

Renewal

SPRING/SUMMER 2007 - VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1

Gender, Destiny, and Education
Adolescents and Art
Science in the Sixth Grade



A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

EDITOR

RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD
e-mail: rkoetzsch@awsna.org

GRAPHIC DESIGNER & PRODUCTION MANAGER

HALLIE JEAN WOOTAN

ARTISTIC CONSULTANT

ANNE RIEGEL-KOETZSCH

CIRCULATION & ADVERTISING MANAGER

HALLIE JEAN WOOTAN
e-mail: hwootan@awsna.org

COPY EDITOR & PROOFREADER

ANNE RIEGEL-KOETZSCH

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

CHARLES H. BLATCHFORD, PhD

STAFF WRITER

THOMAS POPLAWSKI

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT
PATRICIA LIVINGSTON
SHYLA NELSON
JOHN WULSIN

MANAGEMENT GROUP

PATRICIA LIVINGSTON
PATRICE MAYNARD
DAVID MITCHELL

Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education is published twice a year by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA).

Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of AWSNA.

AWSNA does not endorse the products and services that appear in the advertising section of *Renewal*.

Each author holds the copyright to the articles he or she has written. Permission to reprint an article must be obtained directly from the author. AWSNA will provide contact information.

Subscriptions are \$13 for one year and \$26 for two years and can be purchased by contacting the AWSNA office. Foreign subscriptions are \$22.

Selected articles from past issues of *Renewal* appear on the AWSNA Web site: www.awsna.org

RENEWAL PRODUCTION & SALES
AWSNA PUBLICATIONS SALES
3911 Bannister Road · Fair Oaks, CA 95628-6805
phone: 916-961-0927 · fax: 916-961-0715
web site: www.awsna.org
e-mail: publications@awsna.org

Renewal

DEPARTMENTS

1 From the Editor

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD

Waldorf International

36

Going Where the Rocks Are: A Waldorf Sixth Grade in New Zealand Finishes its Mineralogy Block with a Camping Trip to the Mountains

BY NEIL CARTER

47

The Middle East, Peace, and Waldorf Education

BY ABRAHAM ENTIN



A Personal Journey

44

From Wall Street to Waldorf Land—Mike Bogil's Story

BY ANNE WOTRING, PhD

Books in Brief

16

Completing the Circle

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

35

Basic Sculptural Modeling

BY HELLA LOEWE

39

Math Lessons for Elementary Grades

BY DOROTHY HARRER

50

Contacts
Information
Opportunities

val

A JOURNAL FOR
WALDORF EDUCATION

SPRING/SUMMER 2007 – VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1

ARTICLES

4 Toys, Play, and Playrooms

Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Play Environment for Your Young Child

BY PEGGY ALESSANDRI WITH RONALD E. KOETZSCH

7 Sowing Seeds of Peace in the Garden of Early Childhood

BY LAURIE CLARK

10 Saying “I’m Sorry” Is Not Enough

How Children Can Learn to Face Consequences, Make Amends, and Grow into Empathy

BY VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT

12 Gender, Destiny, and Education

How Waldorf Education Seeks to Develop a Child’s Full Humanity

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

17 Painting in the Waldorf Lower Grades

BY HARALD RUDEL

22 Art, Life, and Education

BY VAN JAMES

26 Adolescents and Art

BY BRIDGET QUINN

30 Earth and Heaven

The Study of the Sciences in Grade Six

BY EUGENE SCHWARTZ

40 The Noble Forest and the Circling Eagle

Rooted Growth and Freedom in Waldorf Education

BY MICHAEL PRESTON

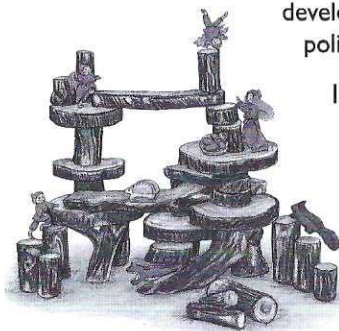
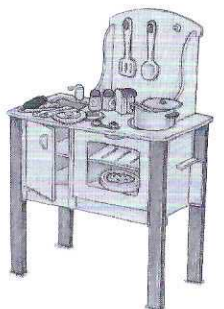


Toys, Play, and Playrooms

Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Play Environment for Your Young Child

BY PEGGY ALESSANDRI WITH RONALD KOETZSCH

Rudolf Steiner said, "Play is the work of the small child." While in today's educational world, academic work is being inserted earlier and earlier into the lives of children, educators at the same time are learning that play is essential to the healthy physical and mental development of children. [Please see the accompanying sidebar about the new policy of the American Association for Pediatrics regarding play. Ed.]



In Waldorf kindergartens and lower grade classes, much attention is devoted to creating a healthy play environment for the children. But children play also at home, and what we as parents do there can greatly help them have positive play experiences.

Young children should have a special playroom or designated area of the living room or family room that is for their use. Ideally, there should be a safe and quiet outside play area, as well.

What Kinds of Toys?

There are several main types of play materials and toys that should be in the play environment. "Toys" include not just manufactured and purchased objects but also items and materials that children use in their play. These include:

- Toys that inspire free play and creativity, including building blocks, pieces of silk and other cloth, old clothing for costumes and dress-up, beads, and also crayons, paper, clay, and beeswax
- Toys for quieter moments, such as dolls, stuffed animals, puzzles, a simple game that can be played by parent and child, storybooks to be read together
- Toys for “work.” Small children love to imitate what adults do. So child-size versions of the tools and objects you use around the house and yard are important: brooms, mops, waterbuckets, rakes, shovels, dusters, spray bottles, a toy telephone, play scissors
- Toys that encourage varied larger body movements, such as a wagon, wheelbarrow, or ride-on tractor; crates and boxes for building and for climbing on, sheets and blankets for building a house, play stands, large balls, swings, jump ropes
 - Toys for the experience of nature, such as a sandbox, a little garden, a wading pool, a pile of dirt with shovels and buckets, a wind chime, kites



When parents choose toys, quality not quantity should be their guide. A single well-made toy that will last a long time,

perhaps into another generation, is worth a host of cheap playthings. For example, one sturdy dump truck made from natural, unpainted hardwood is better than a fleet of plastic cars that will lose their wheels in a short time.

When parents go toy shopping, good questions to ask are:

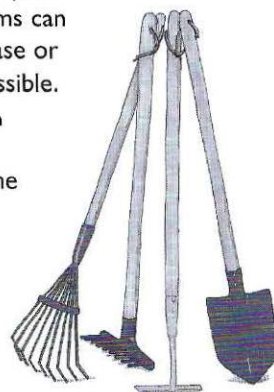
- **Is the toy beautiful?** When I look at it, what feelings and mental images rise up within me? This will give a sense of how the toy will affect the child.
- **Does the toy feel good to hold and to touch?** Here, typically, toys made from natural materials—such as wood or natural fibers—will be more satisfying than those made from plastic, particle board, and other synthetic materials.
- **How finished and detailed is this toy?** Toys that leave something to the imagination—a doll with minimal facial features or a simple block-shaped car or truck—nurture the child’s own creativity and image-forming ability.
- **Does the toy smell?** A toy with a plastic or perfumed smell should be avoided. Our modern environment overstimulates all the senses, including the sense of smell.



Maintaining Order

The playroom or play area should be clean, organized, and beautiful. Children derive—as adults do—a sense of security, peace, and well-being from a well-organized environment. Each toy should have its place to “live” when not in use. Smaller items can be arranged on shelves or in a bookcase or in drawers where they are easily accessible.

Dollies should have beds or baskets in which to sleep. Stuffed animals also should have their proper place—on the back of the sofa or in a quiet corner with their own pillows. Helping to maintain order in the playroom gives children practice in caring for and respecting things in their immediate environment. Naked dollies left strewn on the floor after play, stuffed animals crammed into a basket, or a “toy basket” full of random items do not help the child develop a sense of order and organization.



Of course, for many younger children, boxes and baskets, drawers and bags are targets for dumping, and shelves and cupboards invite emptying. But when the children are done exploring and playing, we as parents can help them put things back where they belong and restore order. The older the child, the more he can help.

Children don’t need a huge number of toys. While it is important that they have items of the various types noted above, two or three from each category may be enough. Children, like adults, can be overwhelmed by an excess of choices in a complicated environment.

Toy collections have a tendency to grow, and hence it is necessary periodically to examine and cull what a child has. If it takes more than ten minutes to clean up the playroom or play area, it means that there are too many toys. This is the time for a good “toy purge” or cleaning out.

One evening after your child has gone to bed, get some large grocery-size shopping bags and label them “Trash,” “Charity,” “Keepsake,” and “Rainy Day.” Then go through everything. Begin with larger items—dealing with them first gives one a sense of accomplishment early on. Later, you can go through those baskets of little things.

Trash: These are toys that are broken or are missing enough pieces that they are not usable; worthless items such as the “Happy Meal” gifts; and all the other trinkets that your child doesn’t play with and probably has forgotten about entirely. Be ruthless! You will be amazed at the amount of stuff that goes into this bag. You may need a couple of bags!

Charity: Children lose interest in toys or simply outgrow them. Or they may just have an oversupply of cars, action figures, or stuffed animals. Culling and giving away toys may actually help children in their play. One or two dolls will more likely inspire a child to play than a whole basketful. In any case, charity organizations and thrift stores are happy to take these items and pass them on to other children.

Rainy Day Toys: These are toys that can drive you crazy if they are used every day, but are fine for occasional use. That expensive fire truck with its sirens and whistles, that pair of rather loud cymbals, the complicated toy with so many parts that it confounds you, or a too-simple game just for two persons all fall into this category. These are best stored out of sight until they are needed.

Keepsake Toys: These are toys that the child has outgrown or lost interest in but that have a strong meaning for you and may also have meaning for the child in later years. These are typically items of high quality and/or sentimental value—the child's first wooden rattle, the music box received at baptism, the game that you played during the cross-country trip. These should be stored in a safe place.

Dealing with Gift Toys

Parents who are particular about the toys they want for their children often have to deal with family members and friends who have other or, perhaps, no standards about toys. This can be a problem. You might prefer a toy that is simple, made from natural materials, and that engages the imagination of your child. Grandma and Grandpa, however, might want to show their love by buying the largest, bells-and-whistles-rich, electronic plaything out on the market. What should you do?

You can be preemptive. As gift-giving time approaches, send out a list of specific suggestions, saying that both you and your child would really love to have, for example, a play stove or other kitchen items, or something toward a Brio wooden train set, or outdoor equipment—a swing set, ride-on toy, or balls. People are often happy to get a wish list; it makes gift shopping easier.



Inevitably, less-than-ideal toys will slip through your defense lines. Uncle Joe will insist on buying something that he is sure will delight your child but that makes you cringe in horror. Relax. It's really okay for a few outrageous toys to be part of a child's life for a time. At first, the child may play a lot with the new and unusual item. But the interest will probably soon wane. Typically, a young child

plays with many different toys in succession, so the offending item will be the object of attention only for a few minutes in the course of the day. It's unlikely to harm a child's development irreparably.

After a time, a particularly obnoxious toy can go "live" at the home of the giver, to be used during visits. That way, Grandma can enjoy that birthday gift she bought for Jimmy—the fluorescent-green, plastic tugboat with the foghorn so loud it rattles the fillings in your teeth. And sometimes a toy just has to disappear. One day it seems to have gotten lost or run away, or it has gone to sleep until we are older.

Providing our children with a healthy play environment is one of the most important things we as parents can do. It is worth the attention, time, and money we devote to it.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Supports Play for the Young Child

In October 2006, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the official association of medical doctors specializing in children's health, issued a report on the subject of play. The report stresses the importance for children of unstructured, imaginative play. Also it decries, as a threat to health, the dominating role television and computers play in the lives of today's children.

The report, whose lead writer is Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, a pediatrician at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, draws on a number of research studies. It concludes that spontaneous, free play—such as playing with dolls or chasing butterflies in a garden—helps children develop imagination, problem-solving capacities, and self-direction. In addition, it keeps them physically active and fit. In contrast, watching television and using computers can, for children (as for parents), lead to stress, obesity, and depression.

The report also counsels parents not to feel pressure to be "superparents," preparing their children for success in the much-later college admissions process. Such parental anxiety can lead to overscheduling and overemphasis on achievement in academics, sports, and other activities.

PEGGY ALESSANDRI has been a kindergarten teacher in California for the past thirty-five years, working at both the Sacramento Waldorf School and the Camellia Waldorf School. For the past eight years, she has also been involved in the education of kindergarten teachers in the Early Childhood Program at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California. Peggy was born and raised in the Bay Area and has four grown children and five grandchildren.

CREDIT: Illustrations courtesy of Magic Cabin, Inc. Their on-line store can be seen at www.magiccabin.com



Sowing Seeds of Peace in the Garden of Early Childhood

BY LAURIE CLARK

LIn the fall of 2006, the largest gathering of Nobel Peace Prize winners in history took place at Magness Arena in Denver, Colorado. Twelve empty chairs were waiting on the stage, and excitement and anticipation filled the auditorium. Seated in the audience between my two daughters, ages seventeen and twenty-five, I felt privileged to be present. As the laureates filed onto the stage, a mood of awe and quiet fell upon those present.

The twelve speakers addressed the audience in turn. Each had a unique story: some had been imprisoned, exiled, or tortured for their attempts to bring peace to the world. Each spoke with amazing enthusiasm and courage.

Adolfo Perez Esquivel, an Argentine human rights worker, spoke about each person's need to "disarm" his own consciousness before world disarmament can take place.

The Dalai Lama talked of the importance of religious tolerance in each individual for the development of worldwide tolerance and mutual acceptance.

Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian activist for women's and children's rights in the Middle East, emphasized the need for "the globalization of the heart" in each of us, an extending of our empathy and deep concern to all people around the globe. She also spoke of how the destinies of all human beings are intertwined and how we are, after all, our "brother's keeper."

Betty Williams, a peace activist in Northern Ireland, was adamant about the need for an end to child labor and other forms of exploitation of children. She is now building a center in Italy called the "City of Peace and Compassion" to address these problems.

Jody Williams, an outspoken American who has devotedly worked to clear landmines worldwide, said, "Peace is hard work. It is not a rainbow or a dove. It is getting out there every day and taking action. Don't just feel emotion about a situation—put it into action!"

I have been a Waldorf kindergarten teacher for twenty-five years. As I listened to these profound ideas, I began to question myself and to reevaluate my life. Is what I am doing making a difference? Is it time to do something else? Should I inquire about working for the City of Peace and Compassion, since my passion has always been working with children? Am I "putting action" into the world and doing my share in creating peace by being a Waldorf kindergarten teacher? I lived with these questions for several days, recalling the words of the Nobel Peace Prize winners.

After much soul-searching, I took to heart a simple question: Am I preparing the children in my kindergarten to become thoughtful, caring, creative individuals, enthusiastically engaged in the world, and with the courageous will to take action for positive change?

In the end, I realized that, as a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, I am in fact attempting to do just this. In humble ways, I am planting seeds in the life garden of the children, seeds that may grow into thoughts, words, and deeds to help bring peace to the world.

One such seed is the celebration of the annual festivals. The festivals are an important element in the Waldorf early childhood program (as well as in the entire school, even through the high school years), and many activities revolve around them. In the celebrations, the children—and their teachers and parents—experience the meaning and joy of life. The children also begin to develop a sense of connection to nature that may later grow into feelings of responsibility for the environment.

We begin the year with the harvest festival. Gathering raspberries at a local organic farm, making jam, baking bread, churning butter, and picking apples from a tree near the school fill our days with meaningful work and fill us with gratitude to Mother Earth, who has provided such bounty. Families join us as we press apple cider and wear crowns made from the beautiful autumn leaves.

Stories of the heavenly warrior, Saint Michael, are told. Michael overcomes the dragon as he rides his steed across the sky, and from out of his golden sword pour shooting stars that find their way down to the Earth. These meteoric stars fill the human heart with courage. Perhaps we all have our own "dragons" to conquer within ourselves so that we can find a way to our higher nature. Is this not a means to "disarm our consciousness," as Adolfo Perez Esquivel so eloquently put it?

In November, as the days grow shorter and the nights become longer, we celebrate the lantern festival, sometimes called Martinmas. Each child makes a lantern that holds a single candle.

As a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, I am planting seeds in the life garden of the children, seeds that may grow into thoughts, words, and deeds to help bring peace to the world.

We sing songs about our lantern shining into the deep, dark night. Then one evening, we join with the families and bravely enter the cold darkness singing, shining, carrying in our hands a house of bright light. Surely, this creates a lasting picture of facing a dark situation with enthusiasm, carrying the light of a new idea, and acting in the world with courage.

In December, when the days are the shortest of the whole year and the winter holidays are approaching, we have the Advent Garden. Evergreen boughs are laid out in a spiral on the floor of a large, darkened room, and in the middle is a tree stump with a tall candle on it. An "angel" waits at the beginning of the spiral and gives each child an apple with a candle in it. The child then is led through the spiral and lights her candle from the one in the middle, as gentle music fills the room. She now retraces her steps out of the spiral and, along the way, places her candle somewhere at the edge of the path. With each child's candle, the spiral path becomes brighter. Each child makes the route a little brighter for the next to find her way. An older child carries a candle for all children who are sick, homeless, hungry, or sad. There is a deep reverence evident in this child's face as he walks the spiral. Is this event not a living picture of Shirin Ebadi's insight that the destinies of all human beings are intertwined and that we need to learn to become our brother's keeper?

The festivals continue through the year—Easter, Passover, May Day, and so on. Each has its particular qualities and experiences. But, in each, the human being is recognized as a citizen of the Earth and a citizen of the Heavens, and the celebration seeks to create a connection between the two realms. This is accomplished through stories filled with archetypal images and through the fulfillment of purposeful, practical work and preparation. The experience of both realms in healthy relationship can help create balance, harmony, and peace in the heart of the child. Each festival is a deed acting upon the young child's developing consciousness.

In the Waldorf kindergarten, the birthday of each child is celebrated as an important and joyful event. The

child is led into the circle of children with his parents and sits in a golden chair. After a verse and song, the child presses a beeswax star onto a glass candle for each year of his life as his parents describe the memorable events of that year. The candle is passed around the circle, and the children and parents make wishes for the birthday child. The teacher then tells the story of the child's journey from the Heavens to the Earth and of the quest that he has undertaken. This experience, it is hoped, gives the child a sense that his life is important, that it has a purpose. Later, as this individual quest reveals itself, perhaps the memory of the celebration will give him "fire" to go into the world and fulfill his destiny.

The establishment of peace in the world will require that each human being develop an inner peace and a trust in the goodness of life and of nature; that each "disarm" his own consciousness—recognize and tame the inner dragon of egoism; that each develop concern, empathy, compassion, and tolerance for all other human beings; and that each have the will and energy to act positively in the world.

The festivals of the Waldorf kindergarten and its celebration of the children's birthdays help to develop these very capacities. It is my hope as a kindergarten teacher that these seeds that are planted in early childhood blossom later in life into impulses for action toward peace.



LAURIE CLARK

Laurie Clark lives in Colorado with her husband, Tom—who is also a Waldorf teacher—

*her three daughters, her granddaughter, and their two dogs, Joe and Al. She is in her twenty-fifth year as a Waldorf teacher and currently works at the Denver Waldorf School. She completed the remedial training with the Association for a Healing Education and was then inspired to incorporate therapeutic activities into the classroom. She is also a conference presenter, a teacher trainer, and a kindergarten mentor. Recently, she coauthored a book with Nancy Blanning entitled *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures*, available through the author at laurieclark525@comcast.net*

CREDIT: Photo by Ailiki Sapountzi.

