

Renewal

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A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

AW5NA

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), in a lecture delivered on January 19, 1911, spoke at length of the stars and the other heavenly bodies as manifestations of cosmic spiritual beings and of the intimate connection of these beings with the destiny of each individual human being and with humanity as a whole. He went on to say:

These things cannot be understood in any other way than with reverence—with that deep reverence that was called in the ancient mysteries “the reverence for that which is above.” For this reverence leads us ever and again to see what happens here on Earth in connection with what is unfolded in the sublime, majestic writing of the stars.

At the close of the lecture, Rudolf Steiner spoke the following verse:

These God-sent spirits shine as stars
In the heavens of life eternal.
May it be granted to each soul
To behold their radiance
In the realm of earthly life.

CREDITS:

Cover art is by Marcia Gauvin, a student in the Teacher Education Program at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, Calif. This painting depicts a theme from the fourth grade Waldorf curriculum—Thor, the Norse god of thunder, above a storm-tossed Viking ship. *Renewal* thanks the Waldorf School of Baltimore and photographer Larry Canner for the photos accompanying “Taming the Media Monster,” “Balance, Posture, and Movement,” and “Let the Sun Shine In”; the Wootan family for the photo of the infant on page 15; Katherine Wells for the photo of the wheelbarrows on page 19; and John Bloom of the Rudolf Steiner Foundation for the illustration accompanying his article.

FROM THE EDITOR

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH



THE COMMON ASSUMPTION TODAY...
IS THAT COMPUTERS ARE A SINE
QUA NON IN EDUCATION AND THAT
THE EARLIER AND MORE WE EXPOSE
CHILDREN TO THEM, THE BETTER.

The Alliance for Childhood is an organization dedicated to providing children, particularly young children, with a healthy and developmentally appropriate childhood. This international body includes eminent Waldorf educators, such as Joan Almon—the Alliance's U.S. coordinator—and also many leading educators and researchers who are not connected to Waldorf Education. Last year the Alliance published a remarkable document entitled *Fool's Gold: A Critical Look at Computers in Childhood*.

The common assumption today, promulgated by leaders of industry and government and education—and virtually unsupported by research data—is that computers are a sine qua non in education and that the earlier and more we expose children to them, the better. The Alliance report, prepared with the help of many distinguished professors, scientists, researchers, and experts on child development, challenges and refutes this idea. It describes the frenzied adoption of computers in schools as a giant national experiment, one that has cost American schools \$27 billion in the last five years, and one whose effects on our children will not be clear for some time.

THE REPORT PRESENTS, ALONG WITH CONVINCING SCIENTIFIC DATA, THE VARIOUS RISKS INVOLVED IN COMPUTER USE BY CHILDREN. SOME ARE PHYSICAL AND INCLUDE:

- Muscular-skeletal problems from long periods of immobility at a keyboard;
- Vision problems from the unnatural activity of staring at a vertical screen at a fixed distance;
- Obesity and poor muscle development due to lack of exercise;
- Harm from toxic emissions and from electromagnetic radiation from computers and monitors.

RISKS TO EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDE:

- Social isolation from other children and a resulting lack of social skills;
- Weakened bonds with teachers as inspirers of learning and as adult role models;
- Decrease in self-discipline and motivation;
- Inability to distinguish between cyberspace "realities" and actual ones in time and space.

AMONG THE NEGATIVE INTELLECTUAL EFFECTS ARE:

- Stunting of imagination and creativity;
- Impoverished language skills;
- Inability to concentrate for long periods (ADD);
- Mechanistic thinking.

There are also risks to the moral development of the child, coming from the unintended but almost inevitable exposure to pornography, violence, drugs, and the other forms of adult pathology that abound on the Internet, as well as the glut of commercial advertising that lives there.

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CORRECTION:

The previous issue of *Renewal* (Fall-Winter 2000) contains an article by Craig Holdrege entitled "Addressing Contemporary Issues in the High School: The Example of Human Cloning." The illustration on the first page of the article (p.28) is incorrectly labeled. The illustration contains drawings of the spinal column of a newborn infant and of an adult human being, each depicted from a frontal and from a side view. Four labels—"cervical curve," "thoracic curve," "lumbar curve," and "sacral curve"—appear across the top of the illustration, one above each of the four spinal columns depicted. These labels should have been placed vertically next to the two adult spinal columns, as they refer to curves that exist only in the spine of the human adult. This error of placement is not the fault of the author.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF AWSNA

BY DAVID ALSOP

As this is the first issue of *Renewal* in the (to some) new millennium, and as it will be the last time that I have the pleasure of writing this column, this is a good opportunity to take stock of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America.

During the last year, we have been actively engaged in a process of planning for the future. This has led us to several important realizations and decisions that will serve as guiding beacons in the next several years. We have affirmed a dual mission for AWSNA: to be a strong voice for Waldorf Education and to provide support services to member schools.

From the initial gathering of the eight then-existing Waldorf schools in North America in 1964, the primary focus of the associated Waldorf schools has been on mutual support and sharing of experiences, information, and opportunities. This almost exclusively internal focus has been transformed into a number of discrete activities that now constitute the member services portion of our mission. These include: accrediting schools for full membership; providing mentoring and pedagogical and organizational consultation through the regional chairs and regional committees; helping the schools work together on development and administration issues—through DANA, a networking group focused on these areas; publishing books and periodicals (including *Renewal*); and organizing conferences and workshops on a wide range of topics of interest to trustees, parents, teachers, and staff. The success of these programs has led to a justified sense of accomplishment about the role of AWSNA in the continued success of the Waldorf schools. Our vision of the future includes the strengthening and broadening of these activities.

More recently, we have felt the need and the opportunity to help Waldorf Education become more visible and known to the public. This has led us to plan for and create opportunities for AWSNA to serve as a strong voice for Waldorf Education. Key elements of this work are to represent Waldorf Education's mission and vision by articulating its anthroposophical foundations and to build a visible, positive public image. We are approaching this through the creation of a speakers bureau; increased networking with organizations with similar educational and social values; establishment of a first-class Web site; national and international advertising; and through defining the Association office as the place to which journalists, in all media, turn when seeking information about Waldorf Education. We are convinced that broader visibility will lead to increased public interest from parents seeking a viable alternative for their children and also from potential teachers.

Until now the chairman of AWSNA has directed both the internal activities of the Waldorf school movement and those that looked outward. Henceforth two persons will handle this work. An association chairman will focus on activities related to representing Waldorf Education in the larger community, and a member services director will deal with school concerns and programs.

For the past ten years I, as chairman, have filled both these roles. I have decided to step aside and make room for two new individuals to find their way together. I do this with confidence that a foundation is securely in place upon which to build and that AWSNA will continue to grow and develop in the service of this most wonderful education.

IS WALDORF EDUCATION CHRISTIAN?

BY WILLIAM WARD



Waldorf schools seek to cultivate positive human values of compassion, reverence for life, respect, cooperation, love of nature, interest in the world, and social conscience, as well as to develop cognitive, artistic, and practical skills. The soul life of the child is affirmed and nourished as the ground for healthy, active thinking. Because of this, Waldorf schools sometimes are mistakenly perceived as religious, or, in particular, as Christian schools. Nevertheless, parents of various religious views and ethical philosophies—Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, Protestants, Sufis, Muslims, eclectic seekers, and agnostics—choose Waldorf Education for their children. They do so knowing that Waldorf schools are based on a spiritual view of the human being and of the world. However, no religion, including Christianity, is promulgated in a Waldorf school.



*Virgin and Child by
a Window by
Rembrandt*

The inspiration for Waldorf Education arises from a worldview or philosophy called Anthroposophy. This broad body of research, knowledge, and experience holds a spiritual view of human nature and development. It sees the human being as more than a culturally conditioned, genetically determined, biological organism. Instead, Anthroposophy maintains that each individual human being has a spiritual core, or "I," and that this I is in a continuous process of becoming, of evolving in freedom through spiritual activity toward ever greater self-knowledge. With the gradual awakening of the I, a corresponding awareness of the spiritual wisdom within the created universe arises in the soul. The anthroposophical worldview understands the historical evolution of consciousness in many cultures as the background for each individual's path of self-discovery.

The fundamental tone of this worldview—which is not a religion—is in harmony with many world religions and philosophies. It stands in opposition, however, to the powerful, contemporary cultural currents based on materialism. In our culture a form of psychological conditioning occurs on an unprecedented scale through the cumulative impact of the 20,000 commercials that the average American child sees each year. Unchallenged assumptions about human nature convey reductionist views of the human being. These strongly influence how

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children form their fundamental "image of Self," their view of the essential nature of the human being. This is distinct from the individualized self-image each child also forms.

Various one-sided theories of human development are projected through the popular media—the idea, for example, that the human being is merely an advanced ape or a biological organism that has arisen accidentally from the primordial ooze and whose ideals are epiphenomena of secretions of the brain. Other common images are of the human being as historically/culturally conditioned and behaviorally programmed; fundamentally egoistic and controlled by unconscious drives; genetically determined; a consumer to be manipulated; a unit of economic production in global competition; and a mechanism whose heart is merely a pump, whose brain is a computer. The human being is a couch potato, an action hero, a Barbie doll.

**THE WALDORF METHOD IS SO SUCCESSFUL IN HELPING
YOUNG PEOPLE THINK FOR THEMSELVES THAT
THEY DEVELOP STRONG INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT—A
DEFENSE AGAINST HIDDEN AGENDAS OF ALL KINDS.**

Faced with this persistent tide of subconscious indoctrination, concerned parents look for an education that offers a more uplifting view of human potential. And in the curriculum, methods, and festivals of the Waldorf schools such an alternative image of the human being is offered.

Many parents are content to see their children thrive in a Waldorf school, sensing that dedicated teachers deeply care about their children and work with effective educational insights and methods. A few parents wonder further about Anthroposophy, the philosophy that inspires the education. Some inquire out of genuine interest, others to make sure that their children are not exposed to something sectarian, parochial, or dogmatic. Parents can rest assured that Anthroposophy is not taught, inculcated, or subliminally communicated in the school. That would be counter to the purpose of Waldorf Education as "education toward freedom." The Waldorf method is so successful in helping young people think for themselves that they develop strong independent judgment—a defense against hidden agendas of all kinds.

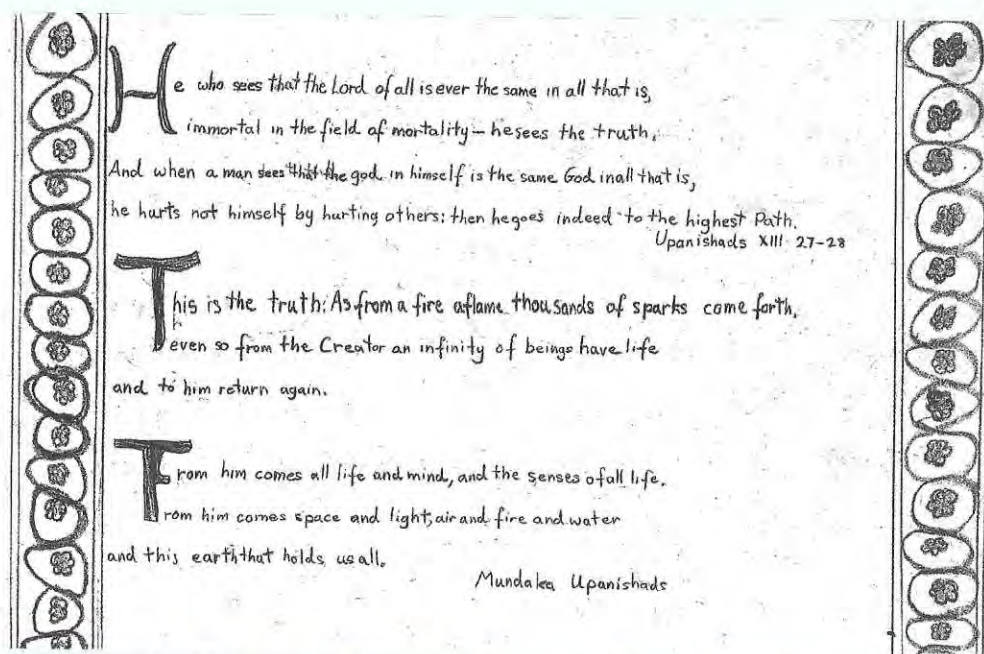
The respect for individual freedom, fundamental to the anthroposophical roots of Waldorf Education, affirms that the search for wisdom, spirit, and religious connection with the divine, however variously these may be named, is a matter of individual conscience and effort. The cultivation of religious values is a choice that belongs to the family. We parents and educators may well ponder together how to

fulfill our responsibility to cultivate values that open the possibility in our children to freely seek their own spiritual path when they become self-directed adults. But it is not the role of the school or its teachers to proffer a religion to the children and their parents.

In the free search for those spiritual and cultural values that give one meaning and purpose in life, many, if not most, teachers in Waldorf schools discover in Anthroposophy a remarkably insightful conception of human development and spiritual wisdom, one that is as practical as it is profound. It is important, though, that Anthroposophy does not remain ideas in books on a shelf, but becomes a work to be undertaken. For the Waldorf teacher, insight into the depth of human potential, reverence for the growing child, respect for the freedom of the individuality, enthusiasm for the curriculum, and renewing meditative work enrich the daily practice of teaching from the wellsprings of Anthroposophy. This source of inspiration is as essential to Waldorf Education as sunlight, water, air, and earth to a growing plant. If it is absent, the teacher, supported only by his or her own experience and insight, will find the challenging task of Waldorf Education overwhelming or impossible.

It is counter to the function of Waldorf schools to promote Anthroposophy to parents or students involved with the school. Some parents may wish to learn about it, though, and do so out of individual initiative. They soon discover that Anthroposophy at its root is deeply Christian in outlook. To the student of Anthroposophy, Christ's deeds, example, and teachings offer spiritual resources and guidance toward the fulfillment of our human nature. This Christian orientation, however, is not narrow or sectarian. It perceives, despite the many religious conflicts history records, an overarching harmony among the world's inspired religions, with each serving the spiritual guidance of humanity.

The name *Christ* and the word *Christianity* can have strong connotations, positive and negative. In the context of Anthroposophy, however, the Christ impulse is a universally available matrix of human aspirations, transformative ideals, and deeds. It does not involve theological speculation, sectarian dogma, blind faith, institutionalized ritual, or a missionary agenda. In this view—as surely as the Sun shines on each of us regardless of our religious affiliation, non-affiliation, or ethical philosophy—fundamental, human-spiritual realities, such as love, compassion, reverence for the divine, peace, healing, and freedom are essential goals of our true humanity. Such universal aspirations comprise the spirit of humanity and find expression in the multiplicity of languages, cultures, and religions. It is a tragic anomaly that atrocities, motivated by intolerance and self-righteousness, are committed in the name of religion.



In the fifth grade, Waldorf students study the civilization of ancient India. This is a page from a main lesson book.

While a Waldorf teacher, as a student of Anthroposophy, may find strength and insight in a worldview that sees profound significance in Christ, to particular parents the name *Christ* may carry negative connotations that arise from the tragedies of history. These may include religious wars of aggression such as the Crusades, persecution of other religious groups as is seen in anti-Semitism, fundamentalist dogmatism, contemporary sectarian warfare as in the former Yugoslavia, violence in the name of brotherly love, or even just a ruler-wielding nun.

In such a situation parents and teachers should communicate openly and frankly. Parents have legitimate concerns: "How does your personal spiritual search as a teacher affect what you teach my children? You profess freedom as a value, but you may hold your values and views superior to what we hold most dear. Perhaps you intentionally or unintentionally promote your view at the expense of ours."

The question—Is Waldorf Education Christian?—may surface at key moments in the festival life of the school. While traditions vary from school to school, an Advent Garden is commonly held; Saint Nicholas may visit; there may be a Saint Martin's festival; Michaelmas (the festival for Saint Michael) will likely be celebrated; and, along with animal fables, stories of saints will be told in second grade. At many schools there is a performance of a Christmas nativity play. With these events marking the course of the year, the obvious answer to the question seems to be: Yes, Waldorf Education is Christian.

