lessons. But parents also will find this an enjoyable and useful book. It will help

them understand what their children are doing in school. And if they themselves wish to follow the directions for the various drawings and constructions, the book may provide some hours of intellectually and aesthetically satisfying activity.

Triangle, Circle, and Soul

BY HARRY KRETZ

Rudolf Steiner College Press

Fair Oaks, CA, 2004

42 pages • \$8.95

Harry Kretz is a “retired” Waldorf teacher who works full-time. Harry travels to Waldorf teacher education centers and Waldorf high schools teaching blocks on projective geometry, sacred geometry, the teaching of mathematics, and related topics. A trained and gifted musician and conductor, Harry is also known for his whimsical sense of humor. He is known, too, for his ability to use humor to help communicate profound truths.

In this delightful little book, Harry recounts an imaginary (?) dream encounter with a being identified only as “he.” “He” leads Harry through a series of geometric constructions. These are all based on the circle and the triangle and bring Harry to the realization that geometric constructions relate to and in fact can express states of the human soul.

About midway through the book, figure 22 shows an equilateral triangle inscribed in a circle with a smaller equilateral triangle and circles within it. The diagram projects a mandala-like stability and strength. On the opposite page, figure 23 shows another equilateral triangle. Within that is a triangular photo of the huge bronze statue in Nara, Japan, of the enlightened Buddha seated in meditation in the lotus position.

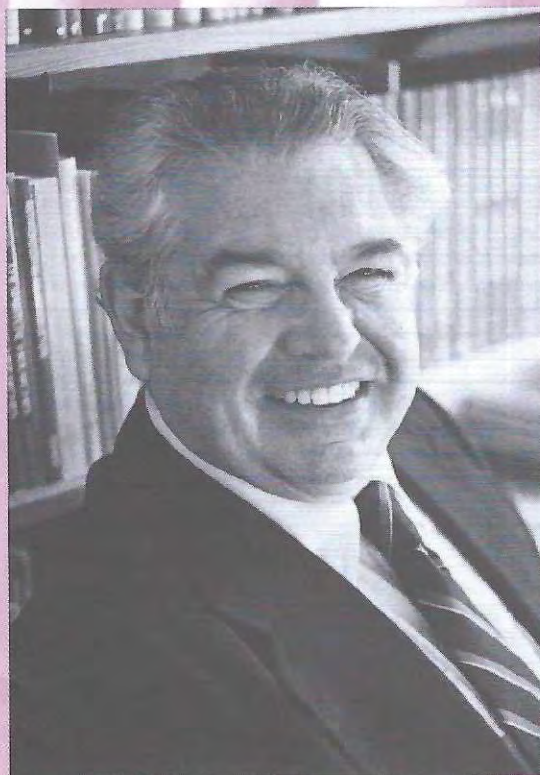
Triangle, Circle, and Soul should be experienced as a participatory journey. You, the reader, need only a compass, ruler, some sharp pencils, and sheets of unlined white paper. Some experience with projective geometry is helpful but not necessary. A friend or two, similarly equipped, might make the journey yet more enjoyable. Then just as Harry does, you need only follow the directions of “he.”

By the end, you too may have experienced that geometry can depict the relation of the human soul to the Divine and that

all regions of the Divine World find expression in an orderly way around my soul life, even though I am far from perfection. (p. 44)

In Memoriam

René Maximilian Querido



September 1, 1926–June 23, 2004

**Student of Life, Master Teacher,
Champion of Waldorf Education**

René Maximilian Querido was an earnest, charismatic, cosmopolitan, humor-filled, and learned man. Fluent in four languages, he was an accomplished writer and translator, a brilliant teacher and lecturer, and above all an inspirer of others. A pioneering figure in the Waldorf and anthroposophical movements in Europe and North America, René played a key role in developing Waldorf teacher education in the United States. René died in Bristol, England, this year at the summer solstice, just before the feast of Saint John, on June 23. His wife of thirty-four years, Merlyn, was with him as were also his daughter, Angela, and his son, Paul.