**In each festival and
birthday that we
celebrate in the
kindergarten, the
child is recognized
as a citizen of the
Earth and a citizen
of the Heavens.**



Saying “I’m Sorry” Is Not Enough

How Children Can Learn to Face
Consequences, Make Amends,
and Grow into Empathy

BY VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT

*L*Imagine: You’re seven years old, and you’ve just spent all the time in the world building the best castle in the world in the woods next to your school. The walls are as tall as the tallest tree and as immovable as a mountain; the ceiling is painted sky blue; the moat is deeper than you are tall and filled with crocodiles. No dragon, no giant, no enemy army will be able to successfully assail your carefully constructed stronghold. You foray out into the world to recruit a fair

maiden or two. As you return, you watch to your horror as one classmate takes away part of your wall for his own castle, and another dives into and destroys what's left of yours. You burst into tears and run to the teacher. She calls the two errant classmates to your side and instructs them to say that they're sorry.

Perhaps one student really is sorry for his action. He acted thoughtlessly, spontaneously, and, faced now with a weeping friend, he realizes what a bad thing he did and really wishes he'd never done it. The other student perhaps feels no remorse at all. Nevertheless, he does speak the words "I'm sorry," to keep from getting punished. So one student is telling the truth, and the other, feeling it prudent to lie, is not. No one observing or participating in this scene can say for certain which child is which.

Adults routinely require children to say "I'm sorry" in a variety of situations. Saying you're sorry may or may not indicate remorse; but from an adult perspective, it often seems a necessary step in setting things right, in healing the wound, and in bringing things back into balance. Children who initially refuse to say they're sorry often sit in time-out until they comply. By the time they're five years old, most children say "I'm sorry" automatically, either after they hurt someone or when they're called to the adult in charge. They know it will be required and that, after they've said it, they'll be able to get back to their play.

The automatic "I'm sorry" is a habit that many of us adults have carried into later life. Sometimes, like children, we say it without really being regretful and hence slide into an untruth. In any case, we expect the words to achieve a healing, to restore a situation compromised by our behavior. We assume also that we will be met with understanding, absolution, and reconciliation.

However, saying "I'm sorry," even if one really means it, does not necessarily make all things right in the world. Actions invoke consequences, and, in spite of the regret felt, those consequences must still be dealt with. Expecting an automatic return to the relationship or situation as it was before the action occurred is an example of "magical thinking." True reconciliation requires commitment, hard work, and consciousness, in action and in thought, of both parties.

This brings us back to the situation described in the first paragraph. We adults want the offending child to imagine himself the victim of his own hurtful behavior and to feel true regret. Yet even for adults the exercise of this imaginative capacity—the basis for true empathy and compassion—is not easy. Should we really expect it



of children? When we do demand it of them, we force them either to lie or to disobey.

For the child, more important than a formulaic apology, unaccompanied by the feeling we want them to feel, is the realization that it requires effort and work to make right the effects of one's bad behavior. One approach, then, is to try to return the situation to its original condition. In the imagined situation described above, all three children might be sent to rebuild the castle.

Often, however, the past cannot be restored, and we can only think and act out of our concern for the future. What we usually want is a guarantee that this particular situation will not appear in our lives again. This applies not only to the offended child but also to the offenders.

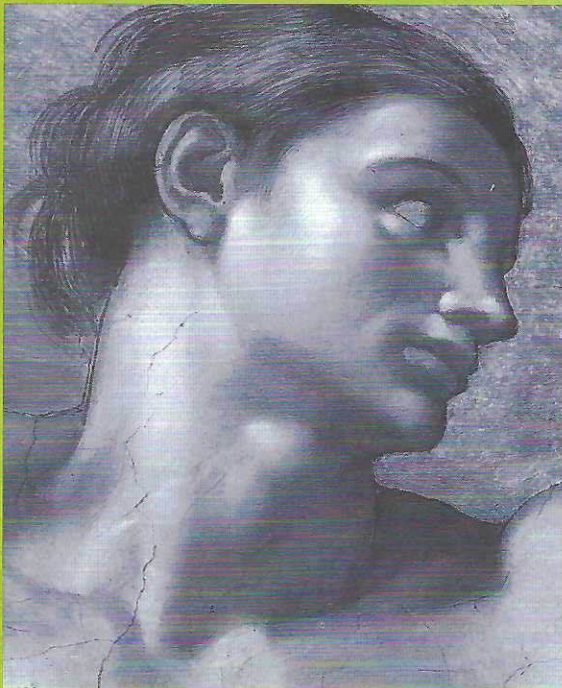
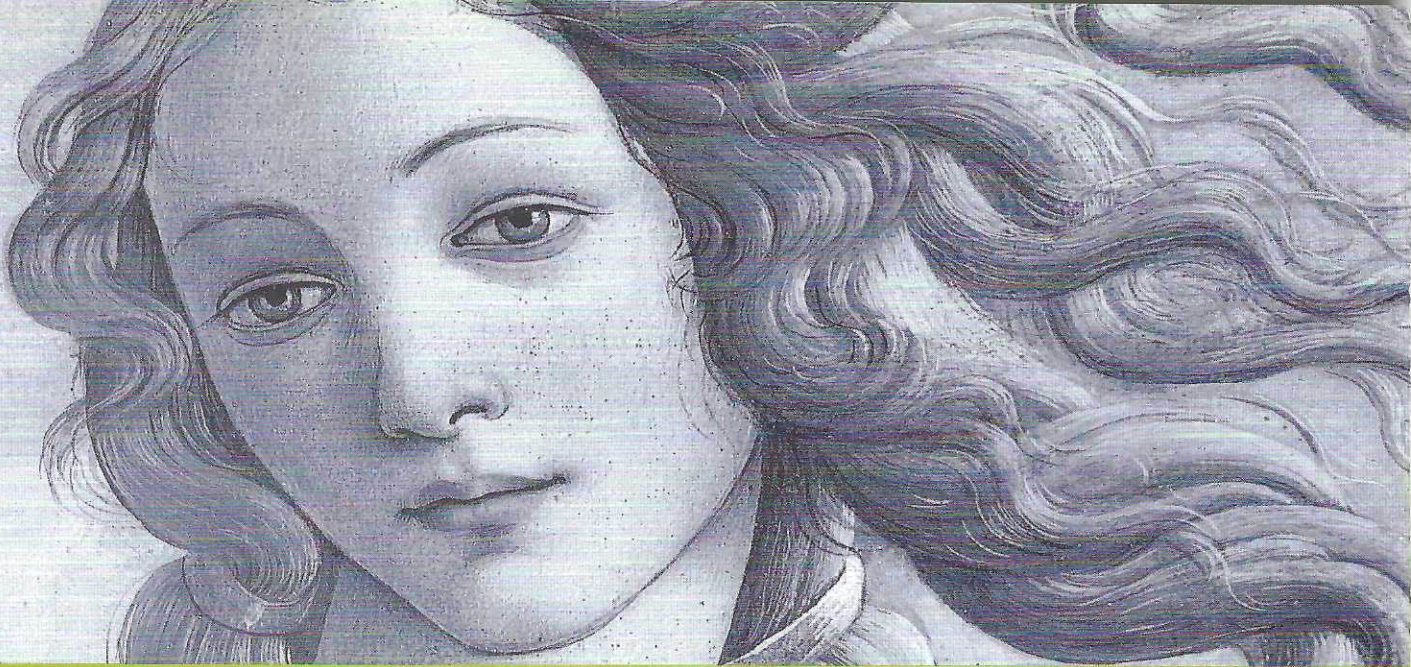
Thus, when I find myself arbitrating these confrontations, I ask the offended child, "Would it help you to feel better if Alice told you she'd try not to do this again?" The response has always been positive. Then I ask the offender, "Do you think you can tell Maisie you'll try not to do it again?" Again, the response has always been positive. Sometimes the two children—the offender and the aggrieved—even hold hands as they skip back to the play area.

A few minutes later, I wander near the children, listening and watching to ensure that they are engaged in healthy play. If they're arguing, or if it seems that one child is unhappily following the other's lead, I redirect the activity. If they're cooperating, I say nothing, but I make eye contact and smile at each. Both children need to know that the conflict has been settled, that I still care for each of them, and that they are still a part of our group.

Children do need assistance in learning how to get along with other people; they need assistance from caring, responsible adults. When a group of children learn and work together for a number of years—as in a Waldorf school—the social benefit can be enormous, as the variety, complexity, and depth of interactions increase as the children get older. Certainly, the lessons learned here are lessons the children carry with them throughout their lives. If they are the right lessons, our entire society benefits.

VIVIAN JONES-SCHMIDT graduated her second class at the Charlottesville Waldorf School last June. After twenty years of classroom teaching, she is now working in enrollment, public relations, and parent education for CWS. Vivian has served Renewal as a member of its editorial advisory board for the past six years.

CREDIT: Illustration by Anne Riegel-Koetzsch.



Gender, Destiny, and Education

How Waldorf Education Seeks to Develop a Child's Full Humanity

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

According to the worldview that underlies Waldorf Education, the child is a spiritual being who has come to Earth from the spiritual world and is gradually entering the physical body provided by his or her parents. This process of incarnation, of coming into the body, happens over time as the child grows and develops. Of course, every child is unique and goes through this process in his or her own way. One factor, in particular, that affects the incarnation process in each child is gender. Some of us are born girls and some are born boys, and this makes a difference.

There has been much scientific research in recent years into the innate differences between female and male human beings in physiology, in hormonal activity, and in ways of behaving, thinking, and communicating. The results are immensely interesting and perhaps even useful. For example, research indicates that, for

Top image: Venus (as detail), from The Birth of Venus, by Botticelli (1445–1510); lower image: Adam (as detail), from The Creation of Man, by Michelangelo (1475–1564)

men, listening to another person speak is primarily an intellectual activity aimed at collecting information, while for women it is also emotional activity in which they are sensing the feeling or soul state of the other person. And—is this a surprise to anyone?—men listen less attentively to women than they listen to other men.

I want to emphasize, though, that any statements here about male/female differences are purely descriptive in intent and **not** judgmental or evaluative in any way.

Boys are more deeply immersed in the physical world, where matter and number dominate.

St. George, by Raphael (1483–1520)

Also, they are made with the realization that, within each gender, there are enormous variations and that each person—boy or girl, man or woman—is a totally unique being who can, through education and/or individual effort, become whatever he or she wants to be. One's gender provides certain qualities and inclinations, but we are free to develop these or not and also to create and nurture other, balancing characteristics. Gender, like temperament, bestows gifts as well as challenges to be overcome.

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education, said the differences between men and women are a result of their entering into, of incarnating into, the physical body to different degrees. In terms of a spiritual ideal, men typically incarnate a little too much and women incarnate a bit too little. Of course, there are some men who do not incarnate overmuch and some women who incarnate more deeply than others.

Incarnation is like putting on a winter coat. If it is a lightweight coat, then the spirit wearing it is still able to move quite freely and with flexibility. We can still dance and prance and feel the inspiration of creativity and intuition and not feel encumbered or dragged down by the heaviness of the garment. Movement, creativity, and inspiration are what spirit is all about. However, if the environment and weather are cold and harsh, the delicate spirit is without the protection and warmth that it needs.

A heavier coat, one that comes with entering more deeply into physicality, is more rugged and makes the wearer feel more solid, more grounded, more sheltered—more a creature of the physical Earth. Of course, wearing this heavy garment is restricting. It weighs us down, limits our movement, and cuts off sensitivity to those around us and to the environment. We become isolated within our little fortress.

Wearing the Heavy Coat: The Male Experience

In general, life as a male is like wearing a heavy coat. Being too deeply sunk into physicality manifests in various ways on the physical, emotional, and psychological levels. A man's body typically is heavy, dense, angular, muscular, and hairy. Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), spoke of the physical body as the “donkey” that carries



one through the world. He advised his excessively ascetic monastic followers to care better for their donkeys. The typical male does not need this advice and tends to be too involved in his own physicality. There is a danger of becoming too connected to donkeyhood, becoming too coarse and heavy, and perhaps of living too much out of animalistic and instinctual drives.

The male's “heavy coat” makes it more difficult to develop sensitivity, nuance, gentleness, and compassion for others. The strong pull into materiality cuts him off from these more spiritual attributes. This attraction to the material manifests on the cognitive level also. From early childhood, boys show interest in dump trucks, power shovels, and sooner or later—despite the efforts of many parents to the contrary—in weapons and guns. Cultivating the life of the mind and succeeding in school comes to boys, as a group, with difficulty. Fewer boys than girls finish high school, and now that access to higher education is generally equal, fewer men attend college. Boys are more likely to have learning difficulties and considerably outnumber girls in illnesses like ADHD and autism.

Deeply imbedded in the material world, the male tends to see life as a struggle for survival, hence male competitiveness and aggressiveness. Until recently, war and the arts of war have been an almost exclusively male domain. In general, overincarnation makes learning, relating to others, and staying healthy (men are prone to substance abuse and addiction) challenging for males.

There are positive aspects, of course. Men are physically strong and less likely to be ruled by or overcome by their emotions. Generally speaking, boys do better than girls in math and science. Given our discussion so far, this makes sense. Boys are more deeply immersed in the physical world, where matter and number dominate. Men are self-reliant and work well independently. They

are practical, interested in and skilled at creating and dealing with the physical realm—plumbing, automobiles, bridges, and the like. Throughout history, men have been the inventors, explorers, and builders in the material realm.

In our society, it has become dangerous to acknowledge this difference between men and women and to see it as anything other than the result of acculturation and social expecta-

painfully sensitive to physical and psychological stresses. Gender is an important factor but obviously not the only one.

The archetype of the human being is a creature half beast and half angel. In this picture, the female inclines to the angelic side. Hers is the pole of loving and caring, of social harmony and connectedness. It is the pole of beauty, of culture, of the realm we simply term “femininity.” The Wild West of the American frontier



Women cultivate deep personal and social relations and are keenly aware of how they themselves and others are feeling.

Madonna (as detail), from Madonna and Child (known as The Small Cowper Madonna), by Raphael

tion. This is evidenced by the uproar that engulfed former Harvard University president Lawrence Summers when he speculated that the reason there are far fewer women than men in the sciences might be inherent differences between the sexes. It is interesting that when someone describes women as more creative or more socially attuned or better at caring for others than men, protests are much less likely to result.

Wearing the Lighter Garment: The Female Experience

From Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual perspective, women tend to be insufficiently incarnated, the spiritual aspects of their being hovering a bit outside the physical body. Thus, women typically are reluctant to plunge into the imaginations and tasks of the physical world, at least as these are presently constituted. Archetypically, by nature, women have been less inclined to the worlds of business, politics, law, and sport, all of which are characterized by competition and conflict—and also, of course, to the organized aggression of war.

Physically, the female human being tends to be softer and rounder. She is physically less strong, less dense, and less muscular. Women are, however, more graceful, more flexible, and more fluid. They seem to handle stress better and generally live longer than men. Perhaps the less incarnated a person is, the lighter the toll of daily life on physical health and well-being.

It should be pointed out that, in this area as in others, one’s temperament can also play a significant role. A choleric person, whether man or woman—short, stocky, robust, energetic, willful, perhaps overbearing—is less vulnerable to the stresses of everyday life than a typical melancholic—slender, dreamy, slow in movement, and

was a sordid world of drunkenness, theft, murder, and mayhem until women joined the male pioneers. Demanding safety for their children and carrying a spiritual impulse, the women cleaned up the towns, physically and morally, and brought a measure of culture and civilization. That’s how “the West was won.”

Emotionally, women do not find their strength and support in their physical separateness; they are floating above the physical realm. Instead, they find their solid ground within their social connectedness with others. Thus, women cultivate deep personal and social relations and are keenly aware of how they themselves and others are feeling. They communicate more out of the realm of feeling than of intellect and make decisions in this same realm.

Parents as Models

Rudolf Steiner described how children usually take from each parent the style that goes with that parent’s gender. The child imitates the earthly will of the father. One sees this manifested in various ways. Having been trained in eurythmy, I take special notice of how people move. I have often been amused to see how a teenager whom I know unconsciously mimics the posture, walk, speaking manner, gestures, and mannerisms of his father.

Similarly, a mother’s emotional gesture is reflected in her children. Psychologists have for years noted that depression in mothers makes for problems with depression later in the lives of her children. Paradoxically, depression in fathers has little or no effect. A mother’s shyness also has a powerful effect, even on children whose temperament would normally incline them toward extraversion. A mother’s positive emotional patterns also are adopted by her children. It is from their mothers that children acquire manners and sensi-

tivity to others and where they learn about relationships and caring.

A Question of Balance

The archetypal human is a being who stands in androgynous balance between Heaven and Earth. However, when the archetype was divided into male and female, the one had a close affinity for the Earth, while the

Waldorf Education sought to help children develop themselves as full human beings, with both masculine and feminine aspects active and healthy. The first Waldorf schools were remarkable in that boys and girls were educated together, instead of being separated. Also, there were no special subjects for girls, such as handwork, sewing, and cooking, nor for boys, such as woodworking and metalworking. All the children learned all the subjects together. This, of course, is still the case in all Waldorf schools. The boys learn how to

The child imitates the earthly will of the father. Similarly, a mother's emotional gesture is reflected in her children.

other was more attached to Heaven and to the spirit. Since that time, each has looked to the other to find some sense of completeness.

With the 1960s and the birth of feminism, Western societies have encouraged women to develop their masculine side, to become more deeply incarnated. Women are now active in all domains of life, in business, government, law, sports, the military—including in combat roles—police work, heavy construction, and so on. Women have brought their sensitivity, their compas-

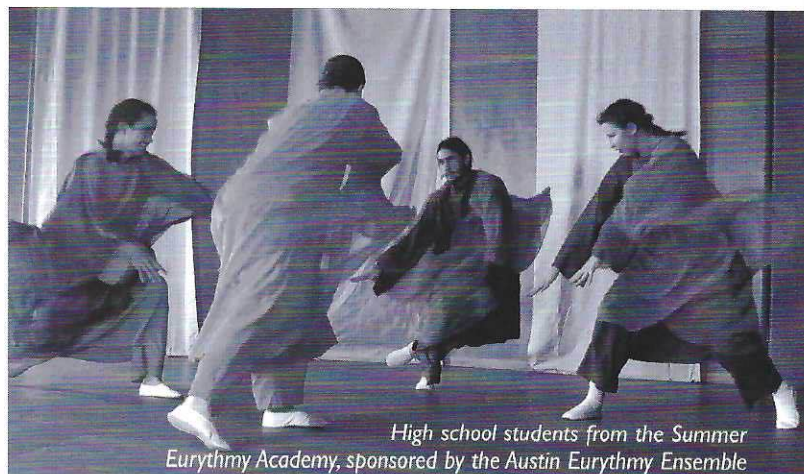
sion, their valuing of human relationships, and their intuition with them, and, in many areas, these qualities have had a salubrious, softening effect on the preexisting, dominant male ethos.

Meanwhile, there has been much less concern and enthusiasm for men becoming less incarnated. More men are

entering what were previously considered female professions, such as nursing and elder care, but the shift is on a small scale. A small "Men's Movement" that has striven to develop the feeling side of the male has had only a minor impact in the broad society.

Long before this recent interest in women cultivating their masculine side and men their feminine aspect, Rudolf Steiner created a "gender-free" education. From its inception in 1919,

knit, to crochet, and even to sew a piece of clothing for themselves. The girls learn to carve wood, to fashion a



High school students from the Summer Eurythmy Academy, sponsored by the Austin Eurythmy Ensemble

nail, and to make a simple piece of furniture.