Well, it is not so simple. We Waldorf teachers also teach the Eightfold Path of the Buddha; the Old Testament and

Judaism; Islam; the teachings of Confucius; the teachings of Zarathustra; and Egyptian, Greek, and Norse mythology. Although limited by our own personal backgrounds, we enter into diverse world cultures with as much reverence and depth as possible. While there are important differences between the world religions, a remarkable common ground—what has been referred to above as the spirit of humanity—is evident. As a school movement, we celebrate festivals of many religious traditions.

A more relevant and revealing approach is to ask: What image of the human being do the Waldorf schools seek to bring to the children as a model and inspiration? Here the answer is unequivocal. It is an image of the human being as loving, compassionate, reverent, respectful, engaged, tolerant, peaceful, joyful, patient, good, upright, wise, balanced, in harmony with the cosmos, nature, and humanity. No religion or code of ethics can arrogate these fundamental and universal values as its unique possession.

For an education that is of the heart and the will as well as the head, there is the practical question of how to help children develop these qualities. Much of what goes on in a Waldorf school that is perceived as religious and Christian—the festivals, the stories and legends of the saints, the Old Testament stories, and so on—has this intention.

In the school where I teach, there is an annual production of "The Shepherds' Play," a medieval nativity play put on by the teachers. This play is a tradition deeply woven into the fabric of many Waldorf schools. The story revolves around the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, and the birth of the child attended by an angel. Uncaring innkeepers

reject the family; another finds them simple shelter. Three shepherds—common folk, called by the angel—reverently offer simple gifts to the Holy Child.

The play is about Christmas. But, more broadly, it is about the renewal of light in the depth of winter, the light of the world, and the spiritual light within. In the context of the universal spirit of humanity, the play presents the cosmic truth that the newborn child, each newborn child, is a Holy Child and comes into the world trailing clouds of glory. In each human birth occurs the rebirth of spirit in the world, and each calls for reverence and love.

For grade school children "The Shepherds' Play" is primarily pictorial, speaking more through tableau, gesture, and archetypal character than through the rhymed, and somewhat archaic, dialogue. But the play gives them an experience of the renewal of the light, of the miracle of the spirit coming into the world, and also of their identity with that spirit. The play also offers an atmosphere comprised of reverence, humility, peace, and love, as well as of the boisterous good spirits of the shepherds, an atmosphere that for a brief moment shines as a candle in the hectic, commercial miasma of the holiday season.

This play need not be seen as an expression of a narrow, exclusive sectarianism. When I speak to the children, preparing them to see the play, I give them the following context:

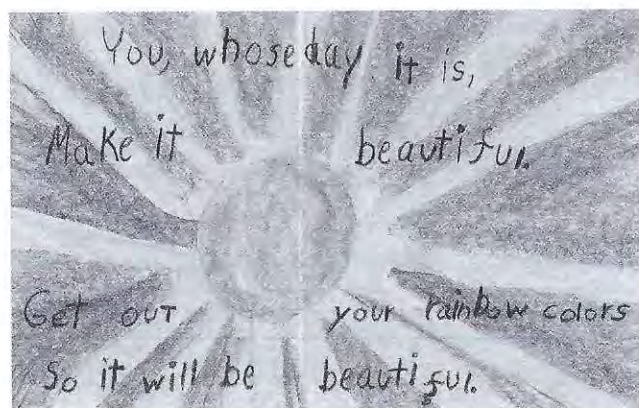
This is how Christians of long ago and also of today retell the birth of the Holy Child. For those of us of the Jewish faith, the Messiah spoken of by the prophets will be born in the future, and a time of peace will at last come to Earth. For Muslims, Jesus is a prophet who taught and followed God's will. He was in the line of prophets that led to Muhammad, who has taught us to obey Allah in the holy Koran. Buddhists understand that, as the Buddha taught infinite compassion for all beings, Christ preached love and forgiveness toward all. And for Sufis who hold that "where the heart opens to love, God speaks," Christ's message of love may be heard. Every child, every human being, bears the gift of light and love within. We celebrate this miracle at this, the darkest time of year.

The play offers these same gifts to parents and other adult friends of the school, who are also invited. It also offers something beyond this. There is a "living in the spirit," evident in the newborn child—an openness to creation, a joy in the light, a love of life and of the world. This ideal state of being is affirmed in each of the world's religions as the highest goal of human striving. It is expressed in various ways: as liberating submission to the will of Allah in Islam, attainment of the pure Buddha mind, the ecstatic love of the Sufi, atonement and songs of praise to Yahweh, as Christ consciousness, and so on. In each religion is an inspired expression of the human spirit seeking the divine.

What is true of the nativity play is also true of Saint Michael's battle with the dragon. Saint Michael, an archangel recognized by traditional Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, overcomes the dragon symbolizing evil in the world and the evil within—the lower nature of the human being. The archetypal image of subduing the dragon is a powerful imagination, more true and valuable than the empty pictures that children find in Saturday morning cartoon shows, comics, and video games. The aim of the festivals is to provide imaginations of archetypal truths about human nature, life, and experience, not to promote Christian dogma or to convert anyone.

Waldorf Education consciously nourishes the inner life of children in order to start them on a lifelong process of self-discovery. It places before them eminent persons—some of them great religious figures, some of them not—but all of them persons who overcame weakness, transformed themselves, expanded the horizons of the human heart, and inspired social change. It does this in the hope that a seed image of human aspiration will grow within each awakening I as the light within, as conscience, as the spirit of truth. Whatever may be achieved in this regard is within the context of an excellent academic education that equips young people for contemporary life with clarity of thought, wisdom of the heart, and practical skill for work.

This article was originally commissioned for a new edition of *Waldorf Education: A Family Guide*, to be published by Michaelmas Press (Amesbury, Mass.) in Spring 2001.

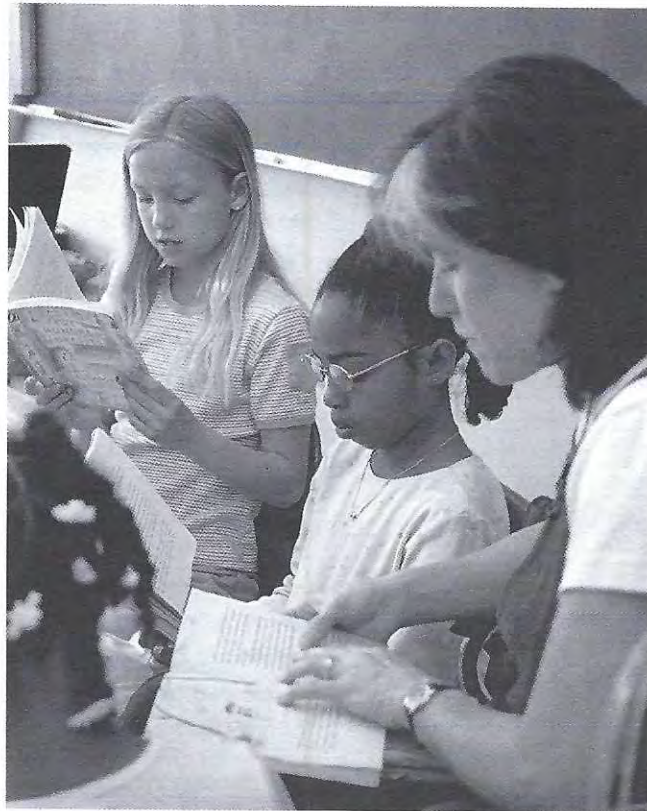


A second-grade main lesson book drawing.

WILLIAM WARD is a native of Michigan. He majored in English literature as an undergraduate at Columbia University and then studied elementary education at the Waldorf Institute of Adelphi University, receiving a master's degree there. For the past twenty-five years, he has been a class teacher at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York. Describing his situation this year, William says, "I am now finishing my third eighth grade, or maybe they are finishing me. In any case, we have a finishing school here." A lover of the theatre, William has written many class plays and festival presentations and collaborated in all-school musical productions. He will take a four-month mini-sabbatical next year and then be involved in raising money for the Hawthorne Valley School's building campaign.

TAMING THE MEDIA MONSTER

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI



A student reads aloud in a Waldorf class. Waldorf pedagogy seeks to cultivate a child's ability to listen attentively.

THERE IS A WARM AND CHEERY FEELING IN THE ROOM FOR THIS, THE FIRST MEETING OF THE YEAR FOR THE NEW KINDERGARTEN PARENTS. SHARING STORIES ABOUT THE LITTLE ANGELS BRINGS LAUGHTER, AND WHEN THE TEACHER REFLECTS WHAT A GREAT STEP IT IS TO SEND THE LITTLE ONES OFF TO SCHOOL FOR THE FIRST TIME, THERE IS A BITTERSWEET TEAR HERE AND THERE. AFTER A STERN MINI-LECTURE ABOUT HAIR LICE AND ANOTHER LAUGH OVER WHAT PARENTS TEND TO FORGET TO PACK IN THE MORNINGS, MS. JEFFERS TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND CONTINUES: "AND NOW I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT ANOTHER POLICY HERE AT THE WALDORF SCHOOL THAT ALL OF YOU HEARD ABOUT DURING YOUR ENTRANCE INTERVIEW BUT WHICH IS CONTROVERSIAL FOR SOME—THE SCHOOL POLICY ABOUT TELEVISION AND MEDIA."

Suddenly the room is quiet and tense. It is as if an arctic wind has suddenly cut through the balmy ambience that had moments ago filled the space. A number of parents cross their legs or arms, and others begin to squirm in their seats. Ms. Jeffers also becomes uncomfortable. The sudden change in the room is apparent to her as well—though not unexpected. Nevertheless, she forges ahead with conviction, relating her own experience of the difference between children exposed to the media and those who are not. She also cites research findings critical of television viewing and computer use by children and hands out reprints of articles and studies by respected authorities. She concludes by strongly recommending that parents protect their children from exposure to the media—in other words, no television, videos, video games, or computer activities of any kind.

But the mood of the evening is ruined, just as it is every year when this topic is brought up. Some parents leave feeling that the school's policy is extreme. One parent chooses not to enroll his child, saying, "No television and no white sugar—that's not for us."

Others feel that somehow their expertise and their commitment as parents are being called into question because they do not agree with the Waldorf "party line." Why, the teacher even hinted that if a child talks about "Sesame Street" or sings tunes from a Disney movie the parents would be called in for a conference. Goodness, is this some kind of Inquisition?

Other parents who nodded their heads in approval at the teacher's presentation also feel perturbed. They are indignant that some parents are threatening what is perhaps their own main aim in coming to a Waldorf school—to shelter their children from the culture (if that is indeed the right word!) of television. They seek for their children an environment characterized by spontaneous free play, wholesome games, stories, and singing, one free of unsavory media content, of "trash talk," violent and distasteful imagery, and the adolescent "jive" and coolness of most so-called children's entertainment. They hope that the school community agrees on standards protecting the magical years from three to twelve.

The teacher goes home frustrated by the unsupportive response she has had from a number of families on this issue. She has seen how damaging media can be for the delicate unfolding of the young children. Yet these otherwise caring parents close a door when the topic of media comes up. She wishes there were a way to help them understand.

THE MEDIA SOCIETY

For parents who have never had their family's media use called into question, the idea of a media ban at home can seem extreme. This is especially true if one, or both, parents enjoy watching television or videos, or being online. A parent who makes a living from computers or media entertainment is likely to react even more. "What do you mean it's not good for my child?"

Almost all parents today have grown up with television. Of course, the content of television programming has changed, the amount children watch has increased, and the advent of video tapes, tape players, and computers has thickened the brew. Studies show that parents born after 1965 tend to allow their children more exposure to media than parents born earlier, presumably because they associate watching television with a warm, cozy family life. The television and increasingly the computer are felt to be, like the family dog, necessary parts of a household. Of course, everyone believes in moderation, so limiting media to a couple of hours a night seems a reasonable request. But, eliminate it entirely? Whoa!

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education, never experienced television, but he did know about the silent movies popular in the early part of the twentieth century. Steiner recognized the medium's potential as a new art form and realized that technologically based entertainment would develop and spread. But he was aware of the negative effects and had serious reservations about such entertainment. In a conversation with a stage designer of the time, Steiner cautioned that film corrupts people's relation to time and space and spoils their ability to have a real imagination. For these reasons, he was concerned about adults who watch too many films.

For decades Waldorf educators have opposed all media use by children, especially young children, but communicating this to parents is more daunting than ever. The situation is analogous perhaps to that surrounding tobacco use in the 1960s. The society as a whole accepted cigarette smoking as benign, and the few people who warned about possible negative effects were dismissed as alarmists and health nuts.

Fortunately, medical and psychological researchers have come to share the concerns of Waldorf teachers. A steady stream of research has indicated the ill effects of media exposure on the child and the adult. The negative consequences include obesity, impairment of neurological development, increase in aggression, desensitization to violence, male/female stereotyping, a warping of the child's sense of reality, and susceptibility to commercialism and materialism—all from a few hours a day of watching "the tube."

As evidence has mounted, even the conservative American Academy of Pediatrics has asked its members to inquire how much media the children they treat are watching. Also, the Academy issued a policy statement urging that children under two years old not be allowed to watch any television at all and recommending that no child of any age have a television in his or her own bedroom or watch more than two hours a day. Some pediatricians feel that the position should be even stronger and expect that with more research, the age at which it is thought safe for a child to watch television, videos, and so on will rise. One can see a battle brewing that may eclipse the current struggle involving the tobacco industry. While tobacco use caused many people to die prematurely, the effects of media exposure are more subtle. They include the failure of children to realize their full potential as productive and happy human beings.

The research that has most influenced pediatricians shows that babies and toddlers need almost constant direct interactions with parents and other primary caregivers. These are necessary to healthy brain growth and the development of appropriate social, emotional, and cognitive skills. As the child gets older, direct, hands-on interactions with other human beings, the environment, and nature are critical. And it is just these interactions, necessary throughout infancy and early childhood, that do not occur when children are involved in the unnatural activity of sitting still and watching electronic signals.

For Waldorf teachers, however, concern about media use is based less on the scientific studies and more on their own experience of seeing the difference between children exposed to media and those not exposed. Celia Riahi, a Waldorf preschool teacher with many years' experience, says she can recognize the "media children" in her class through the chaotic and mechanical movements and sounds that they make, in imitation of what they have seen on television. The play of these children is impaired. They tend to get stuck in a story line or get obsessed with one particular character—usually a television character. To the preschool specialist such behavior does not portend well for later development.

Some Waldorf teachers feel that allowing a child to be exposed to the media undermines what they are trying to accomplish in the classroom. Waldorf Education relies largely on the ability of the children to listen to, observe, and absorb what the teacher is saying and doing and also to respond sensitively to artistic stimuli. Media viewing shortens attention span and dulls sensory sensitivity. Here not only the activity of viewing but also of listening to electronically reproduced voices and music is problematic. Thus parents' inability to eliminate media exposure is a major problem.

SAYING FAREWELL TO AN OLD FRIEND

The Swiss physician Elisabeth Kübler-Ross is well-known for her research with terminally ill patients. She found that patients and their families go through a series of steps in dealing with the crisis of impending death. Each stage must be worked through and transcended if patient and family are to come to some peace before the end. If they become stuck somewhere in the process there will be no resolution even though death will occur. These stages pertain not only to the loss that occurs in death but to every traumatic life change.

Families seeking to swallow the seemingly bitter pill of unplugging from media stimulation can expect a similar journey through the stages of denial, bargaining, anger, and depression. At each stage certain comments are typical.

DENIAL

"Television isn't a problem in our home. Our children never watch . . . well, maybe once in a while. Just a little bit during the week and then maybe on weekends a bit more."