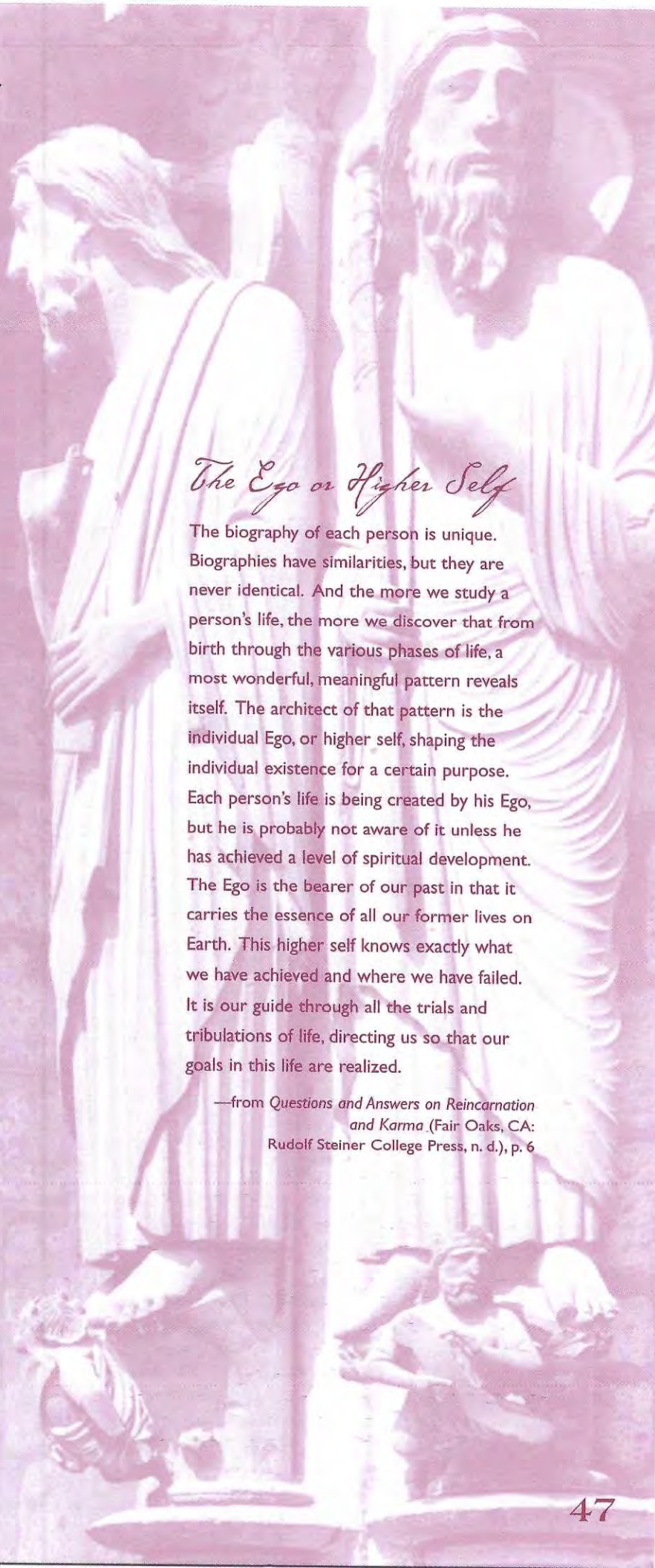
René was born in Amsterdam, Holland, on September 1, 1926, into a middle-class, secular Jewish/Dutch family. Despite his northern European birth, René often spoke of his family having roots in Portugal, which fact may explain his distinctly flamboyant and at times fiery, Latinesque temperament.

René's father was a businessman who traveled widely in Europe, and by the mid-1930s Joseph Querido was aware that the political situation for him and his family was a perilous one. In May 1940, Joseph and his wife, Rosie, packed what they could into fourteen suitcases and with their only child, thirteen-year-old René, barely caught a train for Paris, France. At Nantes, they boarded a ship that, after false starts for Africa and then for Canada and six weeks of avoiding enemy submarines, deposited them as refugees in Wales.

The family lived in London, and René spent the war years there. Once he heard the whine of an incoming V-2 rocket and, at the same time, a voice telling him to get into a phone booth. He jumped into a nearby booth just as the missile hit, and escaped injury.

When he was about nineteen, René worked for an art dealer in London and befriended Luigi Masero, one of the workmen there. Luigi was an uneducated and outwardly simple man, but his deep understanding of art, especially the work of Rembrandt, impressed René. One day the two went to the National Gallery together and saw a painting by Bellini depicting Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. René asked the older man if Christ would come again, and the answer was "Yes, but not in the physical body." Thus the central concept of esoteric Christianity—Christ's nonphysical return in our time—was given to René. Shortly thereafter, Luigi gave René a book by Rudolf Steiner entitled *The Secret Brotherhood*, which led René to a lifelong dedication to esoteric Christianity and to Anthroposophy.