The entire Waldorf curriculum seeks to create a balance in the child between the practical/earthly (masculine) and the spiritual/artistic (feminine). The children do gymnastics and competitive sports but also study eurythmy, an art of movement that promotes grace, suppleness, and flexibility. The children study geometry but do so through artistic drawing and the construction of string drawings and sculpture. The study of the natural sciences is pursued with an attention to the aesthetic and artistic aspect of the phenomena being

studied. [Please see, on page 36, the article on the sixth-grade mineralogy block as taught in the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School in New Zealand. *Ed.*]

Because, in the broader society, the emphasis has been and still is on girls



Waldorf third grader in handwork class

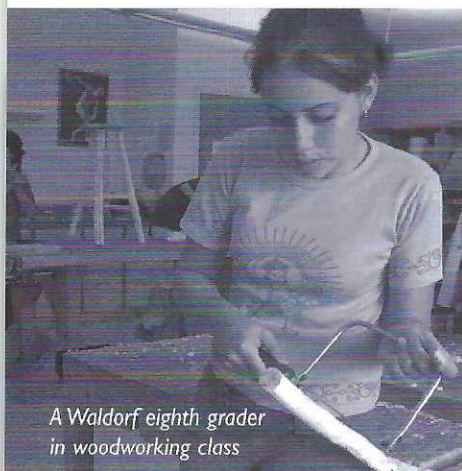
developing male characteristics, what goes on in the Waldorf schools is often misunderstood. Many a prospective Waldorf parent leaves a school tour with the impression that the curriculum is "too feminine." The parent takes for granted and hence does not really see the girls' opportunities for

The Waldorf school is helping both its girls and boys develop into well-rounded human beings.

balanced development. What catches her notice are the arts, handwork, eurythmy, and so on, that are giving the boys this same important opportunity for

balanced development. The parent goes off with the false impression that Waldorf Education is too arts-oriented and does not educate children to deal with the "real world," when what she means is the "male world." She does not realize that the Waldorf school is helping both its girls and boys develop into well-

rounded human beings possessing both masculine and feminine characteristics and virtues.



A Waldorf eighth grader in woodworking class



THOMAS POPLAWSKI is a trained eurythmist and is also a psychotherapist. His wife, Valerie, also a trained eurythmist, is a kindergarten teacher at the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, Massachusetts. Thomas and Valerie have two young sons, both students at the Hartsbrook School. As staff writer for *Renewal*, Thomas in recent years has written twenty-three feature-length articles for the magazine, each of them very popular with our readers. Thomas's book *Eurythmy: Rhythm, Dance and Soul* was published in 1998 by The Anthroposophic Press in the United States and Floris Books in the United Kingdom. His new book is *Completing the Circle*, published by AWSNA Publications in 2006. [Please see the following review.]

CREDITS: Photo on bottom of page 15 and photo on page 16 by Larry Canner from the Waldorf School of Baltimore. Eurythmy photo on page 15 by Michael Lunceford.

BOOKS

in Brief

Completing the Circle

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

AWSNA Publications
Fair Oaks, CA, 2006
111 pages • \$14.00

Thomas Poplawski has a broad perspective from which to deal, in an illuminating and eminently practical way, with the issues that confront Waldorf parents. He is a trained eurythmist, a Waldorf parent (of two energetic boys), a Waldorf husband (his wife, Valerie, is a Waldorf kindergarten teacher), and a serious student of Anthroposophy. Thomas is also a psychotherapist, well-informed about developments in mainstream psychology and education.

As *Renewal's* staff writer, Thomas has written on many compelling topics over the last dozen or so years. *Completing the Circle* is a collection of twelve articles on children, parenting, and education, almost all of which appeared originally in this journal. Each piece offers useful, down-to-earth advice as well as helpful insights into the arts of parenting and teaching.

The articles in this delightful little volume deal with, among others, the following topics:

- the importance of physical warmth in the development of the infant and young child ("Button up Your Overcoat")
- the recent decline in children's sensitivity to sensory stimuli—sights, sounds, tastes—and how to counteract this problem ("Losing Our Senses")
- providing children with toys that encourage healthy development ("Toys Are Not Us"), and
- dealing with the pressures around the current culture of competitive sports for children ("Sports and Children—Finding a Balance")

Thomas Poplawski has long been interested in the meditative path that Rudolf Steiner prescribed as a necessary element in the life of the Waldorf teacher and of any adult seeking personal development. *Completing the Circle* concludes with an accessible and practical article entitled "A Modern Path of Meditation and Inner Development."

This book addresses issues that almost every Waldorf parent faces. It can also benefit parents and teachers not involved with Waldorf Education.

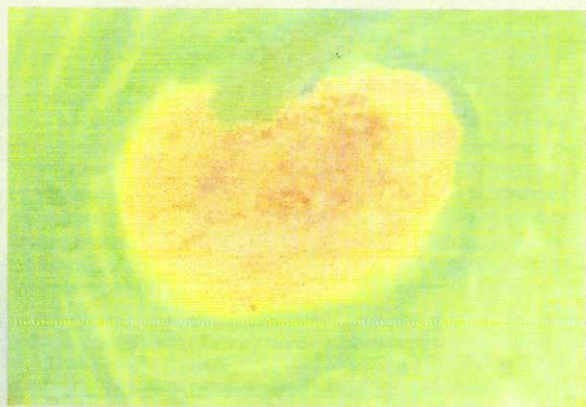
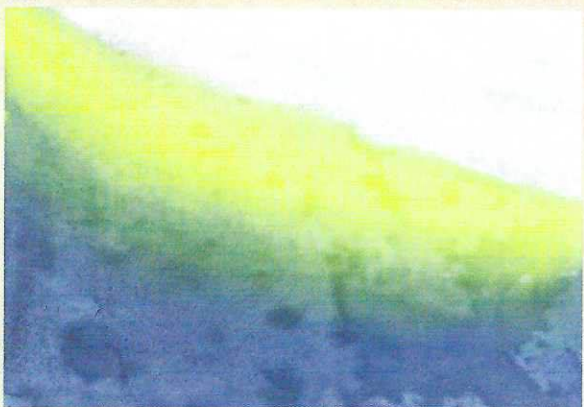
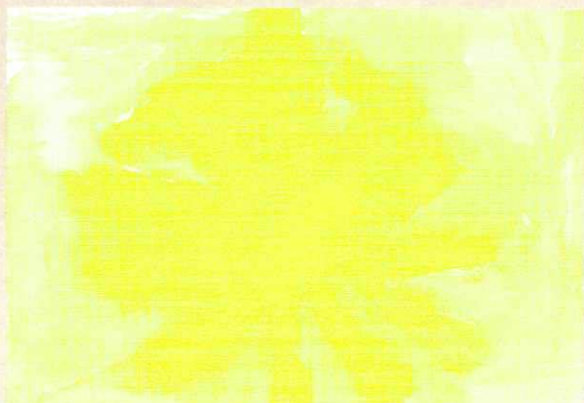
Painting in the Waldorf Lower Grades

BY HARALD RUDEL

This article was first published in 1968 in Erziehungskunst, a magazine published by the Association of Free Waldorf Schools in Germany. It was reprinted in translation in the Fall–Winter 1977–1978 issue of Education as an Art, a journal about Waldorf Education published by the Rudolf Steiner School of New York City. The article has a clarity and charming enthusiasm, so that, even after almost forty years, it still brings to life the painting experience of the teacher and the children in the Waldorf early grades.

—R. E. K.

I've covered the tables. In front of each little first grader, I've put a painting board with a large sheet of white paper on it and beside it, very neatly arrayed, a broad paintbrush, a tiny sponge, a glass of clean water, and a small paint dish of fluid color, today just blue. The children sit there full of anticipation. They are going to have their first painting lesson!



Typical painting exercises done by children in a Waldorf first grade

"Now, children, take your sponge and dip it into the water and wet the entire surface of the paper spread out on your painting board," I say. "Then turn the paper over and wet the other side." There are soft exclamations that grow louder and a bit anxious. "Oh, help! My paper is full of creases!" It is an exciting, challenging task for small, awkward hands.

The children had not expected that the preparation itself would be difficult. But these basic manual skills are important and have to be acquired by effort and experimentation. And if they are developed early, they contribute not only to truly beautiful artistic creations but also to the development of capacities for later learning.

I go around to a few of the children individually and show them how all the creases disappear if one creeps with the sponge carefully outward from the center of the paper and gets rid of each air bubble as one comes to it. Eventually, in front of each child lies a sheet of white paper, thoroughly wet. At last, the painting can begin.

"Now, children," I say, "you may take your paintbrush and dip it carefully into the little dish with the blue color. Then press it ever so lightly against the side of the dish, so it won't be too wet." It is important that each child is conscious of every movement of his hand. Then his whole being is involved.

"Now lay the blue color in long strokes over the paper, very quietly, beginning with the outer edges. Gradually come in from all sides. In the center the color should stay the lightest. On the outside it can be made darker. Then it will look like a great, enormous sky."

While, at the beginning of the lesson, there was inner and outer fidgeting, now there is absolute quiet. The children are quiet in their painting, quiet in their observation of what is becoming visible on their papers.

But the pictures are not finished, not nearly finished. One child's painting has hard edges, so that there is not a smooth transition from the deep blue at the periphery through the intervening shades to the very light blues in the center. On another child's paper, each stroke of the brush is visible, giving the painting a restless quality. A third child has painted with too wet a brush, so that everything has run together. By holding up a paper now and then for all the children to see, I can give hints and suggestions without needing to say much.

These short interruptions in the artistic activity allow the children to observe each other's paintings. For a moment, each child comes out of himself, out and away from his own imperfect work, and sees how others are also struggling. With this larger point of view come a sensitivity to others and a sense of empathy. Developing these social capacities is at least as important as developing the manual skills necessary to the activity. A teacher chooses the moments for these interruptions carefully, intuitively.

A week later, the children have a second painting lesson. This time they find a small glass dish of red color rather than blue. Preparation of the paper takes place exactly as it did the first time. The repetition of an action, done consciously, is important. Only this repetition can form enduring attitudes and habits.

Red has quite a different tendency of movement than blue. This time we begin painting at the center of the paper. In contrast to the quietness of blue, red bursts out, expanding, spreading. This is soon evident also in the atmosphere of the class. There is joy, courage, ebullience among the

For a moment, each child comes out of himself, out and away from his own imperfect work, and sees how others are also struggling. With this larger point of view come a sensitivity to others and a sense of empathy.

children, as an entirely different temperament is called forth. It may even happen that a strongly choleric boy gives full outlet to his glad energy and, in the end, rubs a large hole with his brush in the middle of the paper. But then that accident can have pedagogical value, since the child has learned what can happen if he lets his natural tendencies go unchecked.

Such free involvement with pure color is a loosening experience for the child. Color stirs the human feelings, more than form does, more than line. It really changes, elevates, the consciousness of the painter. One can clearly see how painting with strong fluid colors is a powerful experience for children. They are totally drawn into the activity. Drawing with colored crayons, drawing lines that fence in a color, is a much different, more intellectual activity.

In the third painting lesson in the first grade, the character of the color yellow—its cheerful outstreaming—is experienced. After that, we go on to find the relation of these primary colors—blue, red, and yellow—to each other, always working with them in their liquid form. The children do the mixing of the colors themselves, but with careful supervision by the teacher. They are never allowed to “play” with the color or with the paints.

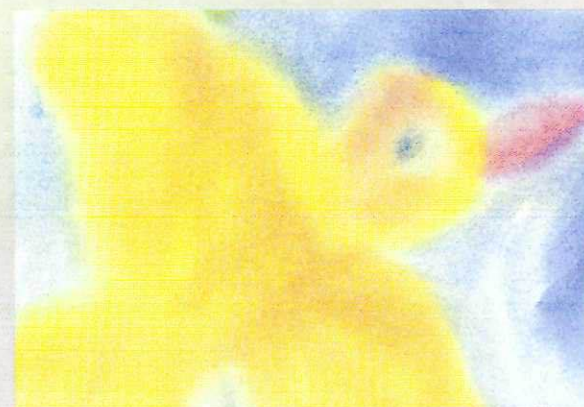
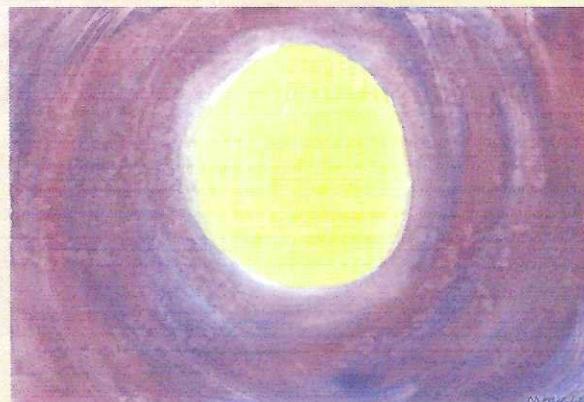
The colors are now allowed to talk to one another. As Goethe wrote in his tale “The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily”: “What is more enlivening than light?—Conversation!” The careful, conscious choice of colors makes possible a give-and-take between them that leads to an integrated composition.

For example, one asks the children to lay the blue heavy and dark across the bottom or ground of the paper and above to have some light yellow move across the broad, free, wide expanse. Then, somewhere a bold, saucy spot of red comes to sit on the blue. When the second color comes on the first, it must adapt itself to the other, so that all exist in harmony, that is, are “friendly” with one another. There is always a relationship to be concerned about. Nothing is there just for itself alone.

Another theme for a painting could be this: through a broad stretch of blue, spread out like a curtain, peeks a cheerful bit of yellow or orange. Actually, with such a task, one has introduced a first experience of color perspective that later will play an important role in the curriculum. Color perspective—that a darker color seems closer than a light color—should be experienced and practiced before external spatial perspective is studied. Otherwise the latter may be merely a dry, intellectual exercise.

After these harmonious color “conversations,” one can proceed to experiences of greater contrast. For instance, the children are asked to place yellow orange next to blue green. In this case, the teacher would pre-mix the colors and encourage the children to decide which color is perhaps more lively and which more quiet.

The teacher also can give the children a first experience of the complementary colors: blue and orange; red and green; yellow and violet. Later in their schooling, the children as sixth graders will encounter these same complementary colors in the study of optics. Then they will learn about and experience the phenomenon of the afterimage. That is, if one stares



More painting exercises done by children in a Waldorf first grade

The object or figure is always secondary. The color itself is the primary thing. Form is the consequence of color.



Top two paintings by Waldorf third graders done during the Old Testament lesson block; bottom painting by a fourth grader during the zoology lesson block

at a field of a single color, red, for example, for a minute or two and then looks at a white paper or wall, one will “see” that color’s complement, in this case, green.

For the moment, though, the experience of the contrast between the complementary colors is enough. In the early grades, one introduces to the children on a feeling level what they will learn in an intellectual way later on. This is a pedagogical law within the Waldorf curriculum.

These first painting exercises should be lively and varied, so that they work strongly on the children’s fantasy. For example, with the complementary colors, one can do “exchange exercises,” in which, first, yellow is inside, surrounded by violet and, next, violet is inside, surrounded by yellow. One day one color is stronger and the next day the other. An inner mobility comes about in the child through this free activity. It will reveal itself later as an ability to deal flexibly with concepts, to use them in varied life situations. If the children see the colors do something to one another, it works strongly on their souls at this impressionable, formative age.

In the early years, fairy tales play a large role in the Waldorf curriculum. One can make an exercise in pure color—with nothing represented at all—but give the colors a fairy-tale quality. It should be done indirectly, however. One need not give the colors the names of fairy-tale characters. This would pull the children out of a purely artistic experience into a more intellectual one in which they might try to paint figures and objects. Dreamy fantasies can too easily become fixed notions.

Thus, for example, the teacher might have the children paint a horizontal stretch of yellow across the middle of the paper; then, in the lower part of the paper, blue; then, left, between the blue and the yellow, a bit of red coming out of the blue; and below, across the paper, several pointed bits of blue or other colors. At the end of the lesson, when all the paintings are being looked at, the teacher might ask if they are reminded of any story they have heard. And if none of the children is moved to respond, the teacher might observe, “Look, children! The bright yellow there in the center, doesn’t that look like Snow White lying in her glass coffin? And that shining red coming out of the blue, perhaps that is the Prince coming to save Snow White. And down below, all those blue and brown points—why surely, those are the caps of the little gnomes sitting there so sadly!”

In the lessons that follow, this fairy-tale color experience could be carried a step further, so that gradually more exact, concrete forms come to view. The figures are not painted in; they grow out of the color that is there. The object or figure is always secondary. The color itself is the primary thing. Form is the consequence of color.

It is very good, even essential, if we want to help the children to comprehend what is happening around them, that we paint with them, even many times, what might be called “soul moods” that arise out of their feelings. For example, after telling a fairy tale on one day, I introduce our painting lesson the next day by saying: “Children, do you remember yesterday how it was with the little goats? How happy they were? How they danced and jumped around joyfully when the wicked wolf was drowned in the well? Today we are going to paint just how those little

goats felt!" And then there will emerge a mood that could be called "Joy," or "Rejoicing," done with the active colors red, orange, and yellow.

Color experiences can also accompany other main lesson blocks. For instance, in the third grade when the stories of the Hebrew Bible are told, it is good to bring those themes into the painting lessons in order to deepen the children's experience of the stories. For example, Noah's ark floats on a broad expanse of blue water; above, a large sweep of yellow—the sunny sky; and the dove rises from the hatch of the ark into the air.

Like each aspect of the Waldorf curriculum, painting in the early grades should accompany and promote the child's development. The young child moves from an identification with the surrounding world to a capacity to experience soul states in response to what is happening outside, and then to a more detached, objective view of external objects and events, as in the picture of Noah's ark.

In the study of botany in the fifth grade, when the children paint an individual plant, the painting should develop out of the pure color chord of yellow and blue. "The sun is urging the plants up out of the Earth," is what a teacher might say to the children, taking the yellow down into the blue to create the green in various shapes, something entirely new on the paper. This active process of creation is important for the growing child—far more important than the finished product—since he feels himself portrayed in what is taking place.

Just as different plants are painted out of a preparatory color mood, different animal forms can be introduced in the zoology block in the fourth grade. Fish, for example, are formed out of their environment by first painting the element water, and then "discovering" little fish swimming in the water, and then making them more visible. The fish are already present in the living element, if the water has been formed correctly. For this, the teacher must be imaginatively alert, observe the things that "just by chance" happen to stand out, and then raise them at once into a more conscious sphere. Children understand immediately that fish cannot live on dry land—in this case the bare, dry, white paper. Later the teacher can speak more factually and in detail about fish. The pedagogical principle here, as throughout the Waldorf curriculum, is **"First doing, then grasping in thought."** Similarly, birds emerge from the element of air, mice from the earthly depths of a dark cellar, and lions out of the heat of the desert.

Rudolf Steiner once said, "If, in our time, a genuine color experience is no longer cultivated, and if the mechanistic theories of the nature of color are spread further among humankind, children will be born into the world no longer possessing a capacity for seeing color. Through color, life itself is revealed. But mankind will no longer have the faculty to see the colors, just as they no longer have the faculty to see the elemental spirits active in nature. The world will be gray."

Thus, the intensive work with color that is part of the Waldorf painting curriculum is crucial for the healthy development of the child. It is in fact a therapeutic activity against the degeneration of a basic human capacity—to see and to experience color in a profound, inner way.