"All the public schools are getting computers, so it must be the best thing for keeping our children ahead of the game. I love the Waldorf School, but sometimes these teachers are just too old-fashioned."

BARGAINING

"How about if I limit it to one video on the weekends and give them a little more freedom during vacation times?"

ANGER

"Let those teachers come here some rainy day and figure out what to do with my two boys."

"Do they expect me to stop watching television—which is the only way I have to unwind—just so the children don't watch any?"

DEPRESSION

"I just feel so miserable. How do I let those Waldorf teachers make me feel stupid and inferior and that I have already ruined my children by what I have let them watch?"

"I can't take away the kids' TV and computer. They would just hate me and think I am a horrible mom. Besides, I could never cook dinner if they didn't have a video or something to keep them occupied."

An objective look at the growing evidence of the harmful effects of media on the growing child should cause a caring parent to think again about media use. In fact, probably

continued on next page

almost all Waldorf parents do try to cut back on media in the home. But they get stuck in one of these stages or crumble in the face of pressure from children, relatives, and friends. Holding out against a societal obsession is difficult. Also, it involves time and energy to find interesting things for a child to do and for a parent to do with a child. The parent's own personal space and time will be compromised.

Parents may succeed in protecting a child from the media. There is then the question as to how long this should continue. Among Waldorf teachers, responses to this question reflect a continuum from a purist position—that to some is impractical and unenforceable—through levels of compromise in bowing to what is felt to be the unstoppable force of popular culture. Almost all teachers feel that there should be no media at all before age seven. Some put this at age nine. Many then are willing to countenance judicious use of television between ages nine and twelve, with parents selecting the programs and, ideally, watching along with their children. Many teachers feel that after the onset of adolescence, at around age thirteen, the young person should have freedom in this area but also the benefit of parental guidance. Individual differences should be taken into account. For a very sensitive child of nine or ten, or older, even relatively benign classic family films like "The Wizard of Oz" or "The Sound of Music" may not be appropriate.

Waldorf parents who do struggle with their school's policy about the media and do work out a reasonable compromise should not be overcome by guilt or by fear of some impending disaster. There are many wholesome influences working in the life of the Waldorf child.

Still, something quite subtle may be compromised in the development of the child. Roberto Trostli is a Waldorf teacher and Waldorf teacher trainer who has taken several classes through the upper elementary grades. He comments that among graduating eighth graders, he can tell which ones still have little or no exposure to media. They are the students with the most capacity for imagination. They are the self-starters and the children in the class with the most initiative. Such an observation may be the most compelling reason for parents to take a hard look at the media question.

THOMAS POPLAWSKI is a regular and popular contributor to *Renewal* and has had more articles in this magazine than any other writer. A psychotherapist who now lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, Thomas is also a eurythmist who trained in England. Thomas and his wife, Valerie, have two young sons who attend the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, Massachusetts. Valerie teaches eurythmy at the school and runs the nursery program there. Thomas writes and lectures frequently on Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education, and related topics. The Poplawskis live happily without the benefit of owning a television or computer.

FROM THE EDITOR

continued from page 1

The report calls for the removal of computers from early childhood and elementary school education. It recommends making the study and use of computers part of the core curriculum in high school. Included in this would be the study of ethical issues involved in the use of computers and the study of the history of technology as a social and political force.

THE ALLIANCE SUGGESTS THAT EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FOCUS INSTEAD ON DEVELOPING THE INNER CAPACITIES OF CHILDREN THROUGH:

- Close, caring relationships with adults;
- Outdoor activity, nature exploration, gardening, and other direct encounters with nature;
- Time for unstructured play and make-believe play;
- Music, drama, puppetry, dance, painting, and other arts;
- Hands-on lessons, handcrafts, and other physically engaging activities;
- Storytelling, reading books aloud, poetry, and conversations with loving adults.

The Alliance for Childhood is a determined David confronting the Goliath of the technology industry on the critical issue of computers in schools. We wish it well.

If you would like a copy of *Fool's Gold* and/or more information, please contact the Alliance:

Tel: (301) 513-1777

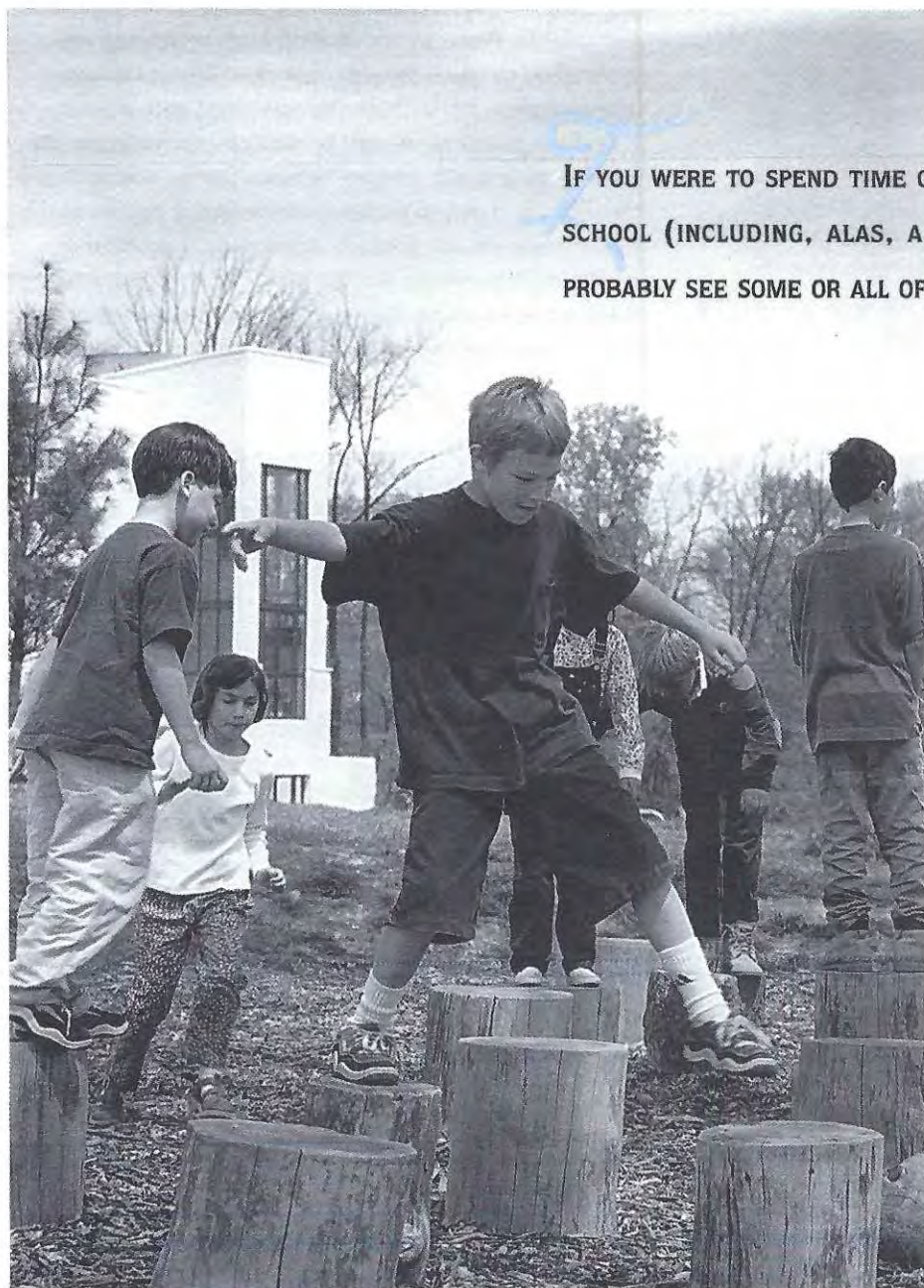
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BALANCE, POSTURE AND MOVEMENT

OPTIMIZING CHILDREN'S LEARNING CAPACITIES THROUGH
INTEGRATION OF THE SENSORY MOTOR SYSTEM

BY INGUN SCHNEIDER



IF YOU WERE TO SPEND TIME OBSERVING CHILDREN IN A TYPICAL SCHOOL (INCLUDING, ALAS, A WALDORF SCHOOL) YOU WOULD PROBABLY SEE SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING . . .

Activities that challenge
a child's sense of balance
promote healthy development.

- Second graders copying a page of text from the blackboard are in constant restless motion, twisting to the left as they write with their right hand or repeatedly bending over their paper and then straightening up.
- A number of fifth graders constantly tip their chairs back and forth or from side to side. One even balances the chair on one leg and then rotates the other three legs around it. If asked to sit quietly with all four chair legs on the floor, this child would slide off!
- In the sixth grade a student (one among several) sits with his elbows resting on the desk and his head in his hands. He looks as if he is experiencing his head to be as heavy as a bowling ball. Another student sits on one of his legs for much of the lesson time. Another holds her head so close to her work on the desk that one wonders how she can see anything. Meanwhile, the muscles at the back of her neck are tight with the effort of keeping her head from landing on the desk.

Each of these examples of poor integration of the sensory-motor system—as expressed in the child's poor posture and inattentiveness—bespeak a discomfort with the structural physical body—skeleton, muscles, and nerves. The physical, emotional, and intellectual together comprise a unit of interrelated parts, and for these to function optimally the child must feel at home in his physical body. If a child experiences his body as an ill-fitting glove, settling down and paying attention to the task at hand are very difficult. Thus, helping children integrate the sensory-motor system by developing good posture, body awareness, and orientation in space is an important concern for parents and teachers.

The postural system is based on the senses of self-movement and balance. These senses develop body awareness and orientation to space through clear developmental stages. These begin in infancy with the newborn's spontaneous, reflexive movements related to survival—for example, the rooting, sucking, and grasping reflexes. During waking hours the infant is in almost constant movement. When given the opportunity, she will gradually develop more intentional, controlled movements. For the infant the best "opportunity" is being placed on her back and being allowed to explore and discover the multitude of movement possibilities on

Games of imitation help children develop body awareness and spatial orientation.



her own—rolling over onto the stomach; pushing up onto the hands to look around from this new vantage point; rolling around again and watching the hands “play with the light beams”; pulling the feet up toward the mouth or letting the hands play with the feet; getting into the sitting position; crawling; and so on.

Thus a parent can provide the basis for good posture and body awareness by giving an infant a period of time each day on a flat, comfortable, broad surface—such as a clean floor—where she is free to move around safely. The toddler likewise is in constant motion and also needs a protected large space in which to move freely—thus developing orientation to space while exploring different types of movement, such as running, jumping, and skipping. Antithetical to this end is allowing a young child to sit motionless and glassy-eyed for long periods in front of a television or video player.

As the child uses her “surveying instruments”—the senses of balance, self-movement, and touch—she will build up a map of the space around her (spatial orientation) and of her own body in space (body awareness). This healthy integration of the senses of self-movement and balance also manifests in the development of proper muscle tone. A child with good muscle tone can maintain a comfortable posture, using the least amount of energy needed for the activity, whether it involves movement—walking, running, knitting, cutting with scissors or a knife—or stability—sitting and standing. Proper muscle tone is the foundation for good posture, as well as for learning fine and gross motor skills. Reliable trunk stability allows the child to freely use her hands for skilled movements.

Unfortunately, more and more children fail to pass through this sensory-motor developmental process in a healthy manner. Already in first grade many children have acquired stiff, stooping, or floppy postural habits. They slouch when sitting, hold pencils or paint brushes in tense, awkward ways, and have trouble standing upright and still while speaking a verse.

Fortunately, the human nervous system is amazingly flexible and adaptable. Thus there is much that parents and teachers can do to help children develop the body awareness and spatial orientation that is the foundation for easeful posture and efficient fine and gross motor movements.



An infant is constantly exploring the surrounding space and the accessible objects in it.

A teacher can incorporate games and activities that involve recapitulation of primary movements such as crawling, running, jumping, rolling over, and so on. These promote the maturation of the senses of balance and self-movement. Sometimes children who cannot handle activities during circle time will misbehave to deal with their frustration. It is tempting to have them sit out, but then they would miss the very activity that they need. The challenge for the teacher is to creatively support and involve each child as much as possible.

“Feely bags” are cloth bags filled with various textures of fabric, buttons, shells, or beads. They help children with a compromised sense of touch, and can be very calming. Teachers can also help children who struggle by incorporating short movement breaks into every lesson. Children need regular opportunities to move, and breaks will increase their ability to focus and to maintain good posture during the rest of the class.

Teachers can identify those children in the class who have postural and body awareness problems by careful observation of each child as she goes through the activities of the school day—as she stands, sits, walks, works with a pencil or crayon, and so on. Sometimes children who seem to have a good sense of balance and can ride a bike, do skateboarding, or skate on rollerblades in fact have trouble with static balance. For example, they have difficulty walking slowly heel-to-toe in a straight line. They walk fast, use long steps, or fail to keep to a straight line. To assess static balance the teacher can ask the child to stand on one foot, shoes off, while holding his arms straight in front and counting out loud. Then the child can try the same thing with eyes closed. If the child is unable to maintain his balance for about ten seconds, exercises to strengthen the sense of balance are recommended.

For each child the teacher can devise appropriate pedagogical exercises. An important principle is to start where the child is. If the child tends to do a movement fast, challenge him to do it as fast as lightning, then to do the same movement as slow as molasses, ending with the medium speed indicated for him with rhythmic counting, a verse, or a song.

Children with special problems can also receive individual lessons from an Extra Lesson educational support teacher, therapeutic eurythmist, and/or movement therapist.

Through individual and group activities in class and through extra personal movement instruction much progress can be made. Trunk stability improves; the pencil grip relaxes; the child can stand more freely; form drawing and writing take place with less stress and more joy. There are concomitant changes in mood and behavior. The child is more balanced, relaxed, and content. Able to do things with more ease and with less intervention from teachers and parents, she feels more self-esteem.

Within a typical Waldorf classroom there are many factors that contribute to the physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being of the child, and thus to postural health and uprightness. These include the warm and supportive ambience of the classroom, the loving attention and clear guidelines of the teacher, the artistic and musical activities, eurythmy, singing, and so on.

THE GREATER THE VARIETY OF POSTURES, POSITIONS, AND MOVEMENTS THE CHILD EXPERIENCES, THE BETTER.

Parents can and should be part of the support process. In working with parents on this and other issues, the Waldorf teacher can help them avoid feelings of guilt about how they have raised their children. Rather, parents should be congratulated and affirmed for all the good they have done for their child so far. Then they can be given suggestions for steps to further the child's potential.

How parents organize the home life can make a great difference in the general well-being of the child. A daily schedule with a predictable rhythm, with set mealtimes and times for getting up in the morning and for going to bed is extremely important. Times set aside for the children to relax, plenty of sleep, and wholesome balanced meals also are crucial. Regular chores and tasks that challenge the child's movement system—something in addition to taking the trash out—can also make a big difference. Activities such as sweeping, raking, digging, carrying buckets, and moving rocks are all excellent.

One activity I suggest to parents, and which children and parents seem to truly enjoy, is the "cocoon wrap." At bedtime, the parent spreads out a large sheet, bedspread, or blanket on the floor. The child lies on the blanket at one of the shorter sides. The parent tucks this end of the blanket around the child, who then rolls over slowly until the blanket is fully wrapped around him. The child can then be helped into bed, where he can lie down, sit, or nestle in the parent's lap. The parent can tell or read a bedtime story to the wrapped-up child. Many grateful parents have told me how much more easily the child goes to sleep after being wrapped in this way.

A parent can also massage the wrapped child on his back, legs, and arms, adjusting touch according to the child's suggestion. Some children like a very firm massage. Hand and foot massage is often helpful for a child who is struggling with fine motor skills or who uses more tension than necessary in fine motor activities—for example, grasping a pencil too tightly when writing. Massage can also help children get up in the morning.