After a few years of technical studies at London University, René moved to Brussels with his parents and his new wife, Celia, whom he had married at the age of nineteen. He had read some of Steiner's works on the Gospels and on developing knowledge of higher worlds and was interested to meet anthroposophists. He found his way to the home of Irma Winant, leader of a group of people who studied Steiner and were interested in Waldorf Education. When she opened the door to René, Irma shook his hand vigorously and said, "Nous avons besoin des professeurs!"—"We need teachers!"



The Ego or Higher Self

The biography of each person is unique. Biographies have similarities, but they are never identical. And the more we study a person's life, the more we discover that from birth through the various phases of life, a most wonderful, meaningful pattern reveals itself. The architect of that pattern is the individual Ego, or higher self, shaping the individual existence for a certain purpose. Each person's life is being created by his Ego, but he is probably not aware of it unless he has achieved a level of spiritual development. The Ego is the bearer of our past in that it carries the essence of all our former lives on Earth. This higher self knows exactly what we have achieved and where we have failed. It is our guide through all the trials and tribulations of life, directing us so that our goals in this life are realized.

—from *Questions and Answers on Reincarnation and Karma* (Fair Oaks, CA: Rudolf Steiner College Press, n. d.), p. 6

Within two years, René at age twenty-two was back in England teaching at Michael Hall, that country's first Waldorf school. He taught language, literature, and history in the high school there for some years. His principles in dealing with adolescents were "Surprise them—give them the unexpected! Spice your lessons with drama and humor!" René, an actor at heart, was a dramatic figure both in and out of the classroom. He was often to be seen riding his bicycle, wearing a black corduroy jacket, with his mane of black hair streaming behind him. Also a class teacher for a time, René remained at Michael Hall for sixteen years. During his years at Michael Hall, René got to know many of the early leaders in Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy, including persons such as Walter Johannes Stein, who had been very close to Rudolf Steiner.

In 1964 René made a grand lecture tour of North America, giving over ninety lectures. In these, and in the hundreds of lectures he gave in the years thereafter, René dealt with the many topics dear to him, including Waldorf Education and the development of the child, karma and reincarnation, esoteric Christianity, the Cathedral at Chartres and the medieval mystery school there, Parzival, Shakespeare, Romanticism, Goethe, Novalis, and so on. René was invited with Werner Glas to Los Angeles to help develop a Waldorf teacher training. He took up the offer but soon, at the urging of his second wife, Ursula, returned to Europe. There he worked with therapeutic communities and Waldorf schools in France, Germany, and Switzerland.

René returned to North America in 1972 with his third wife, Merlyn. (René allowed in his later life that he was not an expert at the practice of marriage.) They settled in the anthroposophical community in Spring Valley, New York, and developed an adult education and teacher education program.

In 1977 René was invited to Fair Oaks, California, to direct the newly founded anthroposophical center there, which soon became Rudolf Steiner College. René helped to build the college into a center for Waldorf teacher education, drama, the arts, and anthroposophical studies. Merlyn taught speech and drama, Anthroposophy, and directed memorable student productions of plays by Shakespeare. René inspired countless men and women to become Waldorf teachers and was famous for his stentorian one-line greeting, "YOU should become a Waldorf teacher!" This greeting often did in fact lead to that person becoming a Waldorf teacher. As a former student observes: "René was always striving to recognize the higher self in a person

and to see what that higher self was capable of."

During this period René traveled and lectured widely, sowing the seeds of Waldorf Education all over North America and elsewhere. His journeys included two lecture tours in Japan.

René and Merlyn retired in 1991 and moved to Boulder, Colorado. Although his prodigious energy was reduced because of significant health problems, he continued to write, travel, and lecture. Even in these years, René lectured with fire and boundless enthusiasm and, without recourse to notes, could regale an audience with his vast knowledge, wisdom, wit, and store of anecdotes. Along with Merlyn, he helped the Shepherd Valley Waldorf School in Boulder during its founding and early stages of development and also the Tara High School for the Arts.

René Querido was a lover of life. He enjoyed fine food, well-made clothes, a good joke, and a hearty laugh. Once while driving with a colleague in Sacramento, he stopped at a traffic light next to a low-rider car whose stereo was booming rock music. René, a lover of classical music and of opera, was playing Wagner on his car stereo and at that moment "The Ride of the Valkyries" was in full swing. René turned his stereo to top volume, opened his window, and genially called to the young men in the low-rider, "COUNTERCULTURE!"