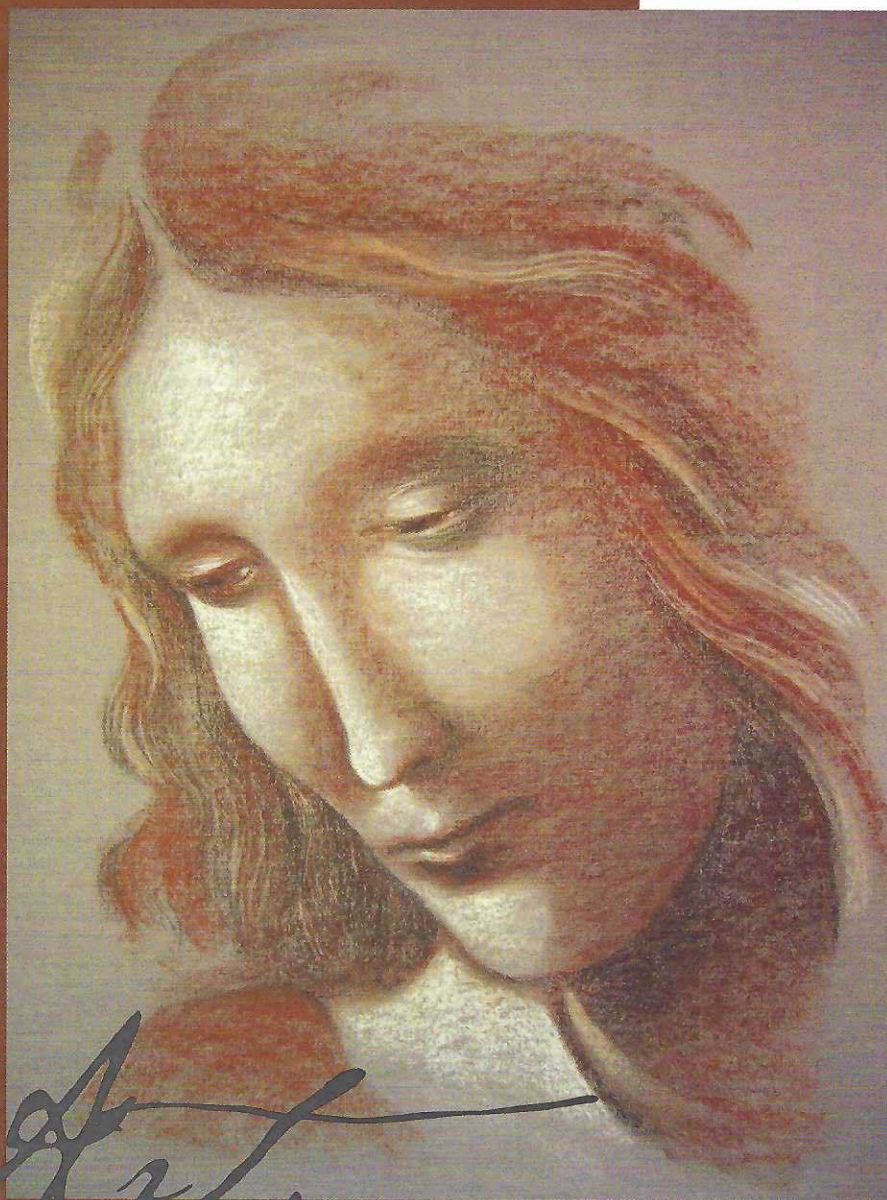
CREDITS: Honolulu Waldorf School and Van James for images on page 17 and bottom images on page 20 and 21; Sacramento Waldorf School and Scott Olmsted for images on page 18 and two top images on page 19; Chicago Waldorf School Calendar archives for bottom image on page 19, middle image on page 20 and top two images on page 21.



Top painting by a fourth grader during the zoology lesson block; bottom paintings by fifth graders during the botany block

**"Through color,
life itself is revealed."**

—Rudolf Steiner



Art, Life, and Education

BY VAN JAMES

Van James is an artist, a teacher of art at the Honolulu Waldorf School, the chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawaii, and a respected authority on art and art history. In July 2005, at the Annual General Meeting of the Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand, Van gave three lectures on art. The lectures were transcribed by Betty Duncan and Neil Carter, both of the Christchurch (NZ) Rudolf Steiner School. Van also contributed to the editing of the lectures for publication. The resulting article appeared then in the Journal for Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner Education, published in New Zealand. This is a condensed version of that article.

—R. E. K.

Art and Life

Before 1400 AD, there was no real word for art. The activities and objects that we now associate with the term—dance, music, poetry and prose, architecture, sculpture, and painting and drawing—all were experienced as intrinsic, necessary aspects of human life. For premodern human beings, what can be called an “original participation” or oneness with the world was a given.

In ancient and traditional cultures, typically almost every person learned to sing, to dance, and to recite. And each person, in the creation of the material necessities of everyday life—dwellings, clothing, utensils, even weapons—was able to imbue what was made with aesthetic value. Each human being was a craftsperson and an artist.

Over the last few centuries, this situation has gradually changed. At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the late 1700s, to “manufacture” still meant to “create something by hand.” Artists and crafters—goldsmiths, jewelers, blacksmiths, weavers, tailors, shoemakers—were all manufacturers.

Today, however, to manufacture means to produce identical objects through large-scale machine production, and almost all commonly used items are made in this way.

Paralleling the Industrial Revolution, the movement for universal compulsory public education grew. Largely concerned with producing good workers for the mills and factories, public education became a large-scale, impersonal, product-oriented “edu-manufacturing.” Based on the factory model, it was an assembly line for learning and had at best a peripheral place for the arts. Today, with the emphasis on academic standards and achievement in mainstream education, public and private, the arts still struggle to retain even their minor role.

As a result, artistic (and handcraft) activity has in large part disappeared from the daily lives of most adults and children. What artistic experience there is, is mostly passive and received mainly through the electronic media. Besides, much of what is presented today as art—i.e., the work of professional artists—is not necessarily true art.

The novelist James Joyce (1882–1941) described three kinds of art: “proper art” and two types of “improper art.” One form of improper art is “pornographic,” because it is seductive, outwardly pretty and alluring, but not true. The other improper art is “didactic,” because it wants to teach a lesson or make a point, even when none is wanted. Didactic art is in-your-face and may be true, but it is not very pretty. An example might be the depiction of smashed cars and dead bodies in the road, in order to protest drunk driving, while an image of a beautiful, happy family driving their shiny, new SUV through a pristine landscape is pornographic.

For Joyce, proper art is both true and beautiful and leads to a state of calm, of “aesthetic arrest,” in the



human soul, a moment of epiphany. Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa* is an example of true art.

Joyce’s older contemporary Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) expressed a somewhat related idea:

True art stands beside real [scientific] knowledge on the one hand and, on the other hand, genuine religious life.... No artist could create in his medium if there were not alive in him impulses springing from the spiritual world. This fact points to the seriousness of art, standing alongside the seriousness of cognition and religious experience. It cannot be denied that our materialistically oriented civilization diverts us, in many ways, from the gravity of art. But any devoted study of true artistic creation reveals it as an earnest expression of humanity’s struggle to harmonize the spiritual-divine with the physical-earthly.¹

For Steiner, true art involves an attempt to bring together the physical and the spiritual, the visible and the invisible. Inasmuch as it succeeds, true art puts both the artist and the person appreciating the art in touch with spiritual realities.

“Art is the creation of organs by which the gods may speak to mankind,” said Steiner.² Art is an instrument by means of which the spiritual worlds may speak to us.

True art can also be a healing force in society. In classical Greece, attendance at the theatre was free to all. The plays on the stage presented a multitude of pictures of human experience. The souls of those in the audience entered these pictures and underwent a catharsis. The art stimulated a “response-ability” to the dilemmas, challenges, and suffering of human life. Greek drama thus provided a transformative, healing experience for the audience. Throughout history, art has been in this way a foundation of education and soul hygiene.

According to Steiner, true art and architecture are essential as well to the moral development of humanity:





The Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland

If ideas underlying such [true] works of art find followers—then people

who allow themselves to be impressed by these works of art and who have learned to understand their language will never do wrong to their fellowmen either in heart or intellect, because the forms of art will teach them how to love; they will learn to live in harmony and peace with their fellow beings. Peace and harmony will pour into all hearts through these forms; such buildings will be “lawgivers,” and their forms will be able to achieve what external institutions can never achieve. . . . Howevermuch study may be given to the elimination of crime and wrongdoing from the world, true redemption, the turning of evil into good, will in future depend upon whether true art is able to pour a spiritual substance into the hearts and souls of human beings. When human hearts and souls are surrounded by the achievements of true architecture, sculpture, and the like [painting, music, literature, drama, and dance], human beings will cease to lie . . . , will cease to disturb the peace of their fellowmen. . . . Buildings [art] will begin to speak, and in a language of which people today have not even an inkling.³

True art, including architecture, is a moral force that can reorient the human soul. This sentiment is echoed by the Russian novelist and social visionary Leo Tolstoi (1828–1910):

The task for art to accomplish is to make that feeling of brotherhood and love of one’s neighbor . . . the customary feeling and the instinct of all people. The destiny of art in our time is to transform the realm of reason to the realm of feeling through the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set in place of the existing reign of force that Kingdom of God, i.e., of love, which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life.⁴

Interior detail of the Great Hall of the Goetheanum

For Steiner, art has yet another purpose—to save the very being of the Earth. In 1909 the dedication of a building designed by Steiner, his first, took place in the village of Malsch, Germany. The Malsch building prefigured many of the elements of Steiner’s later architectural work. At the laying of the foundation stone, Steiner spoke a dedicatory verse, in which he called on the beings of the spiritual world to bring strength and warmth and light into the building and into the work that would take place in it, and concluded with the words:

In pain and suffering our Mother Earth has become materialized. It is our task to once again spiritualize her, to redeem her, in that through the power of our hands we fashion a spirit-filled work of art. May this stone be a first foundation stone for the redemption and transformation of our planet Earth, and may the power of this stone work a thousandfold.⁵

On true art, then, depends the full development of each individual human being, the healing of the social body, the evolution of moral and social life, and the very destiny of the Earth.

Today we need to again recognize that every human being is an artist and that art is a necessary part of daily life. It is incumbent on every aware and aspiring human being to explore and develop his or her abilities in the arts. This is for our own good, for



Fifth-grade Waldorf student performing in a

the good of society, and for the Earth itself. The loftiness of this definition of true art—that it bring together the earthly and the heavenly—should not discourage the amateur artist. What is important is the aspiration to harmonize the worldly and divine dimensions of existence.

Art and Education

In Waldorf Education the arts play a crucial role. From kindergarten through the twelfth grade, the children regularly sing, play musical instruments, do artistic movement (eurythmy), paint, draw, sculpt, recite, and are involved in dramatic productions. They are also involved in a variety of craft activities, including knitting, sewing, woodworking, and metalwork. This work in the arts and the crafts is an end in itself, but also it is essential to the development of other, seemingly unrelated, capacities—

intellectual, social, and moral. [Please see the article “Adolescents and Art,” beginning on page 26 of this issue. Ed.]

The importance of art in

education is evident to many people outside of Waldorf Education. Robert E. Allen, former chairman and CEO of AT&T has observed:

We live in an age increasingly ruled by science and technology, a fact that only underscores the need for more emphasis on the arts. As we find science encroaching on every field of study, we need to ensure that our humanity does not become a historical footnote. That can best be assured with a solid understanding and appreciation of the arts. A grounding in the arts will help our children to see, to bring a unique perspective to science and technology. In short, it will help them as they grow smarter to also grow wiser.⁶

Little children know that they are artists. If you ask kindergarten children, “How many of you can draw? How many of you can sing? How many of you can dance?” all will enthusiastically assert that they can do each of these things. Art is the lifeblood of the soul of childhood. Waldorf Education, by making art an ongoing part of the child’s life, helps him keep this sense of artistic identity



through the growing-up years. And it predisposes the graduate, it is hoped, to a lifetime of artistic activity of some kind.

To us Waldorf parents, teachers, and friends, the rich Waldorf arts curriculum and the things of beauty the children create can serve as an inspiration for our own artistic journeys as creative beings.

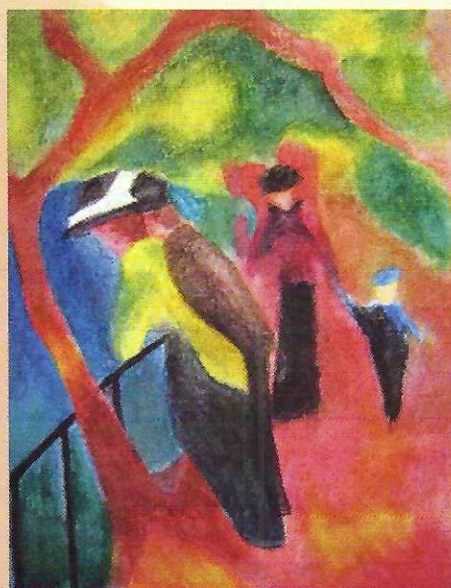
Art is the lifeblood of the soul; it awakens human consciousness and it humanizes society. Art is one of the most powerful gifts humanity has at its disposal. We modern human beings would do well, in our individual and in our collective lives, to make full use of this gift.

NOTES

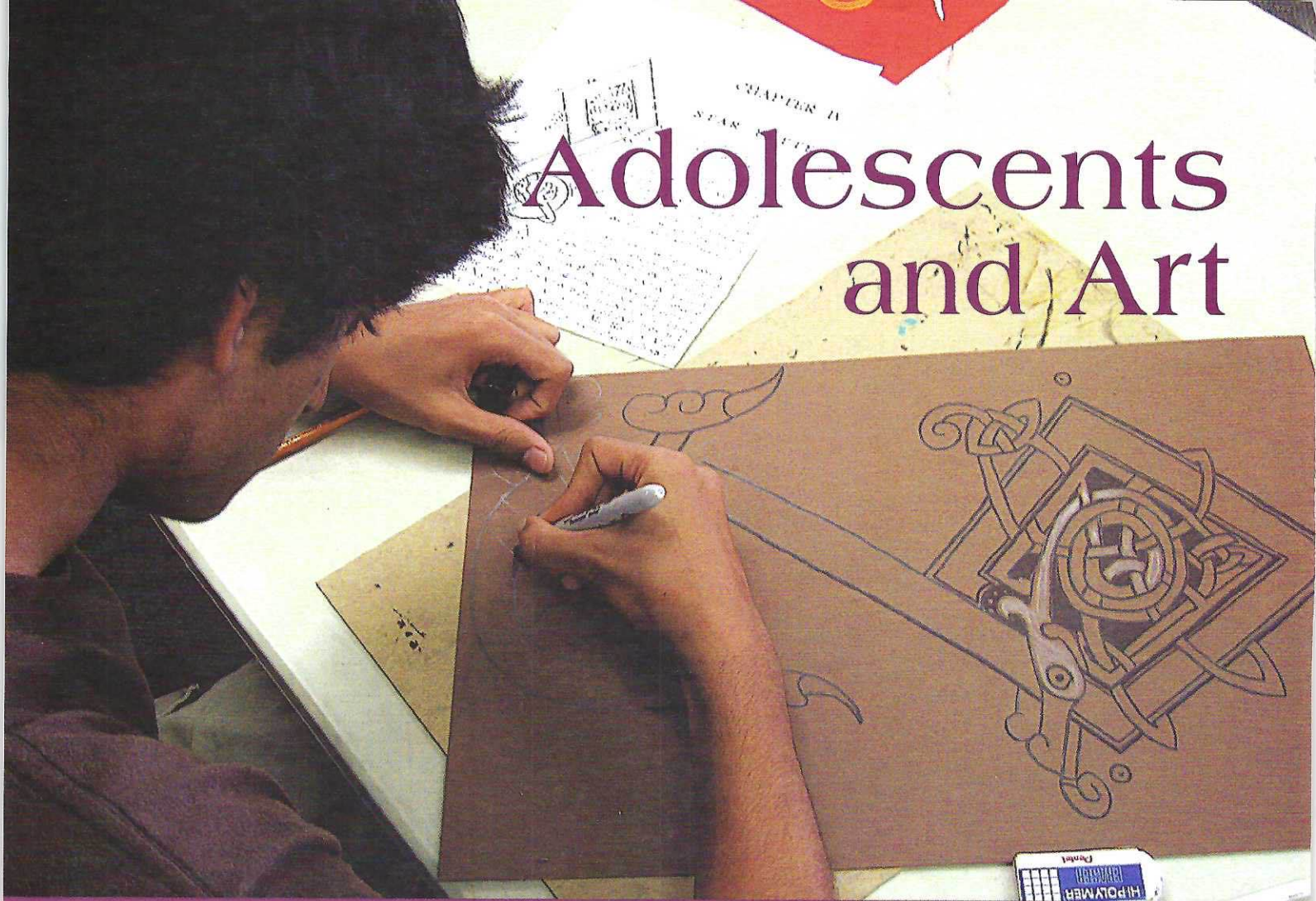
1. Rudolf Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1964), 43.
2. Rudolf Steiner, *Ways to a New Style in Architecture* (Dornach: Philosophisch-Anthroposophisch Verlag, 1929), 17.
3. Ibid.
4. Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?* trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Penguin, 1996).
5. Translation by John Wilkes, given to the author in 1975.
6. Laura Loyacono, *Reinventing the Wheel: A Design for Student Achievement in the Twentieth Century* (National Conference of State Legislatures, 1992), 25.

CREDITS: Pastel drawings on pages 22 and 23 by Van James: drawing on page 22 after Renaissance master; drawing on the top of page 23 after Lascaux; and drawing on the

bottom of page 23 after Ravenna mosaic. Photo on the bottom of page 24 by Aliki Sapountzi. Photo of Waldorf student clay sculpture on page 25 by Donald Bufano; paintings on page 25 by eleventh-grade students from the Honolulu Waldorf School; lower image by Sean Graf after Macke’s *The Park*.



Adolescents and Art



BY BRIDGET QUINN



*Painting, Twin Towers,
by a Waldorf eleventh grader*

*Photo above of ninth-grade Waldorf student
working on a Celtic design*

We know that the universe is infinite, expanding and strangely complete, that it lacks nothing we need, but in spite of that knowledge, the tragic paradigm of human life is lack, loss, finality, a primitive doomsaying that has not been repealed by technology or medical science. The arts stand in the way of this doomsaying. Art objects. The noun becomes an active force, not a collector's item. Art objects.

—Jeanette Winterson, Art [Objects]

*I*n an American education system currently humming with the rhetoric of "No Child Left Behind," there is a great deal, naturally, that may be left behind. When budgets are cinched gaspingly tight and schools are punished or rewarded based on students' scores on standardized tests, administrators are understandably pressed to cut anything "nonessential." In most districts, one of the obvious nonessentials is art. There is no art portion in state standards exams or in the SAT, for that matter.

At the end of 2004, President Bush announced that his administration would push for legislation that would extend "No Child Left Behind" provisions up through high school. This expansion will no doubt result in even more evisceration of the art programs in public high

schools. But will fewer opportunities for art be all that dire for adolescents, a soon-to-be-adult population that needs to be gearing up to face the real world? Surely, teenagers will be better prepared for life by grappling with a good computer course than messing about with paints. There is a widespread sense in American culture that while art is all very nice in kindergarten, it is probably a little flakey after that. Why, then, do we in Waldorf high schools insist on the continued important role of art in our curriculum?

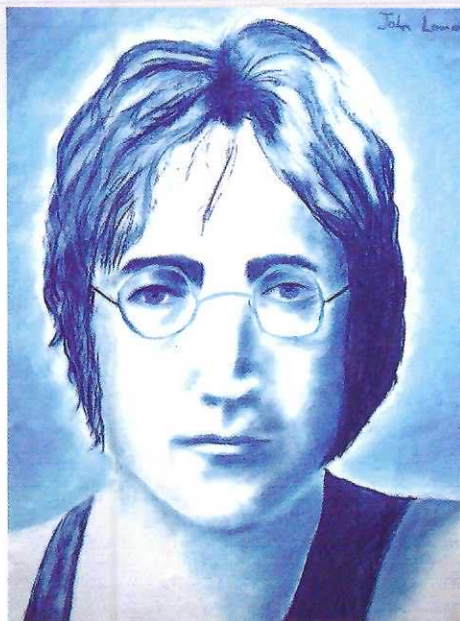
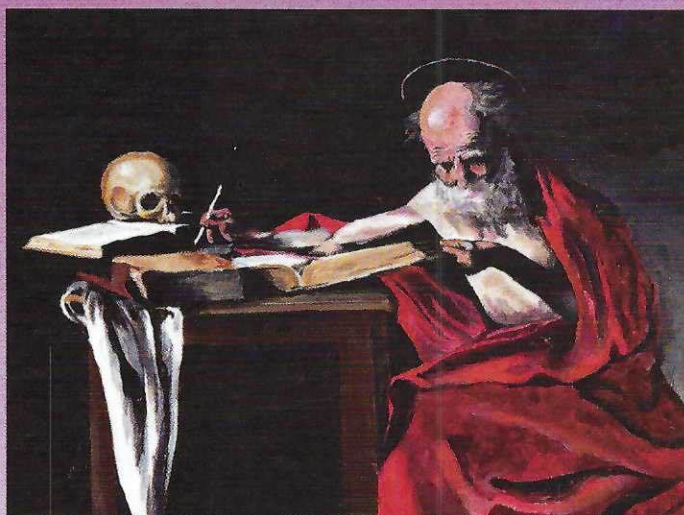
The answer may seem obvious: Because we're Waldorf; art is what we do. Yes, but why? Why should every class, whether physics or art history, have an artistic component? Is it necessary? Is it useful? At some point—and I have heard this argument—isn't all this art business in the high school just so much window dressing: for teachers, a pleasant artifact to display at open houses; for students, something to add a little panache to an otherwise mediocre main lesson book? What should we expect from the conjunction of art and teenagers anyway?