The main purpose for the wrap and the massage is to enliven the sense of touch. This is essential to feeling at home in one's body. Children (and adults) who do not feel at home in their bodies often have trouble falling asleep. An integrated sense of touch also is critical for developing the ability to recognize the existence of the "I" in another human being—what Rudolf Steiner calls the sense of the ego of the other. Also, the wrap helps the child experience his physical boundaries. When a child knows where he ends and where the world begins, he has an easier time accepting boundaries such as classroom regulations, parental limits, and unspoken social rules.

Parents can lead and accompany children in floor movements to help fill in possible gaps in early movement development. These include slowly rolling like a seal, crawling like a lizard—both fast and slow—stalking like a cat, and soaring like an eagle. Activities good for the sense of balance, besides walking on balance beams, logs, and boulders, include all activities that cause the child's head to be upside-down or parallel to the ground.

Parents can lead the child in the same body geography exercise that many teachers do in class—for example: "Touch your right little finger to your left big toe." It is important that the child, in performing this motion, leans over so that the head hangs freely upside down, and thus experiences the "upside-down world."

Regular trips to the playground are valuable so that children can play on swings, go down slides while lying down, hang upside down on the turning bar, and spin on the merry-go-round. Tumbling and acrobatics are also great for children, as is doing stunts with parents. The greater the variety of postures, positions, and movements the child experiences, the better.

Finally, both teachers and parents need to be aware of the importance of furniture. The uncomfortable and restless schoolchildren described at the beginning of this article are in part the victims of desks and chairs that do not fit them. A classroom chair should be sized so that when the child sits fully back in the chair with feet on the floor directly below the knees and with back straight, there are ninety-degree angles at both the knee and the hip joints. The front



Children exhibit various patterns of posture and body-use while sitting and drawing.

chair edge should be gently curved. The backrest also can be gently curved from side to side as well as top to bottom, with a slight curvature to support the lower back.

The height of the desk or worktable needs to relate to the seated child. To determine the proper size for the desk, we look at the level of the seated child's elbows when he is seated with back straight and shoulders relaxed. Ideally the upper arms angle out just slightly from the trunk as the forearms rest comfortably on the desk surface without the shoulders pulling up. Sometimes this height of the top surface of the desk does not allow for much of a storage space under the desk surface, because the child's thighs then bump into the bottom of this storage space. Other solutions for storage of school supplies can be found, e.g., a holder at the side of the desk.

Many of the people who knew Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education, were struck by his posture and bearing. According to their reports, Steiner had a perfectly upright but relaxed posture, and when he walked his head seemed "to be suspended effortlessly between Heaven and Earth." Perhaps this is an image that we as parents and teachers can keep in mind as we work with our children's postural and movement systems and with our own.

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GROWING A GARDEN OF STUDENTS

BY MASON VOLLMER

GOD IS A WORKER IN THE FIELD;
THE GRAIN IS HIS ETERNAL WORD;
THE PLOUGH IS HIS SPIRIT;
AND IN THE HEART
IS THE PLACE WHERE HE SOWS.

ANGELUS SILESII



When I stand in front of a display of student work at the Waldorf school where I teach, I am awed by the accomplishments of my fellow teachers with the children. The watercolor paintings, drawings, woodwork and handwork projects, and the main lesson books done here all indicate that the children are developing remarkable capacities. And as a gardening teacher, I ask myself what gardening can add to the young person's educational experience.

Children today grow up in a world quite different than the world we adults grew up in. Even forty years ago a substantial percentage of North Americans lived on farms and in rural areas. There was in general more sense of connection to the land and to nature. There was also more connection between people. The author Sam Keene, describing growing up on a family farm, said, "At any hour of the day, any day of the year, I knew where my father was and what he was doing." This sense of relation, not only to the Earth but to each other, is inherent in agriculture. Today, less than two percent of our population is involved in agriculture, and agriculture is being practiced more and more on a factory model. In a society dominated by the automobile, television, and the Internet, the forces making for alienation from nature and from other human beings are great.

Between the ages of twelve and sixteen young people today go through a difficult passage. Alienation and the loss of purpose or meaning threaten their further healthy development. This sense of alienation has something to do with our detachment from the earth itself. It is just for this critical period of early adolescence—from the sixth to the tenth grade—that Rudolf Steiner recommended gardening in the Waldorf curriculum.

A Waldorf third grader
harvests a pumpkin, or vice versa.

Today children from an early age are encouraged by media advertising and peer pressure to be consumers and collectors of things. Thus they deeply need to experience the satisfaction and joy of being creative and productive. They need to feel valuable and important. Gardening provides this experience, and for this reason children of every age love it.

It is the adolescent who is in particular need of a true gesture of giving, because it supports the transition from childhood dependency to adult independence and adult productivity. Many youngsters have their first paying job between twelve and sixteen. Gardening gives them the opportunity to bring to their family and the community the fruits of their own labor. It is a preparation for and foretaste of the creative contribution they will make in the larger social and economic world.

Gardening and agriculture are primary human activities. Their origins lie far back in the pre-history of the human race. They were a prerequisite for civilization itself. Out of the long human experience of agriculture, humanity developed, to a high degree, a kind of memory that today is almost completely lost. The late John Davy, founding president of Emerson College—an anthroposophical college in England—called this deeply embedded memory “place memory.”

Davy spoke of three types of memory: place, rhythmic, and abstract. With rhythmic memory we remember something because of its rhythm—the “ABC song,” for example. With abstract memory, which develops between fourteen and twenty-one years of age, something is remembered in and of itself, without being associated with anything else, except perhaps another abstraction. With place memory, certain memories are associated with a particular place. If you go into a room and then say to yourself, “Now what was it I came in here for?” but then go back where you were before and remember your purpose, you have had an experience of place memory.

Place memory is a real phenomenon for the farmer and the gardener. When I return to a certain bed in the garden, memories of crops, seasons, and people come back to me. The students also experience this over the years that they work in the garden.

In ancient times, place memory included the memories of ancestors and of the past. In a living space such as a garden this memory of the past and of the sacredness of the land can come alive. One can regain a sense of the sanctity of the land that fed our ancestors, that feeds us, and that will feed future generations. Poems and traditional songs often express this experience. “America the Beautiful” is not just a patriotic song but is an expression of awe and gratitude toward the land.

The gardening program at a Waldorf school is not a vocational program. Rather, gardening is seen as a way to develop a sense of place and a sense of partnership with nature and with each other. Also, gardening allows children to experience and see themselves as producers of something of value rather than simply as “consumers.” One child remarked to his mother that “the best carrot” he ever tasted was one he had grown in his gardening class.



photographer: Kathleen Wells

THE GARDEN AT KIMBERTON

On the hillside just above the playing field is the two-acre school garden that we have been cultivating for the past five years. The school garden is a place both for and by the students. Here, they experience firsthand nature's generosity and abundance. It

takes only a handful of grain to grow enough food for everyone. Children have heard and sung verses about nature, but in the garden they find the reality expressed in this Dutch poem, often used in Waldorf schools:

BEFORE THE BREAD, THE MILL
BEFORE THE MILL, THE GRAIN
BEFORE THE GRAIN, THE SUN,
AND THE RAIN
THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S WILL.

That every day we need to eat, drink, breathe, and take nourishment from the Earth is a mundane fact. But, that there is such beauty in nature and in the processes that bring us sustenance, is a miracle that should fill us with wonder.

The main gardening curriculum takes place in the sixth through tenth grades. There is also gardening in the third grade, and high school students can elect to do gardening in the junior and senior years.



Waldorf high school students work in the garden in early spring.

THIRD GRADE

Each autumn the third-grade class harvests corn. The children count the number of kernels in a row, and the number of rows, and find that there are over 400 kernels on each of the two ears that each plant produces. They are amazed to learn that it only takes one seed to grow a plant that provides nearly a thousand more kernels or seeds. Thus, it takes the seeds from just two ears to grow almost two thousand more ears of corn.

Amid such a harvest, we set aside seed corn for next year's crop—as we have done for the last five years. This seed corn is different from the rest of the harvest, because it is meant for someone else. Now we can perhaps understand what the Native Americans meant, when in the ceremony of presenting corn to another tribe, they declared: "Here, all the food you shall ever need, if you but tend it properly."

The seed corn the third graders set aside is for next year's third-grade class. This seed comes from the seed planted by the previous third-grade class, which comes from the seed planted by the third-grade class before that, and so on.

Experiencing the grain in this way, the children see that it is not just a thing but a living being. Each year we begin with the seed, and, after the harvest is consumed, we end with the seed—the Alpha and the Omega.

We grow an open-pollinated variety of corn called "Calico." This type of corn has kernels of many colors, but each kernel pops white. It's always a surprise to see what colors lie hidden underneath the white or purple husks.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADES

In the sixth grade students begin regular gardening classes that will continue over the next five years. The aim is that they experience directly how the process of growth changes through the seasons and how the gardener's work is bound up with the seasons. It's a challenge to have the children experience the full growing season, since they are on break during the summer. And for part of the school year the garden is in its winter dormancy. Nonetheless, we do experience the cycles of nature and find that to everything there is a season.

The sixth-grade students help make compost from grass clippings, leaves, and from kitchen scraps from the school's organic lunch program. Together we make about four yards of compost a year. The fact that waste, sometimes even in a disgusting form, can be transformed into good soil is a lesson for life.

Every sixth grade plants some perennials in addition to doing the annual plantings. One year they planted peach trees, another year apple trees, and another year raspberry bushes. This year's class planted a grape arbor from cuttings that we raised ourselves. After the class planted these, we said a verse given me by Sir Richard St. Barbe Baker, the great English forester:

WHEN I PLANT A TREE
I AM A SERVANT OF GOD.
AND FACES THAT I'VE NOT MET,
SHALL CALL ME BLESSED.

One year, after the children had stood back and looked at their planting with some pride and satisfaction, a student asked, "Well, when do we get some apples?" "Oh, in about four years," I said. "Four years! We will be in tenth grade by then." I certainly hope so, thought I.

Every year when we do these plantings at least one student asks when there will be fruit. They really do not know how long it takes. And so, through this planting activity

THE STUDENT ASKED, "WELL, WHEN DO WE GET SOME APPLES?" "OH, IN ABOUT FOUR YEARS," I SAID. "FOUR YEARS! WE WILL BE IN TENTH GRADE BY THEN." I CERTAINLY HOPE SO, THOUGHT I.

the students learn patience and realize that their actions contribute to the future. They learn too that we depend for our daily food on others, many of whom we have not met and many of whom did their work long ago.

The sixth and seventh graders also have a chance to take home herbs, flowers, potatoes, carrots, and tomatoes from the garden. An important part of the educational process takes place when the child does this. Praise for work well done from the loving parent rains down upon the youngster, fostering goodwill and the strength for work. The children's gardening takes on real meaning when the parent completes the circle between parent, teacher, and student.

EIGHTH GRADE

In the eighth grade last year, we picked, washed, and packed some garden produce for a local food bank. Thus our work reached out into the wider world. This is half of the inner calling of the farmer: *Feed the hungry!* The other half is: *Tend and heal the Earth that feeds us!*

NINTH GRADE

In the ninth grade, we consider the ideas behind organic practices and the social issues of land use and stewardship. We study the history of the Dustbowl in the 1930s and the formation of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Soil Conservation Service. The students also work in pairs at a host farm for two weeks during a farm practicum in the spring.

TENTH GRADE AND THE HIGH SCHOOL ELECTIVE

In the tenth grade, more advanced horticultural skills, such as grafting fruit trees, are practiced. The high school elective students help to develop the garden as a whole and assist with projects in progress by younger classes.

The first school experience for many children is in a kindergarten or "garden of children." During my years as a gardening teacher, I have seen that it is the students who do the most growing in the garden. They develop interest in, wonder at, and love for the world of nature and for each other. This can ripen into a sense of responsibility to serve others and, even in a small way, to care for and protect the environment. Whereas corn always brings forth corn, the children each season bring something new into the garden and into the world.

MASON VOLLMER is a native of California. He studied biodynamic agriculture and gardening at Emerson College with Dr. Herbert Koepf. Mason was at the Summerfield Waldorf School in Santa Rosa, California, for five years and inaugurated the gardening program there. He is now in his fifth year of teaching gardening at the Kimberton Waldorf School in Pennsylvania. Mason has a son in the second grade of the Kimberton school.

PARENTING AND MEETING OUR “SHADOW”

BY SUSAN R. JOHNSON, M.D.

Parenting is one of the most awe-inspiring, noble, and challenging professions. Yet, being a parent gets very little support and appreciation from our culture. It was much easier for me to go through medical school, do a pediatric residency and a fellowship, and work as a pediatrician, than to be a parent. I can't remember ever being as depleted and exhausted as I have been at times in these past seven and a half years of parenting a child. I think the exhaustion has come in part from the developmental work that I needed to do—and am still doing—on myself, when faced with a bright-eyed, intuitive, energetic, developing boy. Raising a child has given me the opportunity to relive my own childhood. Unresolved feelings and thoughts, long ago repressed, have come bursting to the surface. Recently, I spent a weekend taking part in a workshop entitled “Natural Learning Rhythms,” designed for parents and organized by a group in Nevada City, California, called EnCompass. Many of the ideas about childhood were similar to those I had encountered during my Waldorf teacher training and anthroposophical medical course. At the workshop, I learned that each age group has its own “wisdoms” and its own nourishing “foods.” And for each age group there are “poisons”—threats to healthy development.

For example, children in the first seven to eight years of life live in their body and their senses. They are sponges to all that they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. They are doers, who are trying to integrate their sense of hearing, sense of vision, sense of balance, sense of movement, and many other subtle senses. Children in this age group have an incredible capacity to perceive our soul moods. It is not the words we speak that teach children of this age group, rather it is who we are on the inside. What is important is our tone of voice, gestures, mental attitudes, mood of soul, and our ability to remain present in the moment—not to



Children can be mirrors both of our love and of our negative emotions.

be overwhelmed and distracted by thoughts of past failures and by worries about the future. Children absorb who we are and what is around them into the deepest core of their being. Therefore, we must ask ourselves if we are worthy of their imitation and if the environment that surrounds our children—what they see, hear, and touch—is worthy of being imitated.

I learned also that children from birth through the age of eight are trying to discover their own strengths, determine their own boundaries, and come into their own bodies. These are the “wisdoms” of this age group. Its nourishing “foods” include loving touch, security, warmth, flexibility, and nourishment of body, soul, and spirit. Children of this age group need clear rules and boundaries, predictable routines and daily rhythms, good nutrition, lots of sleep, not too many choices, and the example of wholesome speech and behavior. To threaten children, either physically or verbally, is a poison because it causes them to withdraw physically and etherically—in terms of their life forces—and also at the soul and spiritual levels. This withdrawal undermines their ability to discover their strengths, explore their boundaries, and fully enter into their bodies.

All children, but teenagers in particular, act as mirrors of their environment and our culture. Children show us our

continued on page 41

LET THE SUN SHINE IN

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

STUDENTS WITH THE MOST NATURAL DAYLIGHT IN THEIR CLASSROOMS PROGRESSED 20% FASTER ON MATH TESTS AND 26% FASTER ON READING TESTS IN ONE YEAR THAN THOSE WITH THE LEAST.

Many things, large and small, distinguish Waldorf schools from most other schools. One of the less striking, but perhaps most important of these, is the preference in Waldorf schools for natural lighting in the classroom. Whenever possible, Waldorf schools opt for large windows, skylights, and incandescent or full-spectrum lighting. To most mainstream designers of schools this is an old-fashioned, impractical, and unnecessarily costly preference. The prevailing wisdom in most public school systems since the 1970s has been to eliminate classroom windows so that students will not be distracted by goings-on outside and to illuminate classrooms with low-cost fluorescent lighting.

Recent research into classroom design, however, is finding that the Waldorf approach is not only aesthetically preferable, but that it has a positive impact on student learning.