René believed that among the things essential for a Waldorf teacher are a deep personal commitment to Anthroposophy and an active meditative practice. He often said that the key to avoiding teacher burnout is the daily practice of meditation and the cultivation of inner development. He once asked a class of teacher trainees what the most effective meditation for a Waldorf teacher is. After a long silence, he answered the question himself. "The one that you do!!" he boomed.

René Querido's life was full of adventures, travels, moves, and changes. But a common thread runs through all—his tireless devotion to Anthroposophy and to Waldorf Education as essential elements in the continuing cultural and spiritual evolution of humanity. He inspired many people to join him in that dedication, and the world is a better place for his having been with us. No doubt, the spiritual world has increased in jollity and high spirits since his crossing.

—Ronald E. Koetzsch
with generous help from Nancy Poer and Claude Julien

Selections

condensed and/or paraphrased

from the writings of

René Guenon

The Seven Liberal Arts

In the school at the Cathedral of Chartres the course of study was the seven liberal arts—the arts that make the human being free:

Grammatica is the study of grammar, etymology, the structure of languages, and the laws of poetics.

Dialectica is training in the laws of logical thinking.

Rhetorica is training in beautiful speech that expresses the goodness and morality inherent in the creative Word, the Logos.

Musica includes singing, playing instruments, and studying harmony, rhythm, melody, and composition.

Arithmetica is the study of nature and the discovery of the proportions, rhythm, and patterns according to which things are created, as well as the mystery of numbers.

Geometrica is the study of geometrical forms, the archetypal shapes of circle, square, pentagram, lemniscate, and so on.

Astronomia is the study of the character of the celestial bodies—the Sun, Moon, planets, constellations, and stars, of their movements, and of their effect on human life.

For the masters and pupils of Chartres, these seven arts were more than disciplines of study. They comprised an esoteric path of spiritual development. It began with the study of *Grammatica* and at Chartres typically lasted seven years. This disciplined path of study reorganized, harmonized, and purified a person's soul forces. This allowed, through divine grace, a higher, spiritual being—one's own true, eternal Self—to descend into the soul from the heights and become accessible to conscious experience.

True education was a spiritual path that purified the soul, brought one in contact with high spiritual beings, and led to an experience of one's true, divine identity.

—from *The Golden Age of Chartres: The Teachings of a Mystery School and the Eternal Feminine* (Hudson, NY:

Anthroposophic Press, 1987), chapter 4, "The Seven Liberal Arts as a Path of Inner Development"

The Ladder of Love

The human being can be understood as having seven aspects or, in a broad sense, "bodies." In each of these bodies, love expresses itself in a different way.

Love at the level of the physical body expresses itself as warmth and is what the infant and young child experience in relation to their mother and father. At the level of the etheric body, love involves tenderness, affection, and respect. This type of love is born usually between the change of teeth at seven and puberty. Love at the level of the astral body involves desire and sexual attraction and develops strongly after puberty.

At the level of the Ego, or higher self, love involves a recognition of the higher self of the other, what lies beyond and above outer appearances and even personality characteristics. Often there is a recognition, conscious or unconscious, of a connection from a previous incarnation.

Rudolf Steiner taught that there are three as-yet-uncompleted "bodies" or "members" of the human being—the spirit-self, life-spirit, and spirit-man—that will fully develop in the future. Each of these developing parts manifests a distinctive kind of love. For the spirit-self, love is the discovery of a former karmic connection and the realization, with deep gratitude, that one could not have evolved as one has without the help of the other person.

Love at the stage of the life-spirit manifests as healing love. A love at this level is a source of healing for the individuals involved and for families, friends, and the community as well. At the highest level, that of spirit-man, love is pure self-sacrifice that neither seeks nor foresees any gain.

The great German poet Goethe in his writings and in his personal life tried to realize this metamorphosis of eros (selfish, erotic love) into philia (friendship) and, ultimately, into agapé, pure self-sacrificial love, interested only in the welfare of the other.

—from *Reflections on the Mystery of Love*, chapter 9, "The Sevenfold Ladder of Love"

Reflections on the Mystery of Love was published a few months before René's passing. The first part consists of René's answers to questions about various aspects of love and human relationships, among them the role of sexual desire in human evolution and the role of the double, or "shadow self," in relationships. The second part is comprised of twelve essays dealing with the theme of love, including "Karmic Relationships between Men and Women," "A Contemporary View," and "Rudolf Steiner's View of Love." The book is published by Rudolf Steiner College Press and is available from the Rudolf Steiner College bookstore: 916-961-8729 or e-mail: bookstore@steinercollege.edu.

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