When I was in high school, art was an elective course that you could take once you reached the eleventh grade. You were selected for the course on the basis of submitted artistic work. Where one was to acquire the knowledge and ability to produce a work of artistic quality, I do not know. Presumably, for many students, it came from native talent. I, apparently lacking this, was assigned to "Automobile Maintenance," a course that would have no doubt benefited me enormously had I paid any attention, but my mind, and heart, were elsewhere.

I attended high school in Orange County, California, in a suburban beach town where my family moved shortly before I began ninth grade. All of my previous life was spent in a rural home on a few acres of

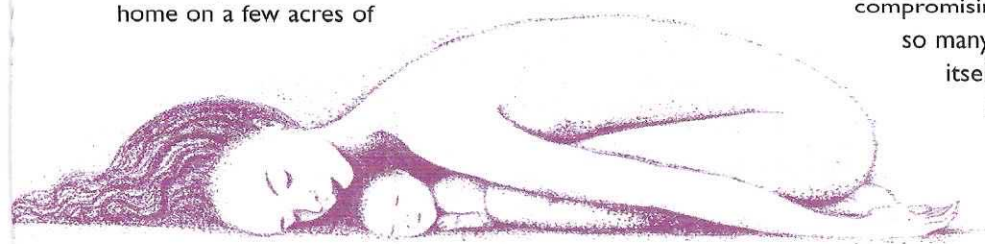
prairie land just outside of Great Falls, Montana. I was utterly unprepared for the brazen materialism I encountered in Southern California. This was the 1980s, and bumper stickers with slogans like "Shop Til You Drop" and "The One Who Dies With The Most Toys Wins" were ubiquitous. I was equally disturbed by the historical ignorance, rootlessness, and artificiality I felt everywhere around me. Desperately searching for some authentic experience amid the strip malls and cul-de-sacs, I eventually discovered punk rock. In the youth culture that surrounded the music (music we wanted to see live and felt compelled to play ourselves, no matter what our "talents"), I found other young people writing their own lyrics, music, and poetry; taking

photographs; creating posters and comics; and designing clothing, hairstyles, and body adornments that would make an eighteenth-century French courtier look positively banal. In short, I was encountering art as a living phenomenon, one in which I fully participated. The effect was inspiring and, I believe, ultimately lifesaving.



I was lucky. None of the darker aspects of the counterculture touched me. Others were less lucky. More than one of the young people in my social circle died from drug overdoses in their twenties. Others have gone on to become lawyers and college professors, but there is no question that, as nourishing in some ways as the counterculture we adored was, we walked a thin line from which one could fall to one side (addiction, street life, illness) or the other (creativity, self-

knowledge, progressivism). It strikes me now that had art been more available to us in our school and home lives, we would not have needed to seek it so desperately elsewhere. The fact that a grungy, socially compromising—and twenty years ago it was most definitely compromising—notion of self-expression appealed to so many suburban beach kids demonstrates in itself how difficult it was for us to find art, and how strong our inner need for art was.



At this point, a question arises. Can I actually equate a three-minute song or a strange hairstyle with art? Frankly, I can. The significance of art is not in how it *appears*, but in what it *does*. When I speak of art, I mean self-expression, the manifesting of something new out of oneself and placing it in the world. Here another question pops up: Is this a particularly important activity for adolescents, whom many feel have quite enough self-expression as it is?

In the introduction to his best-selling book *Care of the Soul*, psychotherapist Thomas Moore writes:

The great malady of the twentieth century, implicated in all of our troubles and affecting us individually and socially, is "loss of soul." When soul is neglected, it doesn't just go away; it appears symptomatically in obsessions, addictions, violence, and loss of meaning.¹

That last phrase could be a summary of any article discussing "the problems with today's youth" in our new century. And this is why art is vital for teenagers. At a time when adolescents are struggling to know who they are, what they think, and where they belong in the world, art provides a conduit to their souls—where the answers to those questions lie.

In her book *Between Form and Freedom*, longtime Waldorf high school teacher and author Betty Staley

describes the adolescent need for art this way:

The inner life of the adolescent craves art as a way of connecting, of conversing, of creating. . . . When we create something artistically, we stand before a mystery, something unknown. . . . As adolescents develop sensitivity to the creative process, they sense that they are the midwives to something that is being born. They partake in the mysteries of the universe.²

By experiencing that mystery, not only does the adolescent feed the soul hungering within, but she comes to understand that the soul in fact exists.

In a materialistic world, acquiring an experience of the existence of the soul is no small matter. What art provides in the years between early childhood and adulthood is both knowledge of the soul's existence and a place in which to invest that knowledge. For many young people, religion is a frighteningly authoritarian concept, both too fixed and too self-revealing to proclaim allegiance to. Teenagers are still feeling their way spiritually. Art provides a secular religion where young people can invest their emotional, spiritual, and cultural beliefs while they continue to develop. In the stages of human development, one might reasonably argue that teenagers are in the Romantic phase, filled with Sturm und Drang and myriad as yet unquenchable



obsessions. In his book *The Passion of the Western Mind*, philosopher Richard Tarnas provides an instructive glimpse of the Romantic worldview:

God was rediscovered in Romanticism—not the God of orthodoxy or deism but of mysticism, pantheism, and immanent cosmic process . . . not an absentee creator but a numinous creative force within nature and within the human spirit. . . . Moreover, art itself—music, literature, drama, painting—now took on a virtually religious status for the Romantic sensibility. . . . Art provided a unique point of conjunction between the natural and the spiritual, and for many modern intellectuals disillusioned with orthodox religion, art became the chief spiritual outlet and medium.³

If we can agree that art is vital for the healthy development of the soul, then perhaps our most difficult task as parents and teachers is to accept what comes to us as art from adolescents. This task can be challenging, particularly for those of us most accustomed to the tender artistic example that often permeates the world of the Waldorf lower school. I would suggest that art, like truth, is not always “a pretty picture.” Beauty—true beauty—can be both piercing and unsettling. Consider that the first words angels of the New Testament utter upon revealing themselves to man are: “Be not afraid.” If truth and beauty are one, then they might sometimes scare us. What is revealed to us by young people can be disconcerting and may not be outwardly what we expect from art. However, if it comes from a place of truth, then it will always contain an inner beauty to which we adults should be open and receptive.

There is one further aspect of soul life that art strengthens and that is the will. This idea is virtually unknown outside of anthroposophical and Waldorf circles, and yet its truth seems self-evident. When we make art, we alter outward reality with something that began as an invisible spark within us. In creating art, we manifest something new in the world, thus imprinting the force of our will upon the physical plane.

In *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Rudolf Steiner explains the development of the will more thoroughly. First, he says, “Cultivation of the will is based in unconscious and conscious repetition.” Then, specifically regarding the will and art, he continues:

Why do artistic activities affect the formation of the will particularly strongly? Because, first, practice is based upon repetition and, second, what people receive

through artistic activity always gives them joy. People enjoy art again and again, not just the first time. Art has a quality that can excite people not just once, but can time and again directly give them joy.⁴



The experience of joy should be reason enough for insisting on the primacy of the arts in the lives of adolescents. What that joy brings is incalculable for lifelong happiness and inner health: intercourse with the soul and cultivation of the will. It is with these tools that young people can fashion the lives they were meant to live.

NOTES

1. Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), xi.
2. Betty Staley, *Between Form and Freedom* (Stroud, UK: Hawthorn Press, 1988), 155.
3. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 373.
4. Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1996), 93.



BRIDGET QUINN is a writer, art historian, and humanities teacher at the San Francisco Waldorf High School. She has worked at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, taught art history at Portland State University, and her essays have appeared in anthologies, literary journals, and national magazines. Her essay “Back in the Pool” was one of four finalists for the 2006 Annie Dillard Prize in Creative Nonfiction. She lives in the Bernal Heights neighborhood of San Francisco with her husband, Rick, and her two young children, who both attend the San Francisco Waldorf School.

CREDITS: Photo on page 26 and tenth-grade portrait of John Lennon courtesy of Van James from the Honolulu Waldorf School. The following are works of art by students from the San Francisco Waldorf School: painting on page 26 by Nicholas Newmann; top image on page 27 by twelfth grader Jack Lorimer after Caravaggio’s St. Jerome; ink drawing on the bottom of page 27 by ninth grader Bryndis Magnusson; painting, *The Black Sea* from Trabzon, on page 28 and drawing on the bottom of page 29 by twelfth grader Patrick Regan; and painting on the top of page 29 by eleventh grader Amelie Alba.





Earth and Heaven

The Study of the Sciences in Grade Six

BY EUGENE SCHWARTZ

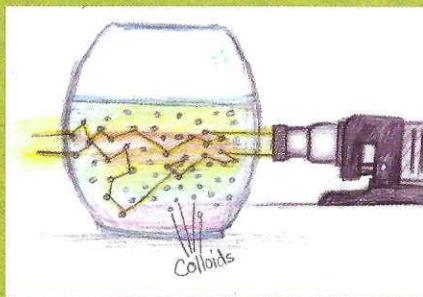
As Waldorf students cross the threshold of early adolescence, the proportion of science classes in the curriculum increases significantly. Sixth graders have two natural science courses—geology and astronomy—and they are given their first experience of laboratory science when they study physics. Even mathematics takes a practical turn as youngsters learn about banking and business, balancing a checking account, and maintaining a stock portfolio. Like the Romans whom they are studying in history classes, sixth graders are standing firmly on the Earth and feeling increasingly enmeshed in earthly concerns.

To complement their science and math studies, sixth graders now learn geometrical drawing. In the first five years, they mastered form drawing, a freehand drawing method that helped them develop the eye's mastery over the hand.

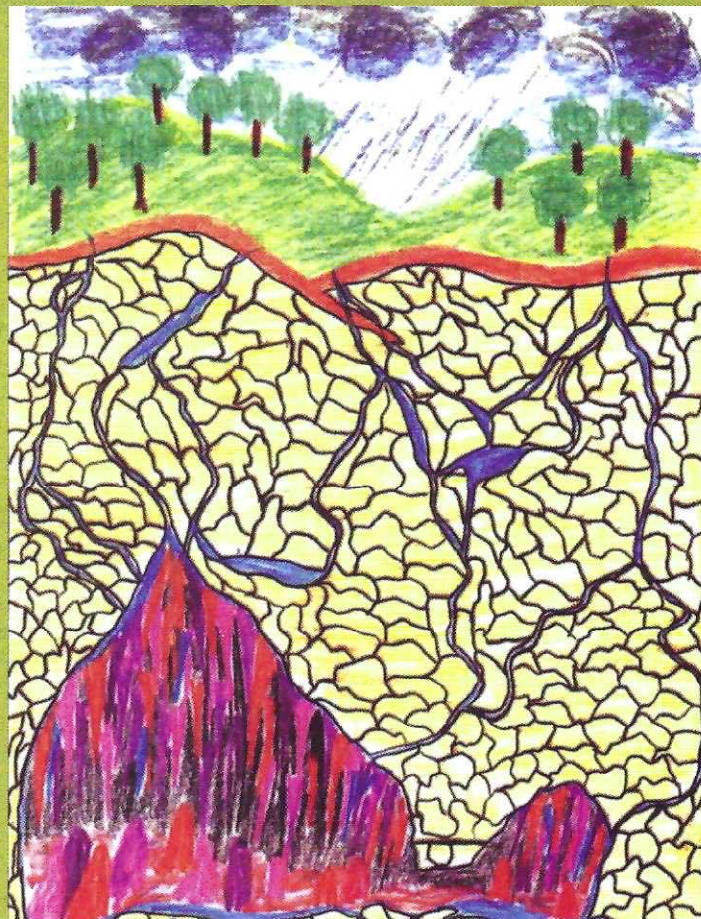
Geometrical drawing introduces sixth graders to drawing instruments—the compass and straightedge—that are extensions of the eye and the hand, objectifications of the student's inborn faculties. This *capacity* of objectification, as well as the attendant *skills* of creating straight lines and circles with instruments, will be put to use when such sciences as astronomy and optics are studied later in the year.

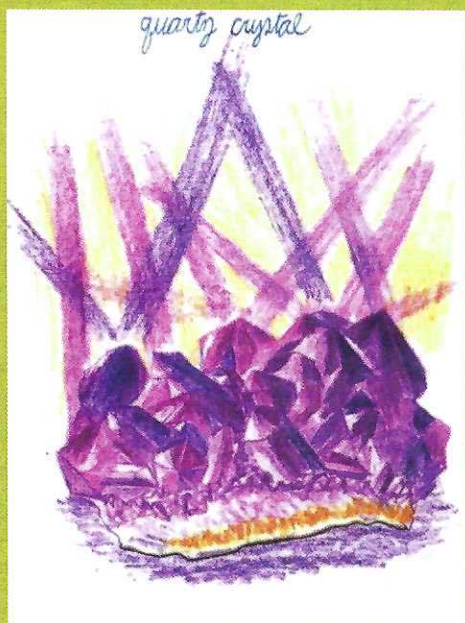
These steps toward the objectification of the natural world are among the most important that may be taken by a twelve- to thirteen-year-old, for they begin to awaken the nascent forces of individuality that are best left to slumber in the younger child. As is true in every subject studied in the Waldorf school, the capacities of soul and spirit that are roused and nourished are no less important than the specific factual or skills-based content learned by the student.

What follows is a sketch of one way in which sixth-grade sciences can



Drawings from sixth-grade main lesson books in astronomy (above), geology (right), and physics (left)





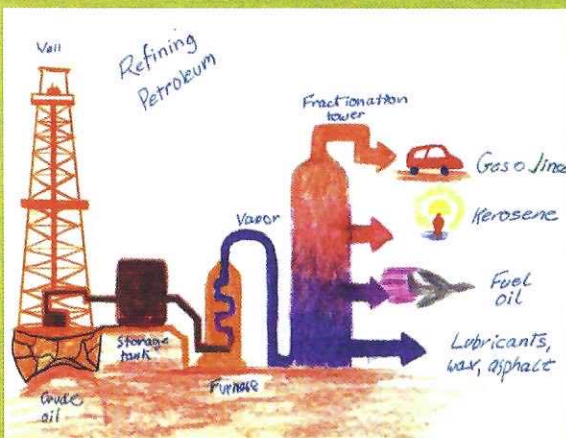
awaken these new capacities. It reflects my particular approach and is meant to be descriptive only, not prescriptive. Ideally, in science as in every subject, each Waldorf class teacher uses his or her creativity and imagination in developing a way of presenting the topic appropriate to the children in the class.

Geology

Geology, or mineralogy (a term preferred by some Waldorf teachers), helps young adolescents make a connection with the substantiality of the Earth. The animals that were studied in fourth grade are irresistibly appealing; plants, studied in fifth grade, draw us to them with beauty and fragrance; but the mineral world waits, and the sixth grader himself must make the effort to penetrate its secrets. There is nothing like mineralogy to rouse even the most sluggish adolescent soul.

Early adolescence marks the birth of the child's independent inner life, an experience fraught with both pain and joy. Now the youngster can experience the polarity of "inner" and "outer," of "self" and "world." Waldorf teachers try to present every subject in the light of this polarity, so that all that is learned in sixth grade can affirm and celebrate this new stage of life. The class teacher also builds on observation skills developed by students in grades four and five that now serve them in sketching and painting forms in the mineral world.

The "Roman" quality of the sixth grader demands that every subject studied have a practical application—just what can people do with this? How does it affect the world? A teacher may choose to develop any number of practical applications of the mineralogical and geological sciences: mining of metals or coal; predicting volcanoes; manufacturing cement, and so on.

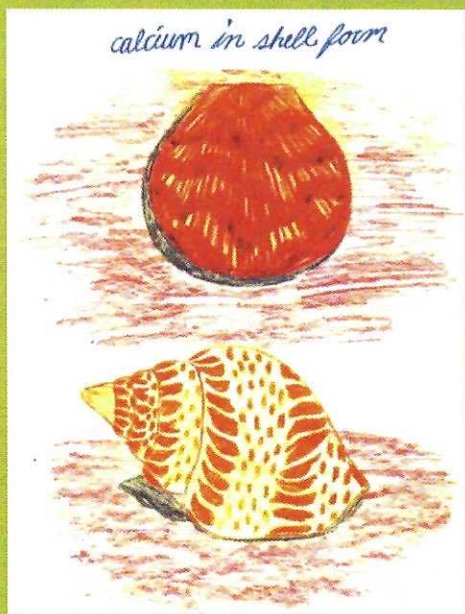


Astronomy

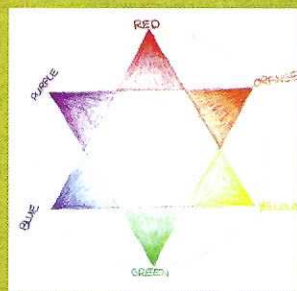
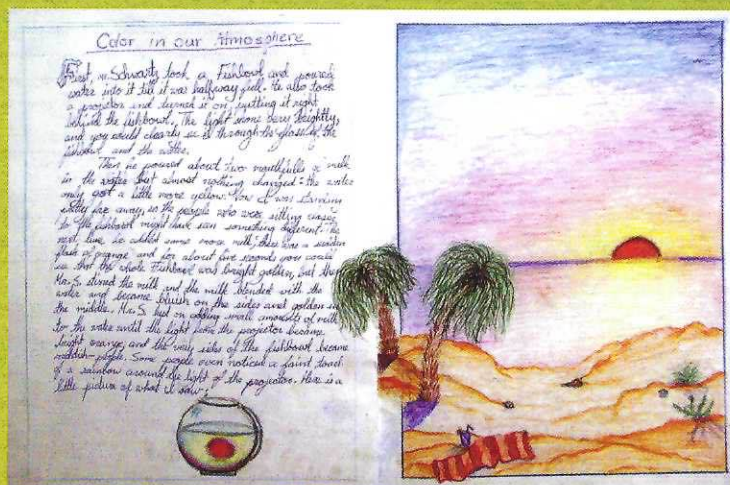
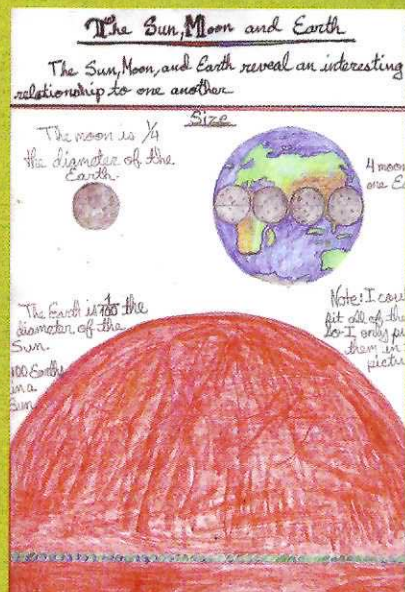
A prime example of the age-appropriate nature of Waldorf Education is the placement of astronomy in the sixth-grade curriculum. Astronomy is taught to children precisely at the time when they are feeling themselves drifting away from the heavens and stumbling in earthly darkness and uncertainty. Few fields of study demonstrate "lawfulness" as clearly as astronomy, and its study can be reassuring to the young adolescent. Astronomy gives students good reasons to look up and to revere the laws that govern the grander things in life.