A California architectural consulting firm, the Heschong Mahone Group, found in its research that classroom lighting has a marked effect on student achievement. A study conducted by the firm found that students in classrooms where there was more natural light scored as much as 25% higher than other students in the same school district. This is the first rigorous study of something that has been suggested anecdotally for years—that children learn better under illumination from skylights or windows than in artificially lit spaces and that incandescent lighting is better than fluorescent. The Sacramento firm was interested in an earlier study done in 1991 in Canada, in which student achievement gains were found to be significantly greater in classrooms where the artificial lighting most closely approximated natural lighting. The Alberta study had looked at the impact of artificial lighting on elementary school students' test scores, health, and school attendance.

In the Heschong Mahone study, a group of 21,000 students in three school districts with very different weather patterns were studied. The most dramatic results came in the sunniest district—the Capistrano school district in Orange County, California. Researchers found that "students with the most natural daylight in their classrooms progressed 20% faster on math tests and 26% faster on reading tests in one year than those with the least. Similarly, students in classrooms with the largest window areas were found to progress 15% faster in math and 23% faster in reading."

In Seattle and in Fort Collins, Colorado, the impact of daylight was smaller but still significant, raising scores 7% and 18% respectively. Researcher Lisa Heschong commented, "We were completely taken aback at the magnitude of these findings. . . . I would have been delighted to find a 5% effect."

The preference in Waldorf schools for natural lighting is perhaps not so old-fashioned and impractical, after all.

CONSCIOUS PARENTING

Twelve years ago I was living in San Diego with my wife Susan and four of our five children, then aged 16, 13, 12, and 4. Through an anthroposophical physician, Susan and I learned of the work of Rudolf Steiner and about Waldorf Education. We decided to enroll our youngest child, Rose, in the local Waldorf kindergarten.

The following year, when Rose had been in first grade a few months, I was confronted by her teacher. She said that Rose was watching too much television and that the effects were evident in the classroom. I was stunned and incredulous. This was a frontal assault on our family's way of life and on my belief system. I had grown up with television. Besides, I had been a family therapist for over fifteen years and had already successfully raised three children. I heard the teacher out, but I did nothing to reduce the amount of television that Rose watched. Our family life continued on as before.

THE MORE TIME SPENT, THE MORE INFLUENCE WE CAN HAVE ON WHAT KIND OF PERSON THE CHILD WILL BECOME. THE PARTICIPATION OF BOTH PARENTS IS IMPORTANT.



About a year later, though, I grew concerned about Rose's continuing lack of interest in reading. Despite our encouraging her to read, she preferred the passive entertainment afforded by television. Then I came upon an article by a Waldorf educator about the negative influences of television and particularly about its effect on reading. Susan and I decided that we had to radically change our family life. We disconnected the television from its cable and used it only to watch an occasional video.

That simple gesture, though, involved a major transformation. We were all suddenly without a major source of diversion and entertainment. We had to create a new basis for home life and family interaction. Susan and I began to spend more time with Rose, reading children's books aloud to her, playing board games such as "Clue" and "Sorry," and also having substantive conversations with her. Meanwhile, Rose was forced to look for ways to amuse herself in a television-free household. She began to read for enjoyment, and became particularly engaged by the *Little House on the Prairie* series written by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Her reading skills developed quickly.

That was almost ten years ago. Susan died four years ago, and I am now remarried with two new stepchildren. Rose is a successful high school student. I am still a family therapist and still a parent-in-training. Since that time my development as a therapist and parent has been deeply enriched by Anthroposophy and by Waldorf Education.

Today the job of parenting is difficult. We have lost the traditional, commonly accepted patterns of child rearing that pertained in the past. We seldom have the advice, support, and help of our own parents and of other members of our extended family. There is much information on child development and parenting, but the approaches often contradict each other. Many of these approaches are promoted by parenting entrepreneurs and corporate marketers trying to sell books, toys, and educational materials that may in fact harm children. The media present, as normative, patterns of family life that are characterized by disharmony, disorder, and promiscuity. The challenge of choosing a parenting method and carrying it out is especially hard for single parents or for part-time parents who have only partial control of their children's upbringing. Without sound benchmarks of effective parenting, the task of parents in today's world is especially daunting.

It is possible, though, to raise healthy and happy children in our society, children who can participate in the renewal and evolution of human culture. Our children are a gift of the spiritual world, and it is our responsibility to help them unfold their potential. Parenting is a serious and sacred task that requires time, energy, study, full consciousness, and the exercise of will.

Parents can and should be empowered by an awareness of the importance of their task. In their work of parenting, they can also be empowered by the spiritual world. There are mighty beings in the spiritual world who want to help us raise our children so that they develop into free, creative, and moral human beings. These beings want to help us make decisions that benefit both our children and society. For a parent, then, an inner life of faith, prayer, study, and open listening is very important.

The dedicated Waldorf teacher depends on an active, meditative spiritual life to be open to the spiritual world, and thus gain energy and inspiration needed to fulfill the challenging task of being a Waldorf teacher. A striving parent can find help and strength in the same way.

IN TROUBLED TIMES

In addition, we need as parents to take responsibility for confronting the negative forces and influences in the world that threaten our children. We need to take decisive action to give our children a safe environment in which to grow.

Thus parenting today requires clear and conscious intent, the will to put inspiring ideals into practice, and an inner life that can access sources of inspiration and strength. The following perspectives can help in the process of parenting:

- **Consciously think about and choose an approach to parenting, preferably before you have become a parent.** As parents, we tend to raise our children as we were raised. This may work out fine. But we need to critically assess how we were raised and separate the positive and negative elements. Talk to friends, colleagues, and family members about their own experiences as children and as parents. Educate yourself in the theories of child development and parenting. Choose an approach that is consonant with your own values and ideals. I found that Rudolf Steiner's work on child development and the approach to child rearing implicit in Waldorf Education to be both the most inspiring and the one that works best in practice.
- **Make conscious choices about the kind of early life experience and home environment you want to create for your child.** These may include homebirth, breastfeeding, organically grown foods, shared parenting, positive approach to child discipline, a spiritual and devotional life, contact with the extended family, and a home environment free from electronic media.



Be aware that life today contains many negative influences that are especially harmful to the sensitive infant and young child. Take steps to implement the choices you have made.

- **Deepen your understanding of your child through careful observation, relaxed interaction, and prayerful contemplation.** The needs of newborn children and young children are constantly changing, and we need to respond to them to make them feel safe and secure. Also each child is different and must be dealt with differently. Children today have a strong need to be understood, and thus each child needs a parenting approach suited to it.
- **Create a safe and protective environment for the child.** Act to remove dangers from that environment. For example, infants should not be exposed to the harsh sounds, bright lights, and hectic images that are present in many of our public spaces today. Taking a newborn or young infant to the mall, to a movie theatre, or a noisy restaurant is not advisable. The delicate, sensitive, and rapidly developing sense organs of the infant are not ready for that level of stimulation.
- **Provide your child with a physical space that is safe,** where she has an opportunity for active play, as well as for quiet activities. Children also need to be protected from the consumerism, violence, and cynicism that characterize much of mainstream culture. We need to monitor and drastically reduce—or even eliminate—our children's exposure to television, movies, video games, and the Internet.
- **Be flexible about your own beliefs and patterns of behavior.** Here I can offer my own experience with Rose and the role of television. No matter how wise and experienced we think we are, there is always much of profound importance that we have yet to learn.

- As children get older, be flexible about the amount of freedom you give them. They need to explore the world and experience it for themselves. So we have to become flexible about the influences they are exposed to and trust that, if they have had a sound foundation early in life, they will be able to be protected.
- Make reasonable accommodations when the ideal is not attainable.
- Be prepared to devote time and undivided attention to your child. The infant and young child obviously need constant attention and supervision. It is important that the parents be the primary caregivers. The face and voice of caregivers, their nurturing care and affection, are crucial factors in the development of the child. Only parents have the deep love and commitment to ensure an optimal start to a child's life. Day care for infants and young children is a compromise that may prove costly in the long run.
- Spend time, time that you may think you can't afford, with your children as they get older. The more time spent, the more influence we can have on what kind of person the child will become. The participation of both parents is important.
- Be persistent. Parenting is not easy. There are always problems and challenges, often ones that seem intimidating. Seek support and help from family, friends, and, if necessary, from professionals. Have confidence in your ability to resolve all difficulties. Prayer and other spiritual practices are helpful. I have found that time taken at the end of the day to reflect on the day's happenings is very beneficial.
- Be patient. The challenge of raising children in a television- and media-free environment is very great. Without the one-eyed pacifier and baby-sitter, children—particularly younger children—can be very active and mobile. They demand constant attention and supervision. Also, children have little control over their emotions and need the support and presence of parents to deal with anger, frustration, fear, and so on. In the work of parenting, vacations, sick leave, and time off for personal activities are hard to come by. So one or both parents can easily become stressed. It is important that we consciously strive to be calm and patient. The self-control and equanimity of parents is important in building a sense of trust and security in the child. Here again a personal, spiritual discipline such as meditation can be helpful.
- Create a home life with a daily rhythm where mealtimes, times for play, quiet times, and bedtimes are fixed and predictable. This gives children a sense of security. Create clear rules for children of toddler age and older about what is acceptable behavior and

what is not and abide by these rules. Children need and want a structure before they have the maturity to decide for themselves what is proper behavior. Creating a structure that is fair and reasonable can often prevent behavioral problems.

- Include children in daily household tasks as early as possible. Children naturally want to help and to be included in the life of the home. If presented in a positive way, tasks like washing dishes or raking leaves can make the child feel important and a necessary part of the family. The life skills learned will last a lifetime.
- Cultivate positivity, humor, and equanimity. Be a model for your children in seeing the goodness and the beauty in the world, being able to laugh at oneself and at what is funny in the world, and finding the possible good in adversity.

These suggestions are the just the beginning—not an exhaustive list—but they do chart the course toward empowerment. Remember, there are beings in the spiritual world who want us to succeed as parents. It is no coincidence that there is a heightened interest today in the development of young children. These beings are the source of this inspiration. Childhood is under attack, and loving adults are needed to stem the flow of negative forces that are weakening our young people. It is time for parents to recognize their part in creating a viable solution. We must base our approach to raising children on honor and respect for the child's inborn drive to grow, develop, and evolve. We must learn to separate the harmful from the beneficial in modern culture. We must work toward improving and mastering our part in the beautiful unfolding of human potential.

Let us recognize the highest possibilities in life, and work, as we are able, toward giving our children the best start possible. May the heavenly forces work with the earthly to help us fulfill this sacred endeavor:

ROBERT HICKMAN is a family therapist, parent educator, and parent-in-training who is working to build a bridge between mainstream approaches to child rearing and Waldorf Education. He is involved in a program at Rudolf Steiner College that will set up Waldorf-inspired, neighborhood parent education and support groups. A native of Long Island, New York, Robert moved to California in the halcyon days of the early seventies and has lived there since. He studied child development at San Diego State University, did a master's degree in marriage and family counseling at United States International University, and received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from William Lyon University. Robert lives in Fair Oaks, California, with his wife, Lauren, and has seven children, three of whom are enrolled in local Waldorf schools.

EXCITING THINGS ARE HAPPENING
IN WALDORF SECONDARY SCHOOL
EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA.

BREAKING NEW GROUND IN RESEARCH ON ADOLESCENCE

BY DAVID MITCHELL

Since 1990, some twenty new Waldorf high schools have started, bringing the total across the continent to thirty. This is a threefold increase in a single decade. This activity has stimulated new thinking about the education of teenagers. New ways of working with and teaching adolescents are being actively researched and implemented.

For the past two years, a research project under the auspices of AWSNA has been looking at the Waldorf high school program. Led by a planning group of five veteran Waldorf high school teachers, the Waldorf High School Research Project has organized three weekend colloquia of high school teachers to explore new ways of teaching chemistry, history, and mathematics. Colloquia on movement education—including eurythmy and gymnastics—and the environmental sciences, as well as follow-up sessions in history and chemistry, will be held later this year.

In connection with these colloquia, the planning group is publishing proceedings and sourcebooks—available from AWSNA Publications—that present the results of the weekend sessions. In addition, a series of articles by Rudolf Steiner on adolescence and on high school teaching have been translated from the original German and will be available soon. Finally, a Web site is being developed that will contain a library of current research on adolescence from around the world, as well as relevant articles by Waldorf high school teachers.

The results of these colloquia will be used in an international research conference of around 100 invited high school teachers, physicians, and counselors, scheduled to take place at a Massachusetts retreat center in October 2001. Dr. Michaela Glöckler, head of the Medical Section at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, will lead discussions concerning the physiological, psychological, and spiritual changes that have been observed in adolescents over the past two decades. The conference participants will explore how best to meet the needs of contemporary adolescents.

As part of the preparation for the research conference, some twenty-five Waldorf teachers from across North America are currently undertaking individual research projects related to the development and education of adolescents. Among the topics being explored are:

- Experiential and outdoor education
- Curriculum focus on Islam
- World music and improvisation
- Communication skills curriculum
- Teaching study skills
- Creating a social and emotional skills curriculum
- Extra Lesson (remedial) work in the high school
- Drama and the education of youth
- Environmental stewardship
- Kinesthetic learning among adolescents
- Chaos Theory: a new main lesson for twelfth grade
- Puzzles using the domino rule

Besides enriching the research conference, these independently prepared topics will help shape the North American Waldorf Teachers Conference in June 2002 on the theme of adolescence. Here teachers from all levels of Waldorf Education will share their experiences and observations of changes in children from early childhood and kindergarten through the elementary grades into the middle and high school years.

The planning group is seeking a broad base for the research project, both in terms of materials and financial support. Anyone with information, suggestions for research, or observations related to adolescents is invited to contact Douglas Gerwin or Betty Staley, co-chairs of the planning group, at the address below.

The group also continues to seek financial backing for the research project, which has already received substantial grants from the Fetzer Institute, the Mid-States Shared Gifting Group, the Waldorf Educational Foundation, the Waldorf Education Research Institute, and the Waldorf Schools Fund. The project is also supported by the Rudolf Steiner Foundation, which has opened a designated account for individuals wishing to make a nonprofit contribution to the Waldorf High School Research Project.

Planning Group of the Waldorf High School Research Project

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Members: Andy Dill, Douglas Gerwin, Antje Ghaznavi, David Mitchell,
and Betty Staley

DAVID MITCHELL thoroughly enjoys being in the company of adolescents and is passionate about the Waldorf high school curriculum and its possibilities. He taught for many years at the High Mowing School in New Hampshire (a Waldorf boarding high school) and is now at the Shining Mountain Waldorf High School in Boulder, Colorado. David has taught academic courses on diverse subjects, including human physiology, cytology, embryology, Shakespeare, and Western architecture, and practical courses in stonecarving and blacksmithing. A member of the AWSNA High School Planning Group, he recently has been active in organizing colloquia on chemistry, mathematics, and the life sciences. David is chairman of publications for AWSNA and a member of the Association's leadership committee.

BUILDING ENROLLMENT IN WALDORF SCHOOLS

BY ABRAHAM ENTIN



Waldorf school plays are an effective way to introduce prospective parents to the school.

IF PARENTS ARE HAPPY WITH
THEIR EXPERIENCE, AND IF THEY
ARE COMFORTABLE RECOMMENDING
THE SCHOOL TO OTHERS, THIS IS THE
STRONGEST POSSIBLE BASIS FOR A
SCHOOL'S GROWTH.

According to a 1997-98 AWSNA survey, enrollment at Waldorf schools in North America averaged forty students below capacity. The same result was found in a 1999-2000 school survey. This means that while many Waldorf schools have full enrollment, many could be educating more children. This chronic underenrollment is, as Agaf Dancy, administrative coordinator of AWSNA, describes it, "... without a doubt the most serious challenge facing our schools today, both financially and with respect to the schools' mission to serve the greatest number of students."