The astronomy block is largely based on naked (unaided) eye observation, an approach not widely practiced today. As modern people, we know all about black holes and quasars and the gaseous composition of the outer planets—but how many of us know which way the crescent moon's curve faces when it is waxing, or in what direction the stars in the southern sky appear to move each night? Perhaps it should not surprise us that, while professional astronomers rely on radio telescopes and computer printouts, some recent astronomical discoveries were made by amateurs, who do actually gaze at the stars. For example, in July 1995, two amateur skywatchers, Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp, independently sighted a spectacular comet that became known as Hale-Bopp.

In the month preceding the astronomy block, sixth graders spend every evening observing the course of the waxing and waning moon. As they compile their observations, they are asked to carefully note in what part



Drawings from sixth-grade main lesson books in geology



Drawings from sixth-grade main lesson books in astronomy (top two images) and physics (bottom three images)



of the sky the moon first appears at any time of night (or day) and where it stands in relationship to the sun. Parents who get involved with their child's observations invariably remark with some chagrin that, having seen the moon wax and wane over hundreds of months, they could not have formulated accurate answers to the questions assigned to their sixth grader!

A host of questions arise among the students as a result of their observations. Does the moon follow the same waxing and waning patterns throughout the year? Does the moon's position in the sky change in the course of a month or a year? Does it follow the same path through the heavens as the sun? Modern children, so at home in cyberspace and the shopping mall, are complete strangers to the sun and moon that have accompanied them throughout their lives thus far—and are likely to continue to be.

These exercises in observation were compiled by Hermann von Baravalle and Norman Davidson, both Waldorf teachers, geometers, and amateur astronomers. Baravalle also developed the technique of envisioning an arrow, streaming left from the moon's center, which always points to the sun's current position, even when the sun is far below the horizon.

Sixth graders also observe the apparent movement of the stars. A prominent star is chosen in each quarter of the sky and then drawn in relation to an object on the horizon (a hill, a roof, or a tree). Over several nights, students meticulously track their stars and, extrapolating from their combined observations, make four drawings that show the stars moving in ever-expanding concentric circles with Polaris, the North Star, as their center. And in which direction do the stars "move"? In the eastern sky, stars appear to rise above the observer to the zenith, while in the western sky the stars descend from the heights and set in the west. In the southern part of the sky, stars seem to move clockwise in concentric semicircles above an unseen center, while in the north the rotation around Polaris is counter-clockwise.

Astronomy certainly calls for careful observation, but it is also a schooling for the imagination. Sixth graders are now asked to take their observations and work with them conceptually. For example, at 40° latitude, I have to crane my neck at a 40° angle to observe the North Star. At 50° latitude, I would have to crane at a 50° angle to observe the North Star. At what angle would I have to crane my neck to view that star at the North Pole (90° latitude)? What would happen at the Equator (0°)? Such imaginative exercises will serve as a foundation for understanding the role of the North Star and the sextant in navigation when students learn about the Age of Exploration in seventh grade.

Understanding the rhythmical and remarkably harmonious interplay of the sun and moon as they appear in the sky also calls for mobile thinking. For example, the full moon's lofty position in the winter sky is exactly

that of the sun in the summer sky, and vice versa. The sun's role in the cycle of seasons, or all that underlies an eclipse, cannot be easily surmised from direct observation alone. Indeed, we may say that the sixth grade astronomy block marks the first time that Waldorf students are asked to "conceptualize," to think with a greater degree of abstraction and mobility than in earlier grades. In this respect, the study of astronomy serves as an important milestone in the students' school experience.

Physics

The younger child, seamlessly integrated with her surroundings, finds joy and satisfaction in the natural sciences, the study of the kingdoms of nature that constitute her outer environment. The newly born inner life of the sixth grader, however, begins to experience discord and uncertainty in relation to its surroundings. "Natural science" is no longer sufficient. Just as here and there in the late Middle Ages prescient individuals began to set up controlled interior spaces for alchemical investigation, so the sixth grader needs to learn the "inner" side of science, in the laboratory. The study of physics in sixth grade marks the crossing of an important threshold for the adolescent Waldorf student.

The Waldorf physics curriculum is so rich that every sixth-grade teacher is faced with a daunting array of choices. Roberto Trostli, in his extremely helpful book *Physics is Fun!*^{*}, suggests that exposing the children to many branches of the physical sciences in sixth grade provides a healthy foundation for greater depth as these fields are revisited in grades seven and eight. During my many years of teaching at the Green Meadow Waldorf School, in the sixth grade I taught only acoustics, color, and optics and introduced the other physical sciences in the upper grades. There are Waldorf teachers, however, who also bring the study of heat, magnetism, and electricity in the sixth grade.

Waldorf school sixth graders will not probably have access to a laboratory, but this is not necessarily a deprivation. When the teacher uses black paper to cover the classroom windows, or turns his or her desk into a laboratory bench, the student sees that science need not be removed from everyday life. In many circumstances, I assigned "homework" that required students to replicate our demonstrations at home for their parents, so that their whole family could recognize that the scientific method could be utilized anywhere.

At one time our class had been working with wine glasses that were filled with carefully calibrated amounts of water and rubbed to produce tones. One student proved so adept at musical wine glasses that he was able to play the

final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Every hour he would return to the wine glasses with an eyedropper, "tuning" them by adding droplets, in order to compensate for evaporation. Several parents reported their dismay at taking their children to fine restaurants, only to have them ignore their food and make music with the costly stemware at their table.

The work with laboratory demonstrations requires a new step in language arts. In earlier grades, the children wrote compositions out of an imaginative response to their teacher's classroom presentations. The sixth graders now learn that the scientific method demands that we not only observe phenomena, but that we also be able to describe our methods and observations clearly and succinctly. We must make it possible for the demonstration to be replicated anywhere else and bear the same results, and our means of communicating what we have done is an essential factor here.

When the class begins its physics block with the study of acoustics, the figure of Pythagoras is often invoked as the father of this branch of the sciences. It was Pythagoras (whose biography is often studied by fifth graders in their ancient history block) who created the monochord and labored to bring earthly music into harmony with divine ideals. The monochord is an apparatus with a single string

Subscribe

*to the journal about Waldorf Education
that offers parents and teachers
information and insights
that are both illuminating
and practical.*

Renewal

that can be easily shortened or lengthened to produce various tones.* For the ancient Greeks, numerical relationships bridged the gap between the earthly and the heavenly. Thus music, too, would have to have a numerical foundation. Aside from its other virtues, the study of the monochord also provides the opportunity for an intensive review of fractions, first learned in fourth grade.

Class teachers are often tempted—or required—to give over science blocks in the middle school to an expert. However, the way in which science classes are integrated with everything else that the Waldorf student learns makes it that much more important for the class teacher to teach those science classes. It is he or she who is best able to help the class recollect other subjects taught in earlier years that reappear in the laboratory, as well as to foreshadow subjects that are yet to come.

It is good for sixth graders to explore a multiplicity of ways to approach the same phenomenon. In acoustics, for example, in addition to the wine glasses mentioned above, blocks of wood, lengths of pipe, cardboard cores from paper towel rolls, concrete walls and iron railings, paper cups and lengths of string were all enlisted in our quest to understand sound. In a Waldorf school, children have been singing and playing two or more musical instruments for years before they undertake the study of

acoustics. Now they can approach their experiences in a more conscious and cognitive way.

For several days, students may explore the qualities of musical instruments, learning how size and shape, wood and metal, reeds and valves all play an essential role in the acoustical qualities of an instrument. Woods and reeds may have been studied in botany a year before, while the metals may have just been explored in their geology block. Here again the integrated approach typical of Waldorf methodology makes connections between different subjects.

Just as artistically modulated sound, in the form of speech and music, has surrounded the class since early childhood, so has the world of color. After years of painting and drawing, modeling colored beeswax, and knitting and sewing with colorful yarn and thread, sixth graders are ready to bring this visible world, as well as the world of sound, to clearer consciousness.

The teacher begins with a phenomenon quite familiar to the class: the blending of watercolor paints, out of which sixth graders develop the color wheel, with its alternation of primary and secondary colors. The color wheel itself echoes the colorful geometrical forms that the students had created earlier in the year.

Waldorf school studies of light and color draw primarily on the methods and theories of J.W. von Goethe (1749–1832). Goethe places the scientific investigator in an active role in making phenomena happen and focuses on the mysterious interplay between inner and outer realities—an approach that suits the sixth grader's experience of the world.

Sixth graders are especially intrigued with the phenomenon of the afterimage, described by Goethe as “physiological color.” For example, students are asked to stare at a blue circle for ten or twenty seconds and then turn away to stare at a white sheet of paper. Most students see a ghostly pale orange disk hovering over the paper. If they close their eyes, the color disappears, so it is not an “inner” phenomenon, but it can't be photographed in the way we could capture an “outer” phenomenon.

Isaac Newton (1642–1737), in developing his theory of color, suspended a prism and allowed light to pass through it, projecting a spectrum of colors onto a blank medium, while he observed from a distance. Goethe, in contrast, held the prism up to his eye and looked *through* it at the world, which led him to a diametrically opposite perception of how colors arise. Although the difference in approach may seem subtle, for the sixth grader it is important to experience science as an active encounter with the world, rather than as merely passive observation, and the Goethean method speaks to this need.

Renewal

☐ One-year subscription \$13 or ☐ Two-year subscription \$26

☐ One-year foreign subscription \$22

Begin subscription with

☐ Fall/Winter 20__ or ☐ Spring/Summer 20__

Name (please print)

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone Number

E-mail Address

☐ Check Enclosed ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ AMEX

Card Number

Exp.

Signature

Thank you! Please mail or fax this form with payment to:

AWSNA/Renewal

3911 Bannister Road · Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Phone: 916-961-0927 · Fax: 916-961-0715

Among the topics explored in the light, color, and optics block are the phenomena of sunset and sunrise, the rainbow, the camera obscura, reflection and refraction, windows, mirrors, and lenses. As in so many other subjects in the Waldorf curriculum, there are echoes and resonances of subjects that were studied earlier. Adolescence is a time when the child's view of the world can be clouded by the turmoil of emotions and uncertainties, when he or she sees the world "through a glass, darkly." Work with light and color and reflection and refraction can help to open the eyes of the sixth graders anew, bringing clarity and objectivity into their lives.

In seventh grade, students will study human physiology—and will hear of Leonardo da Vinci and others who first exhumed corpses for study—as well as more physics and have their first chemistry block. Eighth graders will study human anatomy and physiology as their natural sciences and continue with physics and chemistry, as they learn of the changes those sciences wrought through the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Invention. In the Waldorf high school, all of these sciences reappear in a more advanced form. Although studied as discrete disciplines, the sciences are not viewed as abstract domains of knowledge removed from ethical considerations and historical consequences. Each science block is integrated into the totality of the Waldorf curriculum, and its connections to history, geography, literature, and art are made clear. The arts and humanities weave through every science block taught from grades four through twelve, eliciting a sense of wholeness in the soul of the student.

The sciences are taken seriously in the Waldorf school. They are seen as a part of the cultural and intellectual legacy to which every child—not just the gifted and brilliant—is entitled.

* published by AWSNA Publications, 1995

** available as a science kit from AWSNA Publications

EUGENE SCHWARTZ has taught grade school and high school at Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York, and has served as director of teacher training at Sunbridge College. He was the recipient of a fellowship from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He is an international lecturer, Waldorf consultant, and author and lectures at the "Essential Waldorf" conferences held every summer in Mancos, Colorado. Eugene wrote and codirected the recent DVD *Eurythmy: Making Movement Human* (Hogens Production Studio), available from AWSNA Publications, and his articles and commentary may be accessed at www.millennialchild.com



BOOKS

in Brief

Basic Sculptural Modeling Developing the Will by Working with Pure Forms in the First Three Grades

BY HELLA LOEWE

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

AWSNA Publications
Fair Oaks, CA, 2006
114 pages • \$18.00

When Rudolf Steiner was designing the Waldorf curriculum almost ninety years ago, he conceived of the visual arts curriculum as based on watercolor painting, form drawing, and what he called *plastisches Gestalten*, or "sculptural modeling." Dr. Steiner emphasized that in the early grades, in each of these activities, the children should create pure, nonrepresentational forms rather than replicate natural objects such as animals and trees. Working artistically with pure form fosters the healthy and harmonious development of the young child.

Rudolf Steiner gave many painting and form drawing exercises for children in the early grades, and this work has always been a standard part of the Waldorf curriculum. Sculptural modeling, however, has not been widely adopted. Many Waldorf class teachers introduce clay modeling only in the middle grades.

Hella Loewe, now retired, was a class teacher at the Kräherwald Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany. Having to deal with a class of rambunctious and disorderly first graders, she discovered that having the children do sculptural modeling with clay had a therapeutic, transformative effect. Modeling pure forms strengthened the will forces of the children, channeled these forces into appropriate behaviors, and helped the children develop self-discipline. Hella Loewe concluded that sculptural modeling exercises are essential in the early grades. She developed a series of modeling exercises of pure forms—spheres, three-dimensional ovals, threefold symmetrical shapes, and so on—and then wrote this book to explain how she had worked with the children.

In 2004 the original German version of *Basic Sculptural Modeling* was published. This 2006 English edition comes with an introduction by Arthur Auer, an American Waldorf educator who, like Hella Loewe, had realized the importance of sculptural modeling in the early grades. The volume has many striking photographs of pure form modeling, both prototypes and student work. *Basic Sculptural Modeling* is essential for Waldorf class teachers wishing to bring this important artistic work to their students and for parents interested in bringing wholesome artistic activities into the home.

Going Where the Rocks Are

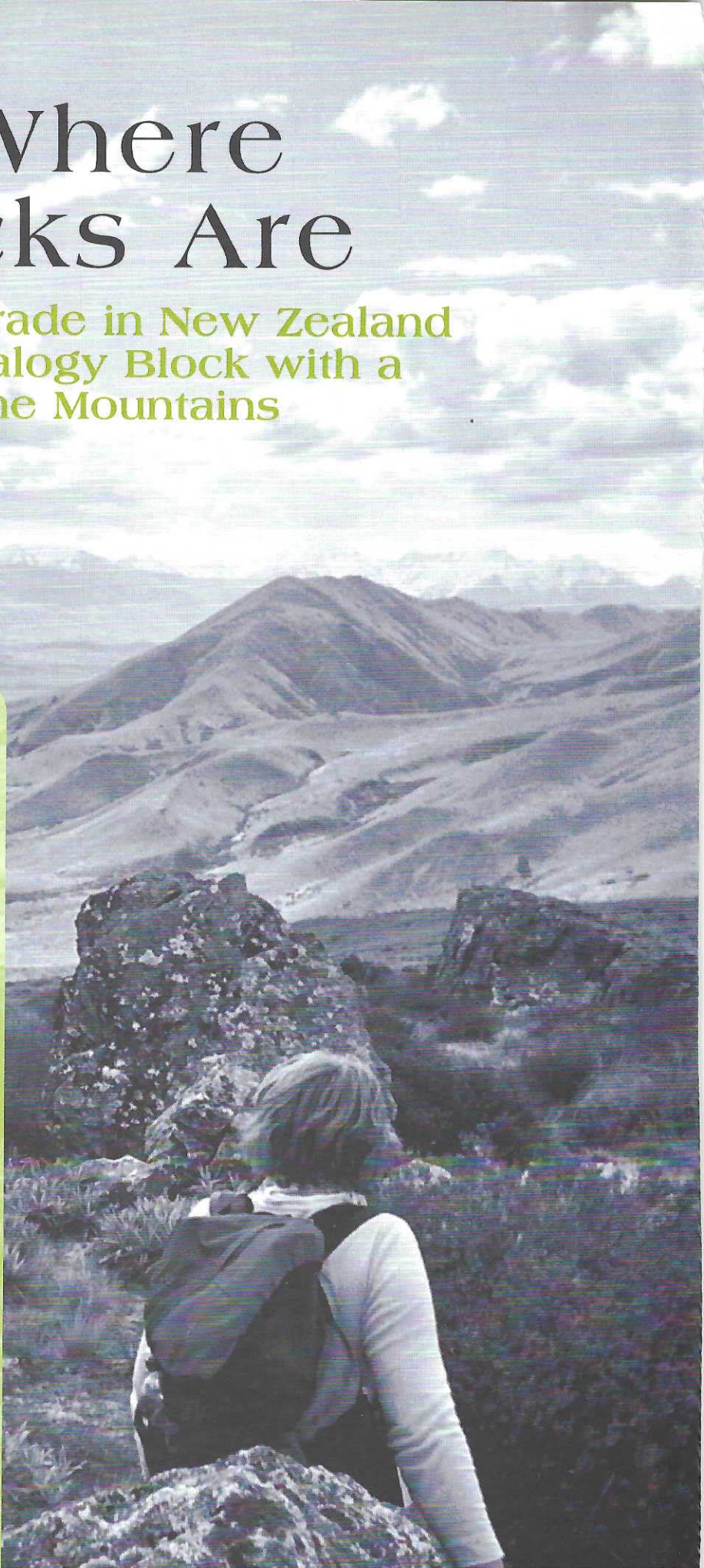
A Waldorf Sixth Grade in New Zealand Finishes its Mineralogy Block with a Camping Trip to the Mountains

BY NEIL CARTER

In 1919 Rudolf Steiner gave the curriculum for the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany. Since then, Waldorf Education has spread around the world with about 900 schools in almost ninety countries. Waldorf teachers around the world seek to adapt the original curriculum to their particular place and time so that the needs of their students are met.

In my teaching, I take as a basic premise that the Waldorf curriculum, using both the world of the senses and imaginative pictures, presents outwardly what the children and older students are experiencing inwardly in their souls and spirits, at each age and stage of development. This age-appropriate pedagogy enables the children to pass through the various stages in a healthy and positive manner.

The world has changed greatly since 1919. Most aspects of our lives—economic, social, technological, political—have changed radically. New moral and ethical dilemmas and attitudes, new diseases, climate change, and ecological challenges all cause teachers to ask: “How can I present the curriculum in a way that nourishes students’ souls and growing spirits and prepares them for the future? How can



I make my lessons relevant, healing, and life-giving, for the children and for myself?"

One topic that Rudolf Steiner suggested for the first Waldorf school ninth-grade class—fifteen-year-olds—was new at the time and not yet generally accepted. This was the theory of continental drift that had been first advanced in 1912 by the German meteorologist Alfred Wegener. A forerunner of the idea of tectonic plates, the theory of continental drift explains the present shape of the Earth's continents. The idea that the various continents once were part of a single landmass and then moved apart was verified only in the 1960s, when research confirmed the spreading of the ocean floors. Steiner supported Wegener's ideas and suggested that aspects of continental drift, volcanology, and the phenomenon of the mountain "crosses"—that some of the world's highest mountain ranges, such as the Andes and Rockies, run north and south while others, such as the Himalayas and Swiss Alps, run east and west—be taught to the ninth-grade students.

The enormous forces at play in the creation of the Earth and in the formation of the continents are related in a metaphorical way to the inner life of the fifteen-year-old. In the different types of volcanic eruptions, the volcanic material moves at vastly different speeds. The andesite lavas of the Andes volcanoes flow relatively slowly, while Hawaiian basalt flows more freely in molten rivers that are quenched by the sea. In some eruptions, a mass of gas-charged volcanic ash—*nuées ardentes*—moves down the mountainside at sixty miles per hour. In other even more violent incidents, ignimbrite, a mixture of ash and pumice, can be expelled at yet far greater speeds. The

powerful, unpredictable "magma" of the adolescent soul also moves at greatly varied speeds!