There are many reasons that achieving full enrollment is vital to the health of our schools. Tuition income provides the vast majority of the operating income of virtually all Waldorf schools. A school's ability to offer a full, pedagogically rich Waldorf program, with all the specialty teachers and artistic activities, is based upon the number of tuition-paying students. In addition, full classes create a supportive learning environment for the students and allow a greater range of social and extracurricular activities to enrich the learning process.

Enrollment is also the basis for the salaries and benefits offered to faculty and staff. Schools with full enrollment can offer the higher levels of support that make it easier to recruit and keep quality teachers and administrative personnel. For the Waldorf movement as a whole, raising the level of support for our faculties makes Waldorf teaching a more attractive vocational alternative for new teachers as well as experienced teachers who are attracted to Waldorf Education.

In view of the obvious benefits offered by achieving full enrollment, how can we understand the chronic level of underenrollment reported in the AWSNA surveys?

In the past, many of our schools operated on the basis of what might be called "anti-enrollment," or "karmic marketing." This is the view that "if it is a person's destiny to find Waldorf Education, he or she will do so." Going beyond this attitude and recognizing that it is our **responsibility** to bring the ideas and ideals of Waldorf Education to the widest possible public, is the first step toward building enrollment. This means consciously and professionally addressing the enrollment process as it is carried out in our schools.

THE ENROLLMENT DIRECTOR

This process begins with having a full-time, dedicated enrollment director or coordinator. By "dedicated" coordinator is meant a person whose sole responsibility lies in this area, and who does not carry admissions, development, or any other administrative or teaching responsibilities in the school. Many new school initiatives are in a situation where "everyone

does everything." However, the job of greeting and meeting new families and maximizing enrollment is a full-time job, no matter how young or "undeveloped" a school may be. Indeed, from a certain perspective, the younger and less developed the school, the more important it is that consciousness is focused on this crucial area of school life.

REACHING OUT TO THE PUBLIC

While the specifics of each situation are different, there are some elements of the process of outreach that are common to every school. I would like to concentrate here on one crucial area. This is the principle of "partnering" as a basis for building enrollment.

At least fifty percent of all new enrollment should be based upon positive referrals from current or past parents, alumni, or friends of the school. Without this positive "word of mouth" from within the school community, the enrollment-building process cannot succeed.

The most important source by far of new enrollments is the current parent body. People talk about their children's schools. If parents are happy with their experience, and if they are comfortable recommending the school to others, this is the strongest possible basis for the school's growth. An important part of this process is helping parents understand why full classes are of benefit to them and to their children—financially, pedagogically, socially, and also culinarily, in that higher enrollment insures larger quantities of good food at school events!

Another, equally crucial, part is developing the true parent-teacher partnership that is the basis for the health of our Waldorf schools. If this internal partnership is being cultivated, parents will see themselves as stakeholders in the life of the school in a deeper way and will actively participate in building the enrollment of the school.

The other partners in this process are the staff and faculty of the school. More students will mean more work for them. In situations where employees are underpaid (Are any schools overpaying their staff?), it is very important that a significant portion of increased income from tuition be earmarked for staff support. This helps build staff enthusiasm, on an individual level, for the enrollment-building process.

Aside from current and former parents, the next most important source of referrals can be educational professionals in the community. Most important among these professionals are people who own and operate day care centers, preschools, and home-based playgroups, as

BOOKS

in Brief

PROVERBS OF PURGATORY

BY JOHN WULSIN

AWSNA Publications (Fair Oaks, Calif.), 2000.

30 pages \$6.00

John Wulsin has been a Waldorf teacher for twenty-two years, and in this book of aphorisms he gives us glimpses into the life of a Waldorf high school. As John explains, a high school, like purgatory, is a realm where things are in the process of "becoming" and also a realm not without a bit of Sturm und Drang.

PITHILY AND INSIGHTFULLY, JOHN ILLUMINATES MANY ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE, INCLUDING THE TASK OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, AS IN:

**OUR HIGHEST GOAL
AS TEACHERS
IS TO SERVE THE UNFOLDING
I AM
OF EACH STUDENT...**

ON WHAT CONSTITUTES A HEALTHY HIGH SCHOOL, HE WRITES :

**THE COHESION OF A SCHOOL
IS THE PRESENCE IN THE HALLS.
ADULT PRESENCE
HARMONIZES TEENAGE SOULS.**

There is a Biblical proverb that admonishes, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Here, John Wulsin gives us a vision—a hopeful vision of what the art of Waldorf Education can contribute to the lives of young people and to society.

Reviewed by **TOM DEWS**, a teacher at the Kimberton (Pennsylvania) Waldorf School.

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well as others who come into contact with prospective new parents on a regular, professional basis.

There are things a school can do to build partnerships with such people who have influence in the community. For example, a school might with other groups cosponsor events, talks, or seminars. The school might offer workshops for preschool teachers on the use of storytelling or puppetry in their work. There are many ways a school can serve these people in the community and help them get to know the people in the school and to understand what the school stands for.

I had a convincing experience of this a few years ago, when our school sponsored just such a workshop on storytelling. One of the participants, who owns a sizable preschool, remarked that she had visited our school fifteen years ago, when looking for a school for her own child. She had formed a negative impression at that time and had never been back.

A few months after the workshop, I was at a local car wash with my daughter, who was in fifth grade at the time. This woman was there, and they began to talk. She asked my daughter what school she attended. When my daughter said she went to the Waldorf School, the woman remarked that it is a wonderful school. Her attitude toward the school, held for fifteen years, had been changed by the one new experience of the workshop. She had become an advocate for the school, willing to speak well of our institution and willing to refer her own clients to our kindergarten. This kind of transformation has played a vital role in taking our early childhood program from forty-seven to ninety-four students—with waiting lists—in only a few years.

There are many opportunities to work with other educators in the community and to serve the greater community. This outreach, if done in a spirit of partnership—with a desire to share what we know and also to learn from others—will, like bread cast out upon the waters, truly return to our schools a thousandfold.

ABRAHAM ENTIN and his wife, Rachael Flug, have been parents at Highland Hall Waldorf School since 1979. Abraham was the chair of the Committee on Marketing and Outreach for three years and still serves on that committee. His more extensive essay, "On Enrollment," can be found in *Administrative Explorations: Essays on Business Practices within Waldorf Schools* (AWSNA Publications, 2000).

PROFILE

THE RUDOLF STEINER FOUNDATION:

BRINGING SPIRIT TO WORKING WITH MONEY

BY JOHN BLOOM



An image of the movement of money in service through the Rudolf Steiner Foundation Community Investment Fund Program.

Money is no more, and no less, than a servant to the reality of everyday life, to ideas, and to ideals. The Rudolf Steiner Foundation [RSF] is devoted to researching the nature of money and translating that research into practical service. RSF works with money in all its forms—investments and loans, gifts and grants, and purchases—with the understanding that the value of money arises through its power to free human activity for the benefit of social and cultural life.

The RSF was founded as a charitable public foundation by an act of the New York State legislature in 1936. At that time it served primarily as the financial arm of the Anthroposophical Society in America. Its quiet and relatively passive role ended, however, in 1984, when Pine Hill Waldorf School burned down. The staff of the Foundation was asked for help. Working closely with members of the Pine Hill community, RSF contacted enough friends to secure the half-million dollar loan needed for the school to build anew. This loan was made even though the total assets of RSF at the outset of the project were only six thousand dollars.

The RSF has grown significantly since then. Its main office moved to San Francisco in 1998, with its smaller East Coast office remaining in Spring Valley, New York. Its asset base has grown to over \$36 million, and there are now thirteen staff members to manage the RSF Community Investment Fund Program, RSF's donor advised funds and grant programs and services, its advisory services, and to account for all this. These programs have provided expanding opportunities to bring spirit to the way the world works with money and to work collaboratively with other organizations that share similar intentions.

Money has a social mission—to create community. To accomplish this mission, RSF works with money with the same devotion as Waldorf teachers do with the students. RSF receives money with reverence for the activity and values behind it, works with it with love for its potential, and then, in freedom, provides it as service. This parallels the Waldorf teacher's pedagogical attitude often stated in the same terms. The consequence of this approach is that money becomes a healing force, builds community through investment and gifts, and connects people through an interest in one another's success. This interest is a protection for investors in the RSF Community Investment Fund Program and links donors to grant recipients. This same interest serves as an antidote to antisocial forces at work in the mainstream of finance.

THE NOTION OF AN ECOLOGY OF MONEY RECOGNIZES THAT MONEY IS INTEGRAL TO THE COMPLEX FABRIC OF SOCIAL LIFE. THE RUDOLF STEINER FOUNDATION IS DEEPLY COMMITTED TO ITS ADVISORY WORK BECAUSE IT ADDRESSES THIS COMPLEXITY.

Fulfilling the special task that emerged seventeen years ago, RSF has made the majority of its loans to Waldorf schools. However, RSF has begun working with more diverse projects while continuing to seek a high degree of commitment and community involvement to ensure a project's long-term success. This commitment manifests in many forms—in financial gifts, pledges and guaranties, in a sustained ability to make good organizational decisions, and in an openness and honesty that make for a sincere working relationship. Neither the investments that make the projects possible nor the loans made are ever simply business transactions. Through the loan process, RSF remains in partnership with the projects to help assure their financial success as organizations with a larger social purpose.

One of RSF's tenets is that there is no such thing as a purely financial problem. Behind this statement is the reality that financial conditions are never isolated from a social context. RSF's gateway into the life of an organization is through its finances. Each individual and organization has a biography, a becoming, and a destiny. When RSF staff works with clients, they consciously and lovingly try to enter that biography as the basis of providing financial and philanthropic services.

In its philanthropic work, RSF's goal is that donors become ever more connected to their giving through a deep understanding of their own values and destiny, and of how these may be reflected in and served by the projects they choose to support. From one perspective, when gift money

changes hands—from the donor to RSF, from RSF to the grant recipient—it is actually transformed and gains in value because the money is sacrificed for the benefit of bringing new impulses and ideas into social life. From another perspective—that of the relationship between donor and recipient—money flows along the paths of destiny and, having done so, traces this shared path from its history toward the future. A gift, given freely, touches and flows from a donor's deepest intentions.

The RSF's long-term view of philanthropy is that it is an essential but unrecognized element in the world's economy. After all, some of the ideas funded will not only better the overall quality of public life, but may also be developed and applied in the economy to produce new surplus revenues which can, in turn, become gift money.

One of the things RSF has found over the years working with Waldorf schools is that parents are drawn to the education because of its respect for the inner life or spiritual aspect of each child's development. Parents experience this in many different forms—the curriculum, the importance of and approach to the arts, the care for quality of environment, and the devotion of the teachers and staff to the children. When parents choose to enroll a child in a Waldorf school, they have more or less consciously identified and embraced a set of educational and life values. They also become co-creators of that community along with the teachers, staff, board of trustees, and, of course, the children. Often, the degree to which this is a perceived reality directly relates to the amount of gift money that flows to the school.

This view is also true for RSF's investors. RSF depends on their trust, expressed in investments, to be able to meet its borrowers' needs. And yet, each investor has a story to tell of how they came to make their investment in RSF. Interestingly enough, just as parents say that it is the spiritual aspect of Waldorf Education that touches them, RSF's investors also articulate a perspective that transcends materialism. Investors recognize that RSF is working with money in a new way that focuses on values and community rather than solely on financial return.

An investment in RSF is never depersonalized or disconnected from the investor's interests. RSF lets investors know from the outset and on a continuing basis which borrowing projects need funding. When they establish an investment fund, they can indicate the projects in which they would like their money working. Then, unless the investor wants to remain anonymous, RSF will let the borrower know who they are so that the project can keep the investor informed of their activities. In other words, investment in borrowing projects is rewarded with interest,

both of the monetary and human kinds—financial and social returns go hand in hand.

The RSF also provides a range of philanthropic services that allow donors to follow their passions and interests in the world with their generosity. RSF manages grant processes and handles the administration of grant programs. A donor advised fund can be easily initiated with a gift to RSF and some simple paperwork. Often donors like to name the fund they establish according to some personal inspiration, but they can also simply use their own name. Once the fund is established, the donor sends recommendations for grants. Guided by its broad mission to support work compatible with Rudolf Steiner's ideas and ideals, RSF gives grants to Waldorf schools and colleges across the country, arts and art organizations, farms, therapeutic work and communities, environmental activists, medical and scientific research, and civil society education. Through their interests and generosity, donor-advisors connect RSF to an increasingly diverse range of initiatives and organizations around the world.

The RSF's largest grant program at present is the Shared Gifting Group of the Mid-States. The program's mission is to foster the development of Anthroposophy in the central region of the United States. For a portion of the program, RSF receives grant proposals, which are reviewed by the program's advisors. However, at the heart of the program is the "shared gifting" process. A lump grant is made to the mid-states Waldorf Schools Fund Sharing Group, a subgroup within the program. Prior to the group's annual meeting, each of the participating schools prepares and shares its grant proposal with all the other member schools. At the meeting, each school's representative presents their needs. Through conversation, the group decides the amount each school will receive. The uniqueness and beauty of this process is that each school representative is not only a grant recipient, but acts as a donor as well.

The social and financial collaboration that has emerged among the participating schools is inspiring. They are able to carry a living picture of each other as associates rather than as competitors, as often happens between charitable organizations in a region. The Shared Gifting Group now sponsors a second Fund Sharing Group for the anthroposophical Adult Education Programs, and hopes that endowed shared gifting groups will develop to serve other regions of the country.

In addition to its donor services, RSF provides grant management and fiscal sponsorship services for organizations, initiative groups, and individuals. For example, RSF can, after a qualification and agreement process, receive charitable

contributions for a group that wants to do something for the benefit of the public, and has the capacity to raise funds for its work. Often an initiative is not yet ready or prefers not to incorporate itself as a charitable not-for-profit. RSF serves as incubator or grant fund holder for nearly ninety such projects across the United States and around the world. RSF staff provides a significant amount of advisory support for these initiatives, and gains insight into the much-needed positive work carried on by these true social entrepreneurs—whether it is a homeless shelter in San Francisco or a Waldorf school for orphaned children in Nepal.

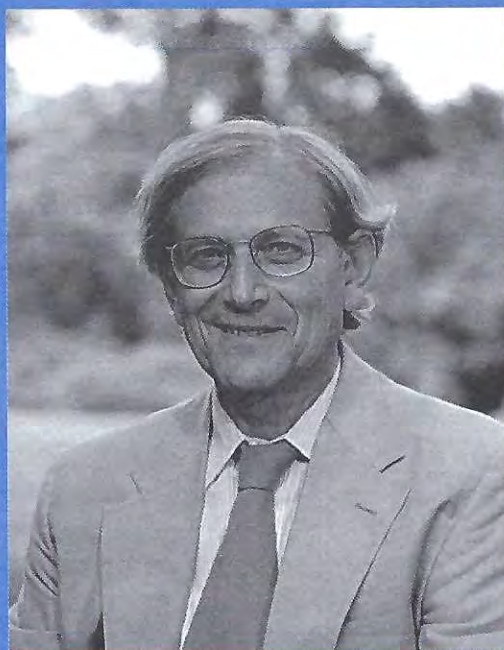
As a unique public charitable foundation, RSF cares deeply about serving its clients out of the recognition that money and karma are integrally related. RSF has developed its investment, donor, grant, and loan programs over the last seventeen years, understanding the importance of this deeper level of values. Its programs serve a binary purpose—for clients to align their life goals and deeply held values with their use of money, and for individuals and organizations to further their work toward self-development and the renewal of social life.

The notion of an ecology of money recognizes that money is integral to the complex fabric of social life. RSF is deeply committed to its advisory work because it addresses this complexity. Further, the relationships built through advisory work stand behind the success of its loans and the continuing involvement and interest of its donors. Service to clients, not just transactional service, but the service of accompaniment is what motivates and inspires RSF's work. As a public foundation it depends, in business fashion, upon the fees it earns from programs and services and on additional gifts to support its advisory work and the development of new programs. Unlike private foundations, RSF has no endowment to generate unrestricted funds. RSF's task is to bring spirit into the way the world works with money by making visible and palpable its capacity to foster collaboration and social benefit.

JOHN BLOOM is the Gifts and Grants Officer at the Rudolf Steiner Foundation. Formerly, he served for eight years as administrator for the San Francisco Waldorf School. John was a founding parent at that school, has served on its board for twenty-one years, and helped found the San Francisco Waldorf High School in 1997. He currently serves as president of the board of trustees of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, as treasurer of the Art of Education Fund, and as treasurer of the Yggdrasil Land Foundation. He is an artist and author, has published a book—*Photography at Bay: Interviews, Essays, and Reviews*—and has written extensively on aspects of Waldorf Education, philanthropy, and values-based approaches to organizational development.

The Rudolf Steiner Foundation can be contacted by phone at (415) 561-3900 and by e-mail at mail@rsfoundation.org. Information about RSF programs is available online at www.rsfoundation.org. The RSF Quarterly is available upon request.

In Memoriam - Stephen Edelglass, Ph.D.



December 28, 1935 - November 17, 2000

When Stephen Edelglass died last year, the Waldorf movement lost a dedicated and influential science teacher. Stephen's work was not limited to Waldorf Education. He was deeply and passionately committed to championing a phenomenologically based approach to science that even the mainstream scientific community could endorse.

Stephen was born in Brooklyn, New York, the only son of Russian Jewish parents. Stephen was an active, multitasking youth, who entered M.I.T. at age sixteen. He studied physics and mechanical engineering and later taught at the college level.

Stephen is perhaps the only person ever to be introduced to Anthroposophy by a cow. One day a cow wandered onto property Stephen had acquired in the Adirondacks. He returned the animal to his neighbors, who happened to be Waldorf teachers. Through that encounter, Stephen and his first wife Susan discovered the Green Meadow Waldorf School and enrolled their children there. Within two years of entering a study group on Anthroposophy, Stephen joined the faculty of the high school.

Stephen taught at Green Meadow for more than twenty-five years. In faculty meetings, he could be a challenging colleague, working to make his fellow teachers more conscious of the impact of decisions and of the process required to reach prudent decisions.

In the classroom, he was a demanding teacher, who questioned students' assumptions about such fundamental phenomena as heat and light. The underlying question in much of his teaching was: How do you know what you know? Stephen also believed in the integration of artistic and scientific perspectives to enrich our experience of the world. He developed a course that explored the principles of visual experience and applied them to the study of modern art.

Stephen cultivated contacts with other scientists both inside and outside of anthroposophical circles. He coauthored a book with Hans Gebert and John Davy called *The Marriage of Sense and Thought: Imaginative Participation in Science*, and another with Michael D'Aleo called *Sensible Physics Teaching*. Stephen was also active politically, promoting various environmental issues.

In 1988 Stephen married Hanna Förster who shared his love of teaching, horses, and travel. Shortly before his death Stephen confided to a friend, "There are two things that I've done in my life that make me feel I've lived a full life. One is that I have learned to truly love, and the other that I feel that I have made a contribution to the world."

Stephen's words at the end of *The Marriage of Sense and Thought* remind us of the illuminating quality of his thinking and the depth of his convictions:

Detachment from phenomena ... has given us our sense of individuality and freedom. ... Surely we do not want to give up such fruits of science, but just as surely, its price, alienation from the phenomenological world and meaninglessness of life, is unacceptable. Only a science that can conceive of a wholeness, in which each part is an expression of the unity of the whole, is able to solve the increasingly difficult problems that face humanity. ... We must not lose the freedom and sense of individuality acquired by reductionistic science, but they must be supplemented by the capabilities generated through the holistic approach. Working together, both are required of the human being if he is to be free, and out of this freedom to bring love to the world.

DAVID SLOAN teaches in the high school of Green Meadow Waldorf School and was a colleague of Stephen Edelglass for over twenty years.

BOOKS

in Brief

GOETHE AND THE POWER OF RHYTHM: A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

BY JOHN BARNES

Adonis Press (Harlemville, N.Y.), 1999

92 pages \$10.00

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) is one of the giants of modern Western culture. A noted lyrical poet, novelist, and dramatist (his two-part dramatic poem *Faust* is a classic in world literature), Goethe was also a student and researcher of nature. He developed a phenomenological approach to scientific investigation and applied it to the study of light and color; of plants, and of the animal kingdom. Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education, was deeply influenced by Goethe. He made Goethe's scientific method part of the curriculum of the first Waldorf school, and the study of *Faust* is an important part of the twelfth-grade Waldorf curriculum.

In this essay on Goethe's life, John Barnes points out a rhythm in Goethe's life, a pattern in which periods of crisis are followed by periods of great creativity and productivity. There was a crisis even when Goethe came into the world. He was believed dead at birth and only survived because of the persistent exertions of the midwife. Thereafter, there were several "deaths," each followed by a new "puberty" characterized by an outpouring of creative genius.

When Goethe was, for example, an unhappy and bored law student in Leipzig, he suffered a hemorrhaged lung. Withdrawing from the university, he entered into a period of inspired literary output. Later, while serving as a high government official, Goethe felt stifled and overwhelmed by his duties and fled incognito to Italy. There he experienced a fundamental renewal of spirit. Goethe's greatest contributions to the study of nature—his color theory and his founding of a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to science—followed upon the death of his close friend Friedrich Schiller and another serious illness of his own.

John Barnes's engaging little book suggests that the time has come to recognize and appreciate the full implications of Goethe's work and to embrace the innovations in thought that he gave as antidotes to the destructive forces in our age. Also, in presenting Goethe as a person who overcame many difficulties and endured many serious crises to be creative and productive throughout a long life, the book presents an inspiring example for our own striving. Also, it sheds light on the mysterious and wonderful laws affecting human creativity.

(Based on a longer review written by ERIC G. MULLER, a teacher at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York.)

OUT OF ANTHROPOSOPHY

THE MAGIC LINE BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY: AN ASTRONOMICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE HORIZON IN ITS RELATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT

BY NORMAN DAVIDSON

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Anthroposophy can be defined as a path from the spiritual in the individual to the spiritual in the universe. Since, according to the anthroposophic worldview, the phenomena of nature are a manifestation of spirit, the careful and empathetic observation of nature can be an important part of this spiritual path. Here, Norman Davidson provides an excellent example of this type of observation, which includes a concern for accuracy and detail, a deep aesthetic appreciation of the phenomena, and a sense of wonder.

The piece also relates to Waldorf Education, since the study of science in Waldorf schools begins with a phenomenological, sense-based approach. Students are asked to and trained to carefully observe the phenomena of nature, using the physical senses—sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. The formulation of concepts, the search for cause and effect and for scientific laws, happens only after the phenomena have been allowed to speak for themselves. Norman Davidson helps us observe the horizon in the way a Waldorf class teacher might very well do with a class. The result can be a deep experience of nature as perceived by the senses as well as an intimation of the invisible realities that lie behind it.

Please note that the words Sun, Moon, and Earth are capitalized in this article. This is consistent with astronomical convention, which sees these as belonging to the family of celestial bodies, the names of whose other members—Mercury, Venus, et al.—are always capitalized. It is also consistent with the anthroposophical understanding of Sun, Earth, and Moon (and also of the other planets and the stars) not merely as physical, mineral phenomena, but as living beings.

R.E.K.



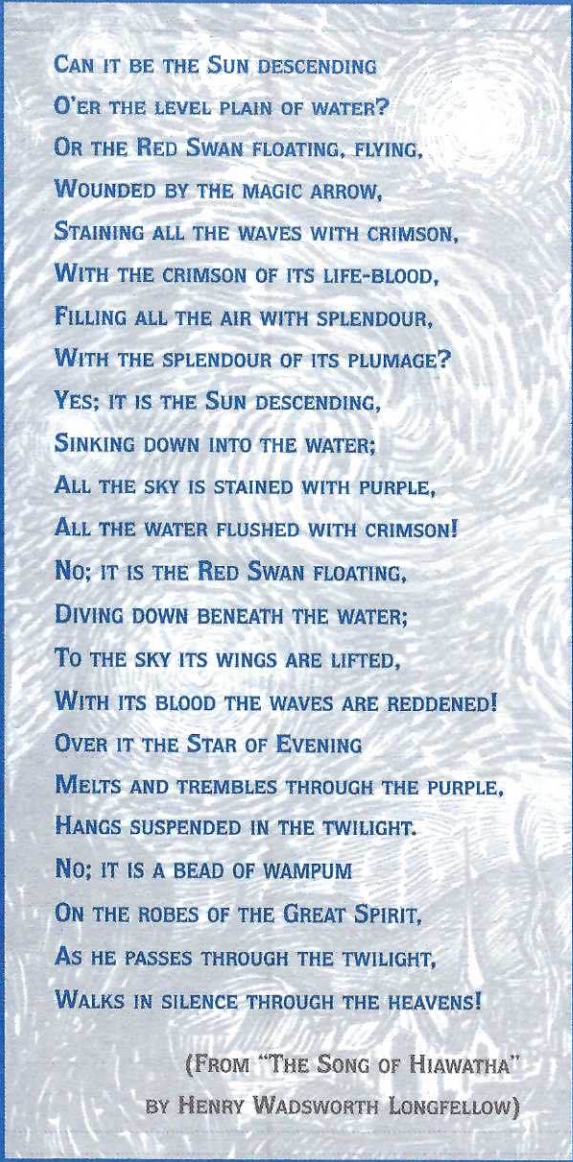
As I write, the planet Venus hovers in the early evening sky above the western horizon, blushing pale red from the colors of the sunset below. She has entered shyly and dimly into the evening sky over the past weeks, but in the months to come she will lose her reserve and plunge back into the sunset, like some sacrificial flame, blazing forth brighter than any other planet or star in the heavens.

Throughout this drama, Longfellow's lines (see verse at right) whisper their question in the background, as one stands in awe of both Sun and Venus in the deepening twilight. Longfellow's question raises the issue as to whether the activities of the setting Sun and of Venus take place in one world or two. The horizon conjures up two realities—a perceivable twilight event of color and movement and a realm of imagination where light meets darkness and where the North American Indian "spirits of the planets" still walk.

Externally, the drama takes place at, and because of, the horizon. Due partly to this, probably few people besides amateur astronomers will observe the lower reaches of the sky at day's end and experience something of the months-long dance between the Sun, Venus, and the horizon. Few will experience a striking event that is a part of the living environment involving both nature and the human soul. It takes little effort to see, for example, the full Moon or the zodiacal constellations pass high overhead on a winter night. But it is easy to overlook our horizon. We study the Earth as our environment; we study the sky and what it contains. But the dividing line between the two is alive with special activities of its own, many of which can go unnoticed.

In today's Sun-centered, Copernican astronomy, there is no earthly horizon. Earth is seen from outer space, where we don't live—at least not for very long, even in our

spacecraft. Earth becomes a spinning ball, and we have no orientation to what is above, below, and in the middle. One could say that the experience of the apparently stationary Earth beneath our feet, the rising of the Sun, and the horizon encircling us, is an illusion. This morning's illusion was beautiful, a work of art: pale orange and red between dark trees and Earth, and a transparent blue sky.



CAN IT BE THE SUN DESCENDING
O'ER THE LEVEL PLAIN OF WATER?
OR THE RED SWAN FLOATING, FLYING,
WOUNDED BY THE MAGIC ARROW,
STAINING ALL THE WAVES WITH CRIMSON,
WITH THE CRIMSON OF ITS LIFE-BLOOD,
FILLING ALL THE AIR WITH SPLENDOUR,
WITH THE SPLENDOUR OF ITS PLUMAGE?
YES; IT IS THE SUN DESCENDING,
SINKING DOWN INTO THE WATER;
ALL THE SKY IS STAINED WITH PURPLE,
ALL THE WATER FLUSHED WITH CRIMSON!
NO; IT IS THE RED SWAN FLOATING,
DIVING DOWN BENEATH THE WATER;
TO THE SKY ITS WINGS ARE LIFTED,
WITH ITS BLOOD THE WAVES ARE REDDENED!
OVER IT THE STAR OF EVENING
MELTS AND TREMBLES THROUGH THE PURPLE,
HANGS SUSPENDED IN THE TWILIGHT.
NO; IT IS A BEAD OF WAMPUM
ON THE ROBES OF THE GREAT SPIRIT,
AS HE PASSES THROUGH THE TWILIGHT,
WALKS IN SILENCE THROUGH THE HEAVENS!

(FROM "THE SONG OF HIAWATHA"
BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW)

On July 11, 1991, I had a wonderful illusion in Mexico when the Moon's shadow, near the middle of which I was standing, created a band of crushed orange and furnace reds at the horizon around me. The shadow cone of the Moon was veiling the otherwise sunlit Earth in a circle, whose circumference was some miles away from where I stood, and was there diminishing the light into color. Above was darkness, dark enough for stars and planets to shine in the noonday Mexican sky! This was an unforgettable total eclipse of the Sun, and the horizon could be said to have been the best part of it.

The sunrise and sunset colors on our horizons are a blessing, like artistic creations by some invisible painter in the sky. They take place between the realms of darkness and light, between below and above, and no two events are the same. Also, nature is special at these times. Not only do Longfellow's "robes of the Great Spirit" become visible in the twilight, but from the darkening Earth rises the sound of birdsong.

Have you ever thought, as you gaze at the sunset, that a circle of sunrise and sunset color extends around Earth at that moment, within the glow of which you stand? This must be so, for Earth is lit only from one side at any particular time. Seen from space, this circle of color moves around Earth—or, Earth rotates within it—once in twenty-four hours. So, in twenty-four hours a circle of color and birdsong sweeps around Earth. Even the rather abstract Copernican system, experiencing Earth from afar, must bow before this phenomenon. Earth is a living being and this is part of its soul.

I mentioned the sun-eclipse "sunset" at noon in Mexico. But now imagine the opposite situation—an eclipse of the Moon. This is when the Moon, not the Sun, is darkened in the sky. The Moon, from time to time, follows a path that takes it through Earth's shadow at night. When this happens, the Moon usually turns a reddish color—sometimes a deep red, sometimes lighter. Now picture yourself standing on the Moon when it is covered by Earth's shadow, and looking toward Earth. The Sun would be behind Earth, and you would see the dark Earth surrounded by its colored sunrise/sunset ring shining in Earth's atmosphere.

Earth's shadow is colored by this wonderful ring, and that is why the Moon takes on color when it is eclipsed by the shadow. The degree of coloration depends upon atmospheric conditions on Earth, and the Moon has even been known to disappear completely in a shadow further darkened by, for example, volcanic activity.

Total eclipses of the Moon that are relatively favorable for viewing from the Americas will take place on the nights of May 15 and November 8, 2003, and October 27, 2004. An eclipse of the Sun, the Moon's shadow crossing Central America, takes place on December 14, 2001.

The phenomena of the horizon relate to all the astronomical situations we have discussed. We can ask the question: Seen from Earth, what is the horizon? The closer we study the question, the more the answer becomes: The horizon is a paradox. Taking a simple example, we can inquire: Is the

horizon straight or curved? Looking out to sea in one direction, we see half of the complete horizon because, with peripheral vision, the human being can actually see a span of 180 degrees and more. We may imagine the distant line of the sea to be curved downward to left and right. But if we take a straightedge, such as a yardstick, and place it close to our eye so that it extends to the left and right, we find that it coincides with the horizon. The semicircular horizon is entirely straight! When we turn around, it becomes a circle as we turn, but when looked at from any single direction it is straight.

In order to see a downward curve of the horizon we have to ascend to a height of about 14 miles above sea level, as was done for the first time in 1935 in a U.S. Army balloon. A member of the National Geographic Society on board photographed the slightly curved edge of Earth as it appeared 330 miles away above the Black Hills of South Dakota.

The horizon is a mysterious place. It is a threshold where two worlds meet. The more one studies it both scientifically and imaginatively, the more one can feel as if something there is asking a question, like the Sphinx of old. And this question often confounds the scientist, because the answer lies within the human being and the realm of sense perception.