In contrast, for the twelve-year-olds in the sixth grade, Rudolf Steiner suggested the study of the surface features of the Earth—the shapes of continents (with the map upside down or rightside up) and the rivers, mountains, and other features of the various nations and

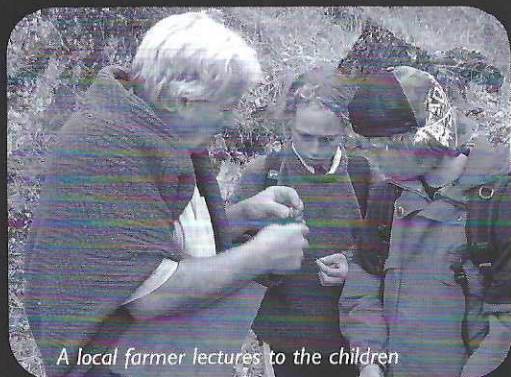
regions of this planet. He also suggested mineralogy, the study of the various minerals and the processes of mineral formation, with an emphasis on the wonder and beauty that is manifest to the human eye. For Steiner, the sixth-grade study was to be distinct from the geology and the volcanology studied in the ninth grade.

In 2006 I taught the mineralogy main lesson block to my sixth-grade class at the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School in New Zealand. I was determined that we would study in such a way that the pupils, when they reached the ninth-grade geology block, would not feel, "Oh, we've done all this before!" There is sometimes a temptation for the Waldorf class teacher to deal in the sixth grade with subjects that really belong to an older age

group. The twelve-year-old is still living in the world of imagination, feeling, and beauty. Hence, I tried to keep us engaged in the beauty and wonder of the mineral world, very much at the level of local, direct observation.

Prior to the block, the children collected—from around our own school grounds and from places visited on summer holiday—examples of the three main types of rocks:

- **sedimentary** (greywackes, sandstones, and limestones—rocks formed by the pressures of



A local farmer lectures to the children



accumulating layers of mineral material);

- **volcanic** (basalts, rhyolites, and andesites from the extinct Lyttelton volcano, just above our school, and granites from holidays in the Abel Tasman National Park—all the direct products of volcanic activity);
- **metamorphic** (schist and gneiss—rocks formed by heat and pressure—brought by students who had spent their holidays near the Franz Josef Glacier in Westland National Park).

The students also found on the school grounds mineral substances transformed by human beings—pieces of iron from a corrugated roof and also asphalt and tar. This brought up the ancient Babylonian story of the Great Flood and the use of tar in the waterproofing of their ark, and also led me to reminisce about smelling tar as a child in Trinidad.

The children made small collections of the various minerals. They examined the specimens closely, both with a magnifying lens and with the naked eye, did hardness tests, and tested for magnetism. The students also sketched the specimens and did beautiful watercolor veil paintings of the crystals. I had them try to identify samples blindfolded, and on the final main lesson test they had to identify and write about each of ten samples. They very much enjoyed this challenge. Throughout the block, the students were impressed by colors, shapes, and overall beauty of the semiprecious stones, as well as of the quartz, feldspar, mica, and other minerals.

Such collecting and observation was an excellent preparation for going out and experiencing these minerals in

their natural setting. Fortunately, quite near to Christchurch is an area of geological diversity well suited for such studies. The Mount Somers–Stavely area experienced ancient rhyolitic volcanic activity and contains not only rhyolites (volcanic rocks whose texture bespeaks a slower flow than that of basalt), but

also coal deposits, limestone deposits (25 million years old), agates, and other “gems.” Since the biennial “Minerals to Art” fair in Mount Somers village was held on the first day of our outing, we had a perfect venue for further study and for exploration.

The class spent several days preparing for the trip. We studied the history and culture of the area. We gathered camping equipment and food, planned menus, and figured out the most interesting, economical, and safe route to get to where we were going. All of this was also good training for the students.

The four-day class camping trip through the relatively unspoiled New Zealand natural landscape included a variety of adventures: a visit to

a limestone quarry where we collected fossils; cutting limestone using an ancient stonecutting tool; dips in icy streams; visits to water caves and to a coal mine; seeing a water gun once used to mine coal by washing away surrounding clay; experiencing gale force winds and collapsed tents; climbing a 3000-foot summit; and a before-bedtime telling of the life story of Helen Keller.

These were only a few of the experiences. On other days there were encounters with skinks and other types of lizards, falcons, and ants; a blindfolded walk through the forest, guided by a rope tied from tree to tree;



Student painting of an abandoned limestone kiln



seeing a glacial valley that had once been all ice; hearing a talk by a local farmer about the abandoned limestone kilns (once used to make burnt lime), the local slate, and the four-and-a-half-billion-year geological history of the Earth; visiting a local geological and historical museum; each student spending an hour alone in the bush; sketching local landmarks; as well as eating ice cream, playing games, and just basking in New Zealand's February and March summer sunshine.

I joined in all of this with the students, but my own experience as teacher is well expressed by the following entry from my diary. (Each child also kept a daily journal.)

One night we were playing spotlight in the field, but one of the students asked us to turn out the torches because there were shooting stars. The children saw more than I, but I saw four brilliant meteors. I feel really happy when the children start pointing things out to their teacher.

During this block, the children had an opportunity to experience the natural world and in particular the mineral world, directly and intimately, in a way that not only informed their minds but also nourished their souls, and in a way that prepared them for the later, more intellectual study of the subject.



NEIL CARTER is a class teacher at the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School in Christchurch, New Zealand. He obtained a BS (honors) degree at Victoria University in Wellington, NZ, in ecology and obtained his Waldorf teaching diploma in Stuttgart, Germany. Neil has taught all levels from class one through class twelve, as well as adults, and is currently class teacher for grade seven. He also coedits the semiannual Journal for Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner Education and, as a member of the New Zealand Steiner Teachers' Education Group, coordinates teacher training at the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School.

CREDIT: Photographs by Rex Verity



BOOKS

in Brief

Math Lessons for Elementary Grades

BY DOROTHY HARRER

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH

AWSNA Publications
Fair Oaks, CA, 2005
131 pages • \$14.00

Dorothy Harrer was a Waldorf class teacher who taught for many years at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City. Toward the end of her teaching career, Harrer put her accumulated wisdom about the teaching of mathematics into a little book called *Math Lessons for Elementary Grades*. First published in 1985, this book has been reissued in an attractive and easily used edition.

The book starts with some relevant quotes from Rudolf Steiner on the teaching of arithmetic. This includes the remarkable advice that children poor in arithmetic be given extra time in Bothmer gymnastics and eurythmy, with emphasis on the counting of steps. "What lies at the root of arithmetic," Steiner observed, "is consciously willed movement, the sense of movement, [and it] will bring the child's arithmetical powers to life."

Harrer then offers a selection of lessons in math from each of the first six grades. The book is rich with verses, poems, riddles, games, stories, physical activities, and artistic exercises that introduce the mathematical concepts and processes appropriate to children of each age.

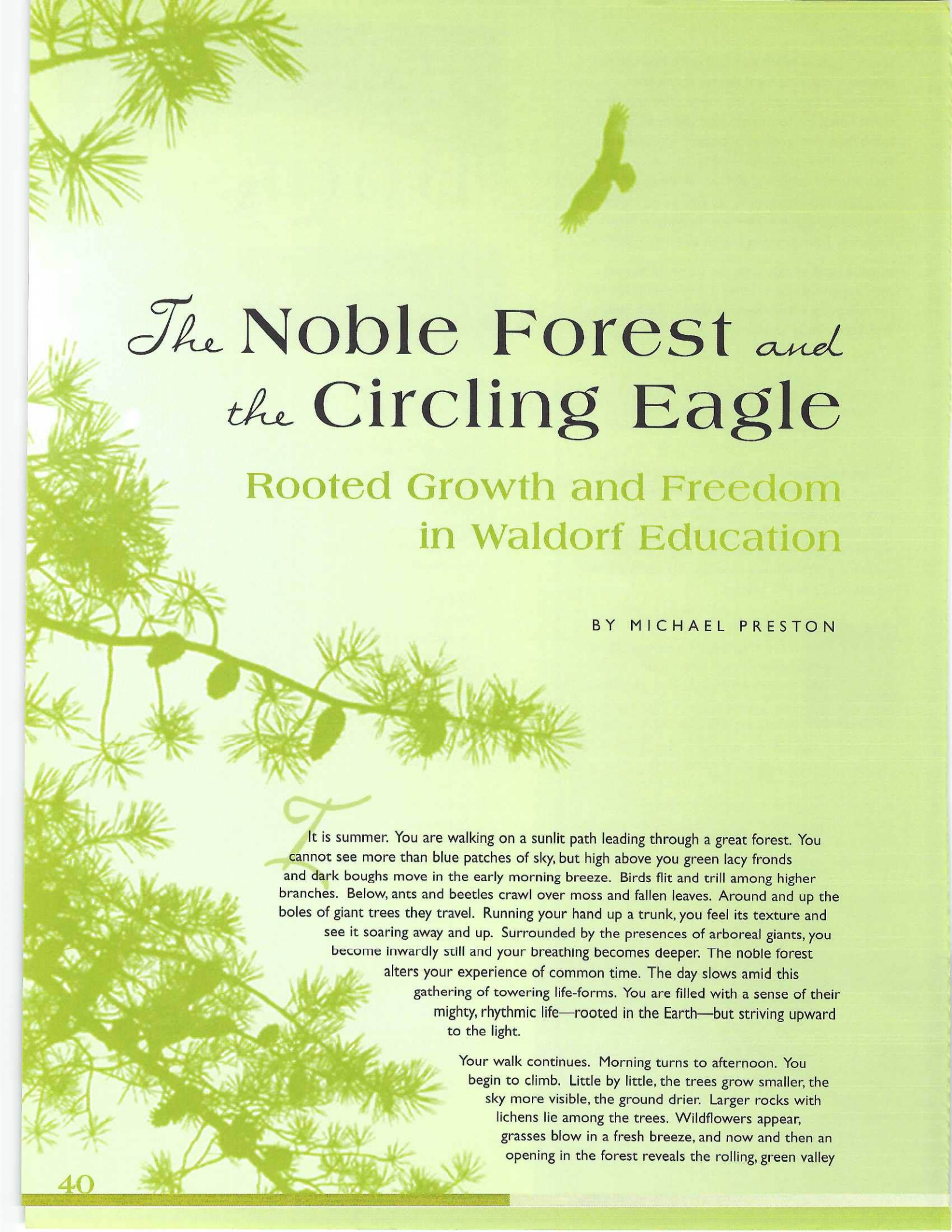
Grade one, for example, begins with the numbers and the verse:

When at first we look for one,
We find it in the shining sun,
For me and you,
We count one, two....

In grade two, the children meet the young King and his four advisors, Addition, Subtraction, Division, and Multiplication, who help him rule his domain.

Upon advice of Lord Multiplication all the people worked
to multiply everything they needed and brought what was

continued on page 49



The Noble Forest and *the Circling Eagle*

Rooted Growth and Freedom in Waldorf Education

BY MICHAEL PRESTON

*I*t is summer. You are walking on a sunlit path leading through a great forest. You cannot see more than blue patches of sky, but high above you green lacy fronds and dark boughs move in the early morning breeze. Birds flit and trill among higher branches. Below, ants and beetles crawl over moss and fallen leaves. Around and up the boles of giant trees they travel. Running your hand up a trunk, you feel its texture and see it soaring away and up. Surrounded by the presences of arboreal giants, you become inwardly still and your breathing becomes deeper. The noble forest alters your experience of common time. The day slows amid this gathering of towering life-forms. You are filled with a sense of their mighty, rhythmic life—rooted in the Earth—but striving upward to the light.

Your walk continues. Morning turns to afternoon. You begin to climb. Little by little, the trees grow smaller, the sky more visible, the ground drier. Larger rocks with lichens lie among the trees. Wildflowers appear, grasses blow in a fresh breeze, and now and then an opening in the forest reveals the rolling, green valley

below. The trees thin out. The wind is cool; alpine meadows appear. An eagle soars above in slow circles. The wind catches the grass and harebells. Clouds scud across the horizon; sunlight flashes off distant rocks and water. You step out into open space. Horizons of cloud and mountain greet you. Sunlight speckles the rocks and streams, a wild bird whirs away from nearby heather. Bracken sways with gusty breezes that texture a mountain lake.

In the forest, to experience the stillness and rootedness of the great trees, their forces of growth, and the supporting elements of earth, water, and light makes us conscious of our own physical nature and life forces, our rootedness in nature, and the powers of growth and development that sustain us.

Above the tree line, to experience freedom and flight when we see a soaring eagle that is supported only by the elements of air and warmth connects and awakens us to parallel soul and spiritual aspects of our own being. We are put in mind of our own longings for free expansion, exploration, and discovery and are connected with the possibilities of our own spiritual and imaginative powers.

This outward dichotomy in nature is reflected in an inward polarity that Goethe memorably captures in Faust's words:

*Two souls, alas! reside within my breast,
And each withdraws from, and repels, its brother.
One with tenacious organs holds in love
And clinging lust the world in its embraces;
The other strongly sweeps this dust above,
Into the high ancestral spaces.*

—J.W. Goethe¹

Earthbound beings such as plants, animals, and humans, with their necessary laws of development and growth, live at one pole, while the independent, freeing power of imagination and spirit live at the other. These two primal tendencies manifest in education and can lead to polarized ideologies and approaches. One school prides itself on its structure, rules, discipline, and rigorous training. Another espouses creativity, individuality, freedom, and spontaneity. Waldorf Education, based on Steiner's view of the psychophysical unity of the human being, seeks to combine both aspects, to see them as complementary and mutually enriching.

The Noble Forest

A number of basic elements in Waldorf Education encourage in the child a healthy experience of the more

*A number of basic elements in
Waldorf Education encourage in the
child a healthy experience of the
more earthly, grounded aspect of
nature and of human life and of
the forces of growth that dwell
there—the Noble Forest.*

earthly, grounded aspect of nature and of human life and of the forces of growth that dwell there—the Noble Forest.

There is, first of all, the class teacher, who stands as a person of knowledge, wisdom, and authority before the children. Ideally, the class teacher herself inspires a reverence in the children. She also helps the children to develop a reverence for all that she brings—the vast legacy of human history, literature, science, and art. Children look naturally to the teacher as a wise guide. The teacher helps the children develop by presenting what is exemplary in human life, nature, and the archetypes of the imaginative world.

This “looking up” and reverence for those who have loved us and guided us and for all the gifts of nature and of human culture is related to the feeling of awe and respect we feel in gazing up at the great trees in a forest. Rudolf Steiner said:

*This looking up with a certain respect to the
surrounding culture must be inspired in the child from
the very first, so that he really sees almost a kind of
higher being in the people who have already grown
older.²*

The Waldorf curriculum gives the children, throughout their schooling, many opportunities to observe, study, and appreciate trees, other plants, animals, and the larger natural environment. In the kindergarten and early grades, they go on nature walks and collect items for the nature table in the classroom. The nature table with its changing display of leaves, flowers, stones, and plants marks and celebrates the beauty of the changing seasons. In grade three, the children learn about and take part in gardening, farming, and animal husbandry. In grade four, in the block called “Man and Animal,” they study the animal kingdom, its relation to the human being, and the connection of various animals to their environments. In grade five, the botany block brings, in a more scientific way, the study of the plant world, and the students typically have some seedlings or special plants growing in the classroom. In grade six, they



Throughout these years, science is taught with a deep sense of reverence for the power and beauty of the phenomena and laws of the natural world.

study geology and astronomy and, it is hoped, develop a sense of awe, both at the mighty forces that have shaped our landscapes over aeons and at the majesty and mystery of the celestial world. In grades seven and eight, the students usually study chemistry, aspects of physics, and also human biology. Throughout these years, science is taught with a deep sense of reverence for the power and beauty of the phenomena and laws of the natural world.

This natural science curriculum expands awareness on two levels. The students are led to an intellectual understanding of the interconnectedness of the natural world in all its varied forms. At a more instinctive, heartfelt, and aesthetic level, the interweaving through the years of art, mythology, and the celebration of natural rhythms and of festivals progressively develops a child's participatory consciousness. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge aptly called this type of experience "growledge."

Knowledge alone leaves us on the outside of things. By contrast, participatory consciousness not only leads us into the heart of things but also helps to align us with the innate wisdom of nature and its rhythms. This combination can have its deepest value when woven into the education and development of children from the earliest age.

The Waldorf student is helped to develop various age-appropriate social, artistic, intellectual, and practical skills. This steady development requires constant shepherding and reinforcement in each area by the class

teacher and the subject teachers. Related to this is growth in relationship to others. The "forming of a class" by the class teacher is like developing a healthy ecosystem. For healthy development, children need clear structures and rules in the larger environment of the school, in all their classes and activities—eurythmy, crafts, choir, and so on. Also of great benefit is a correlation between what happens at school and what happens at home. Teachers, parents, and staff need to work together with certain specified, recommended policies and ways of doing things to form a viable community.

However, we cannot exist only in a forest. We need the wide expanses of air and sunlight. All these tall trees can block out the light, distant views, and the flowing wind and limit our freedom.

The Circling Eagle

Just as we breathe a sigh of relief as we clear the trees and start to see open landscapes and imaginatively fly with the eagle, so too the theme of initiative and freedom, of air and fire, brings its profound complement to Waldorf Education.

The humanities and the arts lead us out of our rooted particularity. Through stories, we can fly to other lands, be a king or a pauper, an old wise woman, a helpless infant. In plays, we can even act out these journeys to other worlds. In poetry, painting, storytelling, writing,

and singing, we can evoke an experience of our individuality and freedom while roaming unencumbered in the worlds of time and space.

The vitality of a school is closely related to the degree to which the artistic, creative, and imaginative life is present. Many a parent and visitor to a Waldorf school is struck by the music that pours from the classrooms in the early morning, the vibrant colors in every classroom's paintings, arrays of beautiful handwork, and the energy of the festival celebrations and the class plays. Every teacher knows the joy of finding a new, imaginative approach to a subject, of having particularly inspired his children. He knows that by a mixture of work and grace, imagination has been given flight. Every lesson should always contain an element of "flying." Steiner said of singing lessons—and this holds true for all other lessons—that a teacher should strive for the children to have at least one "tingle" moment or "goosebump" experience during each class.

We take joy in the spreading of the imaginative wings of our children. It is wonderful to see a new child, or a child new to an artistic activity, grow in confidence in acting, playing an instrument, retelling a story, painting a picture, composing a poem, or knitting a beautiful sock. Their doing is a measure of the effectiveness of Waldorf Education.

And this strength in flying leads us back to the forest. Every exercise of the imagination needs a medium that derives from the material world. The artist must work with a lump of clay, paints and paper, his own body and voice, or a musical instrument. Artistic development requires an attitude of respect for the medium, respect also for great practitioners of the chosen art, acceptance of instruction from those with experience and expertise, as well as much personal study, practice, and hard work. Of this, Goethe said:

*Each has his own happiness in his hands, as the artist handles the rude clay he seeks to reshape into a figure. Yet it is the same with this art as with all others: only the capacity for it is innate; the art itself must be painstakingly practiced.*³

In a Waldorf school, the practice of the arts is pursued as a real path of personal development. There is no dabbling in an instrument or learning to paint in just one semester. The children work hard at their artistic skills, typically on a regular daily or weekly basis. They are at home, from the earliest years, with the bringing together

of disciplined practice and imagination, structure and freedom.

In this way, the noble forest and the eagle need not be antithetical but work best as friends to each other and to those who would welcome and interweave the powers they symbolize.

Without guided development and an in-built ability to "look up," the power to revere, and an ability to learn from great exemplars, there cannot emerge an adequate sense of direction. Without the power of imagination, there cannot develop a sense of freedom and initiative. But, in the presence of both, a wonderful weaving can take place.