One such question arises when the Moon appears close to the horizon. The Sphinx might be heard to ask: Why does the Moon now appear larger at the horizon than when it is higher up in the sky later tonight? This question goes back at least to Aristotle and is still being discussed and disputed by scientists after over 2000 years of investigation.

An authoritative book on the subject, called *The Moon Illusion* and published as recently as 1989, states that from about 1900 to 1960 a broad scientific "attack" on the subject was made, but no generally accepted explanation of the illusion was found. The book adds: "The position has not changed much since."

Yet there the big Moon stands before us at the horizon, and science and psychology stumble before it. Popularly, many people think that the horizon Moon looks larger because the eye compares it with distant objects like houses or trees. But one has only to go to the seashore when the sea horizon has no objects on it, and the Moon is as large as ever. Some also think that the atmosphere between us and the Moon somehow refracts the light and makes the image of it actually larger. But direct measurement and photography show that the Moon at the horizon is exactly the same size as the Moon overhead.

This aspect of the horizon is not confined to the Moon. The Sun appears larger at the horizon than high above, as also do constellations of stars. The Big Dipper, for example, stretches hugely across the northern horizon when low above it, but seems to be a very modest constellation after it has swung overhead round the pole.

Skywatchers everywhere see the mysterious "horizon effect" enlarge the phenomena of the sky, and seek an answer. One aspect is that when we look toward a distant horizon we see in three dimensions, in perspective, across the surface of Earth. But the eyes focus differently when

they contemplate a two-dimensional, single-plane surface like the sphere of the sky. When looking at the horizon, two eyes see in three dimensions, but one eye does not. Also, if one shuts one eye or looks through a tube while looking at the large Moon on the horizon, it appears smaller:

At the horizon two worlds come together—the finite and the infinite. The horizon seems to be a finite distance away in three-dimensional space, with lines of sight converging toward it in perspective. But beyond it, there is the two-dimensional backdrop of a plane of stars virtually at infinity. The stars are so far away that they keep their relation to each other fixed and, for the astronomer's instruments, make parallel tracks across the sky. There does not seem to be any experience of perspective when we look directly at the open sky without a horizon. It then appears that the Moon overhead is seen two-dimensionally, without the perspective arising out of a horizon effect.

In this situation, the horizon becomes the magic line between two realities. It is where two worlds come together in human inner experience. Any true explanation of this phenomenon of nature, the "horizon-effect" of enlargement, must include the human being. And the horizon Sphinx still sits there today, listening for the next theory.

What else does this line between above and below do to our experience of nature? One thing is that it makes sure we always have more light than darkness in our yearly experience, wherever we live on Earth. Astronomers call



the reason for this, "atmospheric refraction." When the Sun is technically just below the horizon, it is refracted so that it appears to be just above it. Thus, the Sun rises visibly before it does so "technically," and visibly sets later than its technical setting.

This is also one of the factors why day and night are not closest to equal in length on the days of the spring and fall equinoxes. Technically they should be virtually equal all over the world on those days, but a glance at the *Old Farmer's Almanac* will show that the times when they are nearest to equal are about three days before the spring equinox and about three days after the fall equinox.

Another important experience in the relation between Earth and sky is that a change in one's location on Earth, to the north or south, produces a different character of horizon. For example, on traveling to the north of Canada one finds that risings and settings of Sun, Moon, and stars take longer than if one is in, for example, the southern United States.

In the far north the celestial objects skim the horizon, while closer to the equator they thrust themselves above and below it at steeper angles. On going to the North Pole itself, we encounter an astronomical environment where the stars never rise or set but continually circle round, parallel to the horizon.

Having arrived in imagination at the North Pole, we can look at how the horizon there recently allowed scientists to determine whether the American explorer Robert E. Peary was in fact the first person to reach the Pole. His claim to have reached it on April 6, 1909, has always been a matter of controversy. Commissioned by *National Geographic*, a Navigation Foundation investigation into the claim used geometrical analysis of shadows and the horizon line in photographs that Peary's expedition took on the day it claimed to have reached the pole.

The shadows cast by expedition members on the snow, plus the geometrical line of the horizon behind them, were vital in calculating the height of the Sun above the horizon that day, thereby in determining the exact latitudinal position of the party. In 1990 *National Geographic* published the result that "the pictures were taken in the very close vicinity of the Pole" and that the photographs, plus other evidence, placed Peary at the North Pole "within the limits of his instruments."

The horizon is indeed a strange threshold. It is a practical and indispensable orientation in space and time, as shown by the shadow analysis of Peary's photographs. Celestial objects rising and setting in relation to it are at the basis of our experience of time. The horizon changes the

appearance of things in color and size. We see it all around us, yet it doesn't exist physically, because if we go there we find nothing at all. And we take it with us, whatever its changing appearance, wherever we go.



The moon passing in front of the sun turns day briefly into night.

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NORMAN DAVIDSON's *earliest horizon ran along the foothills and sea estuary near Edinburgh, Scotland, where he was born in 1933. Eventually he widened it to the Thames estuary and landscapes in England, where he was a journalist for ten years. Later he took a Waldorf teacher training course at Emerson College and then taught in Waldorf schools in England for sixteen years. When he emigrated to the United States in 1986, his horizon crossed the Atlantic and settled within the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and the Hudson River. There he served as director of teacher training at Sunbridge College, Spring Valley, New York, until 1998. He now teaches at Sunbridge, writes and lectures, and is the author of Sky Phenomena: A Guide to Naked-eye Observation of the Stars (Lindisfarne Press, Hudson, N.Y.).*

PARENTING AND MEETING OUR "SHADOW"

continued from page 22

shadow or "dark side," and teenagers show us both our shadow as parents and the shadow of our culture. In other words, the characteristics that we as parents refuse to acknowledge in ourselves and in our society often manifest in our children. If we were not allowed to show anger in our childhood, then often our children demonstrate lots of anger and ignite our own. If we were taught to be afraid of anger in our childhood, then our child can control us with outbursts of anger when he or she wants something. Our

relationship to our children, just as our other intimate relationships with family members and friends, continually reveals our shadow, and therefore provides us with an opportunity to transform and heal our soul.

SUSAN R. JOHNSON is a pediatrician, a graduate of a Waldorf teacher training program, and the mother of a child in the first grade at the Sacramento Waldorf School. Susan regularly writes articles to provide parents with practical advice about child rearing, children's health, and parental health.

SOCIAL FORUM, SUMMER 2001

Can an individual help change the world for the better? This is a question that confronts every human being. The answer a person gives to this question deeply affects his or her attitude toward the world as well as his or her life path. For young people this is an especially crucial issue.

In the summer of 2002, an international social forum, sponsored by the Social Science Section of the Anthroposophical Society, is planned to take place in Dornach, Switzerland. It will bring together, from all over the world, people who are working in the areas of social service and social action and who are doing so out of an anthroposophical impulse.

This summer a similar conference, addressing the particular needs of North America, will be held in Los Angeles, California. The conference is for people of all ages, but the organizers hope that many young persons

(eighteen and over) will take part. They hope also to have participants from various social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. The conference will take place at California State University at Northridge from July 11 to July 15, 2001.

Each of the conference presenters is a person with long experience in an area of social challenge. They include (among others):

NICANOR PERLAS of the Philippines, concerned with the impact of economic globalization on the cultural life of nations, local communities, and individuals;

ORLAND BROWN, who does rehabilitative work with members of youth gangs in Los Angeles;

CATHERINE SNEED, who has introduced biodynamic gardening to prisoners in a San Francisco jail;

TRUUS GERAETS, who worked for years bringing Waldorf Education to black

townships in South Africa;

JOANNA LENNON, active in nature conservation in the East Bay area; and AQEELA SHERRILLS, who works with youth who are at risk of becoming involved in drugs and/or crime.

These persons will present their work and be available for group and individual conversations with conferees.

The forum invites financial support so that all persons who wish to attend can do so regardless of financial means.

For more information and for application materials, contact:

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KNOWLEDGE, TEACHING AND THE DEATH OF THE MYSTERIOUS

BY DENNIS KLOCEK

Rudolf Steiner College Press
(Fair Oaks, Calif.), Spring 2001
133 pages \$18.00

Dennis
Klocek



*The finest thing we can
experience is the mysterious.*
—Albert Einstein

*Knowledge, Teaching
and the Death of
the Mysterious*

REVIEWED BY ANDREW SULLIVAN

Dennis Klocek's new book is based on transcripts of a series of lectures he gave at the Western Waldorf Teachers' Conference in February 2000. The oral style has been maintained in the written version; the text is rich with colloquial comments ascribed to beings of the spiritual hierarchies, to spiritual seekers, and as well to the internal organs of the human body. Because the lectures were given to Waldorf teachers, an intermediate level of familiarity with Anthroposophy is necessary to fully appreciate Klocek's points.

The first of the six lectures, entitled "Introduction to Child Development," presents the central explanatory picture of the lecture cycle: a center and periphery in communication with each other. Klocek starts at the primordial Old Saturn stage of planetary evolution—using as a source Rudolf Steiner's *An Outline of Esoteric Science*. He employs his picture to explain an aspect of the relationships between the three grades of spiritual beings who comprise the second or middle spiritual hierarchy. At the center are the Thrones, who possess self-awareness. At the periphery are the Kyriotes, who lack self-consciousness and are aware only of the Thrones. The Dynamis are the messengers in between, aware of both states of being.

This picture is then applied as an analogue to explain the fundamental dynamic stages of embryology, commencing with the ovum (Thrones) and cells of the ovary (Kyriotes) in dialogue (Dynamis). Klocek then uses this picture to describe many other diverse phenomena, including human consciousness—that is, the knower as intermediary between percept and

concept; the development of the internal organs of the embryo according to the laws of a convection cell—the same laws that govern the formation of clouds in the earth's atmosphere; and the law of minimal surfaces in cell growth and division—an etheric law.

In the remaining chapters Kloeck explains the requirements for healthy education in each of the seven-year cycles of human development in which body, soul, and spirit develop in the period between birth and adulthood. Throughout, he refers both to Gray's *Anatomy* and to the works of Rudolf Steiner, intertwining them with analogy upon analogy.

In the first seven-year cycle, which includes the kindergarten year, the teacher or parent must manage the images that the child consumes. These must be naturally rhythmic and wholesome, because it is through sensations, cosmic and earthly, that the internal organs—liver, lungs, kidneys, and heart—develop.

From seven to fourteen, the time of middle school, the teacher's primary task is to take facts—data—and turn them into lawful pictures. Kloeck explains what lawful pictures are and how to "see" them. They are holistic and dynamic, forming relationships beyond themselves. For this reason they nourish the middle school child, who longs for balance "between fact and process."

For the high school teacher dealing with the young person of the third seven-year cycle, developing through meditation a sense for truth is paramount. This means that the teacher can "be there with the facts, but meet them [the students] as a soul" (p. 37).

It is in the realm of adult education—dealt with in the final two chapters—where, according to Kloeck, the next real

transformation in anthroposophical work will occur; and not solely in the area of teacher education. He opines:

While I understand the need for the continuing pedagogical education for teachers, it is my perception that if more teachers need to come to Waldorf Education, they are going to come through the door of Anthroposophy, not curriculum study (p. 79).

He argues that few people are willing to make the sacrifices Waldorf teachers necessarily make. However, if individuals come to Anthroposophy for its own sake and begin cultivating the inner life and developing moral forces in the soul, they will have more capacities to be successful on the path of the Waldorf teacher, and thus will avoid the familiar Waldorf burnout.

The most important word in the book's title is the word *mysterious*. Kloeck points out that when one's cultivation of the inner life—through exercises in exact imagination—begins to turn the soul, one experiences a rebirth of all that before seemed inert and commonplace. All phenomena begin to take on a larger and larger context, reaching into spheres outside the experience of the seeker. "The bringing of new life into the corpus once again is the higher level of the great work" (p. 108). This experience of a new vivacity in phenomena is not arbitrary or fantastic, but lawful and accurate. It allows one to begin the enormous and painful task of transforming doubt in thinking, blame in feeling, and fear in willing. The first step is to see the Pandora's box of the soul as a reversible cube.

ANDREW SULLIVAN is a graduate of the Sacramento Waldorf School; of Notre Dame University, where he majored in English; and of the program in Goethean Studies at Rudolf Steiner College, a program headed by Dennis Kloeck. Andrew is a poet and is currently earning an M.A. in English at California State University at Sacramento. He concurrently teaches English and creative writing at Rudolf Steiner College, in Fair Oaks, California.

IN THE FIRST SEVEN-YEAR CYCLE, WHICH INCLUDES THE KINDERGARTEN YEAR, THE TEACHER OR PARENT MUST MANAGE THE IMAGES THAT THE CHILD CONSUMES. THESE MUST BE NATURALLY RHYTHMIC AND WHOLESOME, BECAUSE IT IS THROUGH SENSATIONS, COSMIC AND EARTHLY, THAT THE INTERNAL ORGANS—LIVER, LUNGS, KIDNEYS, AND HEART—DEVELOP.

EX OPERIBUS RUDOLF STEINER

Rudolf Steiner understood the celestial bodies—the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars—to be not only physical, material phenomena, but also to be manifestations of cosmic spiritual beings. These beings are intimately related to the past history of humanity, its present condition, and its evolution in the future. Steiner referred many times in lectures and writings to the celestial bodies and to their importance for humanity.



Please realize that in reality every star that we see glittering in the heavens is a gate of entry for the astral [i.e., the spiritual beings of the heavenly hierarchies]. Thus wherever the stars are twinkling and glittering in towards us, there the astral is also shining in. Look at the starry heavens in their manifold variety. In one place the stars are clustered together, in another are scattered far apart. Then you must say to yourself: In this wonderful configuration of radiant light, the invisible, supersensible astral body of the cosmos makes itself visible. Thus in the starry heavens we perceive a manifestation of the soul life of the cosmic astral world. . . . The stars are an expression of the love with which the astral cosmos works upon the etheric cosmos. This is the perfectly correct way to express it.

WHITSUNTIDE LECTURE, JUNE 4, 1924

Human beings calculate, calculate, calculate. It is just as if a spider spins her web and then imagines that it is spun throughout the whole world. The reason is that these laws, according to which human beings calculate here, are not valid out there [in the cosmos]. At most, one can make use of the moral element that is in us to acquire a sense of what exists out there. Out there in the starry heavens we meet moral realities, and sometimes also the unmoral, the ahimanic, the luciferic, and so on. But if I take the moral as a generic concept, the cosmos is an expression of moral, not of physical nature.

LECTURE, JULY 28, 1923

If we take what is experienced beyond all space and time, between death and a new birth, and translate this into a spatial image, we can say: Every human being has his star, which determines what he works on between death and a new birth, and he comes from the particular direction of a particular star.

. . . We cannot speak of the midnight hour of existence [the moment when the human soul begins a new process of incarnation] between death and a new birth, without thinking of some star where the human being dwells between death and a new life—although we must always bear in mind what I have said about the beings of the stars.

LECTURE CITED, WITHOUT REFERENCE, BY ELISABETH VREEDE
IN HER "ASTRONOMICAL LETTERS," DECEMBER 1929

If a person's physical brain were extracted and its construction clairvoyantly examined, so that it might be seen how certain parts are situated in certain places and send out appendages, it would be found that the brain of each individual is different. No two have brains that are identical. Then let us imagine further that this brain could be photographed in its complete structure so that one would have a kind of half sphere in which every detail is visible. This would make a different picture in the case of each person. And if one were to photograph a person's brain at the moment of birth and then photograph the heavens exactly over the person's birthplace, this latter picture would have the same appearance as that of the human brain.

LECTURE CYCLE, *THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF HUMANITY*, GIVEN IN JUNE 1911, CITED BY E. VREEDE IN HER "ASTRONOMICAL LETTERS," APRIL 1929