In every Waldorf school, it is possible that the circling eagle and the noble forest can dwell together, blessing each other and the school beneath them. Then, what Steiner considered the Waldorf schools' most important goal may come about:

*... to develop free beings who are able, of themselves, to impart purpose and direction to their lives.*⁴

*Through stories, we
can fly to other lands.
be a King or a
pauper, an old
wise woman,
a helpless
infant.*



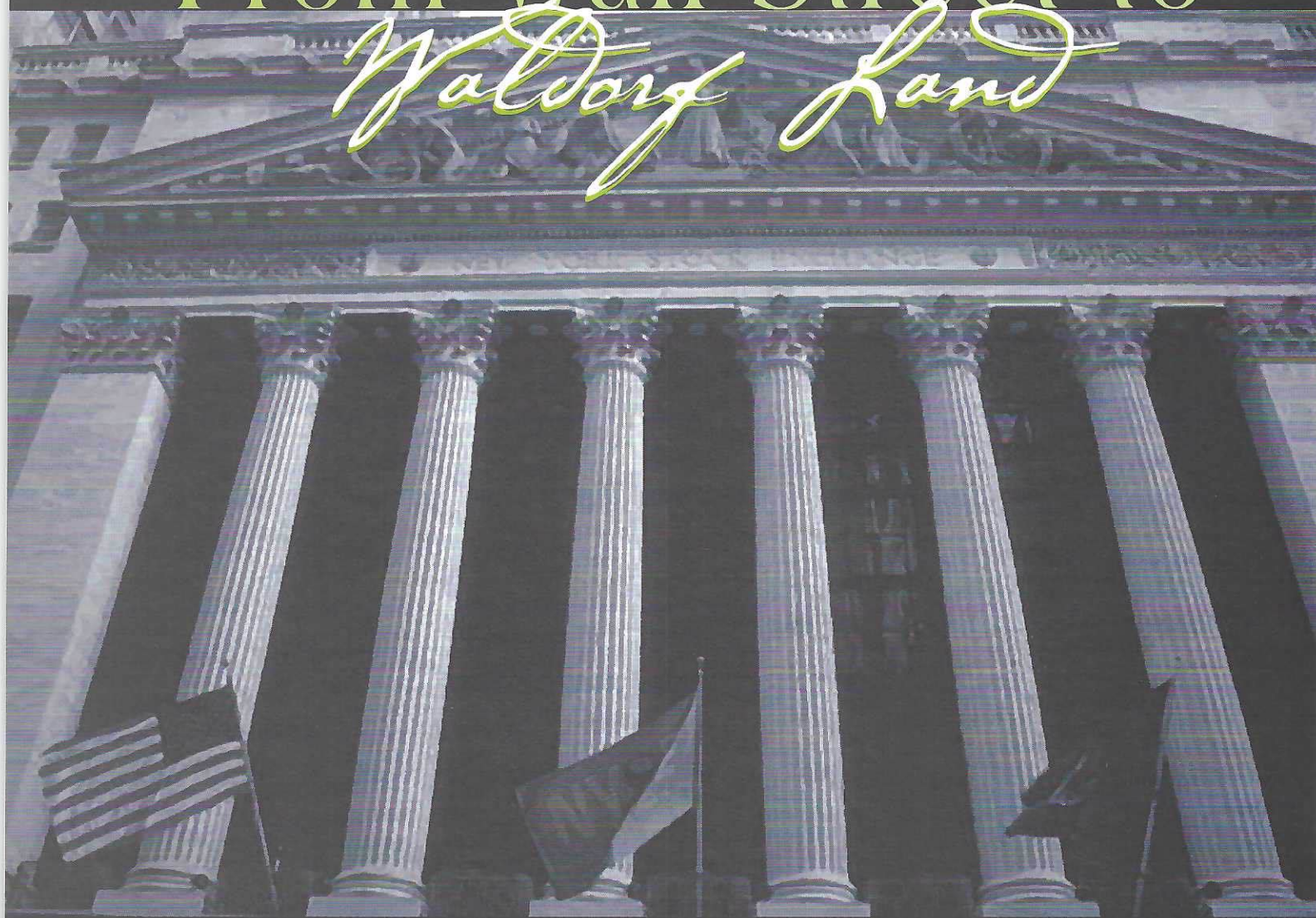
NOTES

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part I*, trans. Bayard Taylor (New York: Random House Modern Library, 1950; original copyright, 1870), chap. 2, "Before the City Gate," Faust speaking: l. 1112.
2. Rudolf Steiner, *Practical Course for Teachers* (London: Rudolf Steiner Publishing Co., 1937), 52. Now available as *Practical Advice to Teachers* (Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press, 2000), 54.
3. J.W. von Goethe, *Goethe's World View—Presented in his Reflections and Maxims*, ed. Frederick Ungar (New York: Ungar Publishing, 1963), 65.
4. Although this quotation is widely used in Waldorf circles, I have not been able to trace it to its source.



MICHAEL PRESTON was educated in Kenya, New Zealand, and England. He taught as a Pacific volunteer in Vanuatu, taught also in two state primary schools in England, and trained at Emerson College. He later gained his PhD in philosophy of education at London University. He has been a Waldorf class teacher for twenty-four years, in England and Hawaii. He is now teaching at Three Cedars School, Bellevue, Washington. He and his wife have three children who graduated from Waldorf schools and three small grandchildren.

From Wall Street to *Waldorf Lane*



BY ANNE WOTRING, PhD

Facade of the New York Stock Exchange

*M*ike Bogil's career on Wall Street began during the heyday of the bond market in the 1980s. Then for almost twenty-five years he worked as a licensed bond trader at top brokerage houses in New York. Mike succeeded in that competitive, aggressive, exciting, and stressful environment—in the process working ten to twelve hours a day, eating lunch at his desk, and often having business dinners in the evening.

During this time, Mike discovered the Lucius Trust, a library of esoteric literature right on Wall Street. Mike, a seeker, who had studied martial arts with a Buddhist monk and always wanted "to be the best person [he] could be," used his daily Staten Island ferry commute to "consume" books by Rudolf Steiner, Edgar Cayce, and other spiritually oriented writers. When a colleague noticed with disdain one of his purple-covered Steiner books, Mike began hiding his books in a desk drawer and started his career as a "closet Anthroposophist"—a sub-rosa student of Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner's view of the world and of the human being.

On September 11, 2001, Mike was working at Chapdelaine & Co., the “New York Yankees of municipal bond markets,” a few blocks away from the World Trade Center. He had previously worked for Cantor Fitzgerald on the 105th floor of one of the towers. “So many good people—colleagues and friends—died that day,” he recalls. “A lot of the fun went out of the game for a lot of people.” In the next year, the financial business became, in his words, “very cutthroat,” and Mike was laid off like many others. About the same time, Mike was deeply affected by the sudden death of a former colleague in an automobile accident.

During this period of soul-searching and transition, Mike was much influenced by the book *Philosophy of Freedom*, by Rudolf Steiner. One of Steiner’s main points is that we can realize true human freedom when we cultivate and trust our intuitive capacities. Mike decided to trust his intuition and to pursue what had by then become his true passion—the study of Anthroposophy.

Mike spent the next year as a student in the Foundation Year at Sunbridge College, in Spring Valley, New York. Sunbridge is dedicated to teaching Rudolf Steiner’s philosophy and its practical applications—in education, agriculture, community-building, the arts, and business. The Foundation Year is a full-time program that includes the study of Steiner’s basic works, varied artistic activities, and also opportunities for personal growth through meditative “inner work.”

Mike commuted three hours a day but recalls that “it was the greatest year of my life. I felt as though I was having the childhood I never had.” Mike found the ideas he received and the insights he had at Sunbridge so meaningful and deeply moving that he “would come home and cry.”

The basic culture of Sunbridge, like that of most anthroposophically based institutions—including Waldorf schools—can perhaps be best described as “feminine.” The great majority of those involved are women, and the emphasis is on teamwork, mutual support and nurturing, communication, cooperation, and personal relationships. This was a big change from Wall Street, where the emphasis is on efficiency, competition, personal advancement, and financial gain.

At Sunbridge, Mike had to get used to those around him expressing their feelings much more openly than he had experienced in the financial world. Rather than the “How about those Yankees!” that one might hear at Cantor Fitzgerald, at Sunbridge it was an ingenuous, appreciative, “I really love Mike Bogil.”

During the course, also, Mike discovered that some of the women students trusted their intuitive, creative, right-brain process with—it seemed to him—little regard for a logical, analytic approach. Yet they did very well. In one class, small groups worked together to create a final presentation; Mike’s group was assigned

the topic of the lost continent of Atlantis. He recalls: “While I was at the library compiling information weeks in advance—and worrying about the presentation, one woman in the group said, ‘Let’s meditate or do haiku poetry [to get information].’ By the end, she was a volcano of ideas and creativity, which included some of my ideas, and which even included me playing the lyre!—the lyre being yet another departure from Wall Street,” Mike deadpans, with characteristic humor.

At Sunbridge, Mike also encountered in a living community a manifestation of Rudolf Steiner’s “Social Motto”:

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

When the year ended, Mike’s question was: “How can I be myself and fulfill my own purpose, and still serve the higher cause?”

Mike knew that he wasn’t going back to Wall Street, but he knew also that he wasn’t cut out to be a Waldorf teacher or biodynamic farmer. When one of his teachers suggested that Mike consider Waldorf school administration, Mike realized this would be a way he could be in a conscious community, continue learning, and at the same time use some of his experience from Wall Street. He entered Sunbridge’s summer program in Waldorf school administration and community development. In August 2005, Mike became the administrator at the Richmond Waldorf School in Virginia.

To some extent, Mike’s experience at Sunbridge had prepared him for life in a Waldorf school. In Richmond, he has been the only male employee in the school. But, Mike says, his Sunbridge experience “was a piece of cake” compared with the challenges of Waldorf school administration—making decisions by consensus, balancing different personalities and perspectives, finding qualified teachers, deciding on budget cuts or tuition increases, and recruiting parents for volunteer work.

The Richmond Waldorf School is a young, growing, and vibrant school with close to one hundred children in kindergarten through the sixth grade. Mike has worked there to improve communication among faculty, parents, administration, and board, to help make the school a single community that recognizes its interdependence. Also, he has applied his experience in the financial world

This was a big change from Wall Street, where the emphasis is on efficiency, competition, personal advancement, and financial gain.

Mike realized that Waldorf school administration would be a way he could be in a conscious community, continue learning, and at the same time use some of his experience from Wall Street.



to help give the school a firm fiscal basis as it contemplates expansion. Mike was pleased that the Rudolf Steiner Foundation, an anthroposophical lending institution, echoed his sentiments in requiring that prospective borrowers have detailed business plans and demonstration of resources, financial records, and tax statements over a period of years.

Mike has continued to ponder how life in community can coexist with individual spiritual development. He observes, "Giving yourself up for the betterment of the group while at the same time developing and perfecting yourself still seems contradictory. It would be so much easier to be meditating on top of a mountain somewhere," and adds with a philosophical laugh, "but that isn't what true self-development is about."

Mike has loved working at the Waldorf school primarily because of the daily social interactions, especially with the children. From his first day at the school, he has taken great joy in standing outside the school each morning, greeting the teachers, parents, and children as they arrived. He recalls that, when he began this practice, "I wanted the children to know me, but the parents were just as enthusiastic to see me." The children have delighted in stopping by "Mr. Bogil's office," and some think that Mr. Bogil looks a lot like "Bogie the Clown," who made his debut at a school fair recently.

In January 2007, when the school asked its staff for their intentions for the 2007–2008 school year, Mike

announced that he would not continue as administrator beyond June 2007. While he will remain in Richmond and continue to be part of the school community, Mike wants to pursue other interests, particularly professional clowning and writing and singing songs.

Mike Bogil's story continues, and, like the life path of each of us, has an as-yet-unknown denouement. He remarks that "my life is full of revelation and adjustment, with a long way to go." But Mike's ongoing story illustrates that a person can, regardless of age and position, productively pursue a personal destiny and that, for some, that destiny may be closely connected to Waldorf Education.



ANNE WOTRING, PhD, is an organizational coach and mentor specializing in Waldorf schools. She works with Waldorf school leaders—administrative, board, faculty, and parent organization—to develop more effective structures and processes and to strengthen their own effectiveness in their leadership roles. She is also a life coach and writing coach. Anne can be reached at a.wotring@verizon.net and www.annewotringphd.com

MIKE BOGIL can be reached at mbogil74@verizon.net and at admin@richmondwaldorf.com (through June 2007).





The Middle East, Peace, and Waldorf Education

BY ABRAHAM ENTIN

Waldorf Education was born in Germany in 1919 out of the chaos of World War I and its aftermath. There was an evident need for a healing and nurturing education that would give children a foundation for healthy growth and development—even in a disintegrating society—and also nurture a sense of shared humanity with all other human beings, an empathy that would transcend religious, ethnic, and national boundaries.

Photo: Jewish Israeli students from Harduf Waldorf High School and Arab Israeli students from nearby Shefar'am High School participating in the High School Peace Leadership Program sponsored by the Salaam Shalom Education Foundation. After finishing the first day of Holocaust studies, they are planting an olive tree for peace in the Arab town of Shefar'am, in the area of Galilee. Shefar'am was the site of bloody religious violence last year during the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza strip.

Today, Waldorf Education has established itself around the world with about 900 schools in over eighty countries. Some of these schools are in areas where there is sectarian and political conflict—Croatia, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, and Nepal, among others. It is perhaps in such places that Waldorf Education is needed more than anywhere else.

In Israel and Palestine today, children are being raised in an atmosphere of sectarian violence, religious strife, and political and economic upheaval. Young Israelis are drafted into a modern army, and young Palestinians are groomed as suicide bombers. In the midst of this chaos, a quiet movement for peace has been growing on all sides. And Waldorf Education has been recognized as having a vital role to play in the unfolding of this peace process.

Harduf is a Jewish Israeli kibbutz located in northern Israel and is based on Anthroposophy, the worldview articulated by Rudolf Steiner. Many of the surrounding villages and towns, including the town of Shefar'am, are predominantly Arab. Harduf (Hebrew for 'oleander') has for years sought ways to reach out to these neighbors who live in a very different and separate world.

The kibbutz has a large, three-hundred-student Waldorf school, with a full program from kindergarten through grade twelve. Several years ago, teachers at the school began working with Masen Ayoub, director of the Arab schools in Shefar'am toward the establishment of a Waldorf kindergarten in the town. This project included a Waldorf kindergarten teacher training at Harduf for young Arab teachers from the town of Shefar'am. In 2005 a Waldorf kindergarten, El Zeitun (Arabic for 'the olive tree') was founded in the town and has become so popular that a second Waldorf kindergarten has already been added. Students from the Harduf school's seventh-grade class come weekly to help out, and a kindergarten teacher from the Harduf school spent part of her summer vacation working there.

Recently two longtime parents at the Highland Hall Waldorf School in Northridge, California, Shepha and Cal Vainstein, have been instrumental in broadening this cooperation between Harduf and the Arab community. Two years ago, the Vainsteins visited Harduf as well as Palestinian communities in the West Bank area.

Cal and Shepha's daughter had attended the Waldorf College Project in Stroud, England, an international school based on Waldorf principles. During their visit to the Holy Land, the Vainsteins had an impulse to establish a similar boarding school in Israel for Jewish Israeli, Arab Israeli, and Palestinian teenagers. Such a school would combine a "traditional" Waldorf high school curriculum with courses in nonviolent communication, intercultural

studies, and other activities specific to the environment in Israel/Palestine.

Two developments combined to alter this vision: the further disintegration of the political situation in the region, which would have made such a project very difficult to begin, and the willingness of the Harduf Waldorf School to inaugurate a program that would be a very strong first step toward such an institution.

In September 2006, the Harduf Waldorf High School started a separate track in its high school with fifteen students. The program pairs Jewish Israeli students with students in a nearby Arab Israeli high school for various joint activities, including nonviolent communications skill development and drama. There are also weekly visits to the Center for Humanistic Education—an institute promoting moral responsibility in society and working for mutual understanding between Arabs and Jews. In addition, the Harduf students study Arabic language and culture. It is hoped that, if the situation allows, Palestinian students will also be able to attend and perhaps live in the Harduf area during the school year. The program has proved so popular in its first year that all of the eligible Harduf students want to enter next year, and the program is already oversubscribed among the Arab students as well.

During this and a subsequent visit by Cal and Shepha, another exciting opportunity presented itself. Leaders in the West Bank Palestinian community of Jenin—which includes a large refugee camp and which has been home to some of the suicide bombers—had been exposed to Waldorf Education. Some teachers even made the trek through the checkpoints to visit the Harduf Waldorf School and to personally observe the education in

The program pairs Jewish Israeli students with students in a nearby Arab Israeli high school for various joint activities, including nonviolent communications skill development and drama.

process. A desire to train one teacher from each of the Jenin kindergartens in Waldorf Education grew out of these experiences. Such a development could lead to the establishment of Waldorf schools in the Palestinian territories and to a chance for a true healing impulse to take root in this impoverished and troubled community. This program had its inaugural session on December 22, 2006, when twelve kindergarten teachers from Jenin came to Harduf to begin their Waldorf teacher training.

The Vainsteins have created the Salaam Shalom Education Foundation (SSEF) to support and direct these several initiatives. Kobi Tuch, one of the founders of the Harduf High School and for years a teacher at the Waldorf College Project in England, has returned to Israel to direct the work of the Foundation. Kobi already has a relationship with the Palestinian community through earlier humanitarian efforts. He is working with the Harduf faculty to launch and develop the high school and with the Palestinians to initiate the teacher training project.

As a child growing up in a Jewish family, I remember collecting money to plant trees in the new nation of Israel and being inspired by stories of the kibbutzniks and their devotion to community and to working together. Later, in college and afterwards, I became aware of the more complicated history and of the more problematic elements of life in the area.

Whatever one's view of the historical roots and development of this conflict, it has become clear that violence will only bring more violence, that children are increasingly the victims of the fighting, and that a new way of relating and of resolving issues must be developed.

In other areas of the world, situations of strife have been reversed. As an example, a Highland Hall parent active in SSEF, who grew up in South Africa under the apartheid regime, recently returned from a visit to her old home. Fifteen years ago, schools in South Africa

were totally segregated by race. She reported, though, that today children in South Africa cannot imagine **not** going to school with children of other races and backgrounds.

In the midst of the pervasive mood of crisis and despair in the Middle East, it is hard to imagine that an effort like this one can really make a difference. However, change is possible anywhere, and the darkest situation can offer the greatest opportunity for positive intervention.

NOTE: Those interested in more information about the Salaam Shalom Educational Foundation can visit the Web site at sashedf.org



ABRAHAM ENTIN has had at least one child at Highland Hall Waldorf School in Northridge, California, in the years between 1978 and 2006. He has been a member of the Anthroposophical Society since 1976 and has frequently consulted with Waldorf schools and other institutions on questions of enrollment and outreach. With his wife, Rachael Flug, he has owned and operated Diaperaps, a natural diapering company, since 1984. Abraham went to Hebrew school and was bar mitzvahed at Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago in 1958.

Books in Brief, continued

left over to the King. Count Addition added it all together so that the Duke of Division could divide the surplus wealth equally for Sir Subtraction to take away and give each of the people his share while leaving a remainder for the King.

In grade three, the children memorize the times tables, and learn about weights, measures, and telling time. In grade four, they learn about area measure, fractions, and common denominators. Fifth graders study Pythagoras, his interesting life, and his ideas about mathematics being the underlying principle of the universe, and go on to fractions and their decimal equivalents. By sixth grade—the last grade dealt with in the book—the children are studying business math—interest, commissions, special sales, and taxes. In all the grades, the lessons seek to engage not only the intellect of the child, but also the imagination, the artistic sense and feeling life, and the will.

Math Lessons for Elementary Grades does not present the entire Waldorf mathematics curriculum. What is given for the first six grades are clearly selected lessons. But this charming little book is essential for Waldorf class teachers and for homeschooling parents who want to bring the world of numbers and math to their children in a way that is full of imagination, joy, and life. The book also could be very helpful for Waldorf parents who want to understand what is going on in their children's classrooms.