



Steiner Education

Vol 35 No 1

Learning from the Environment



Steiner Education

ISSUE THEME:
Learning from the
Environment

Speaking from the point of view of anthroposophical science, we do not wish to return to past instincts: we want to find, out of a deeper spiritual insight, what old instincts—since they are growing insecure—are less and less able to provide. To this end we must include a far wider horizon in our studies of the life of plant and animal, and of the earth itself. We must extend our view to the whole cosmos.

Rudolf Steiner, Koberwitz, 7 June 1924.

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Front Cover: *From Manhattan's high-risers to the
glass, steel and concrete blocks of London City to blues
on a canvas – an adolescent's inner and outer journey,
culminating at age 17/18 in his Class 12 year's project
(see article on page 12).*

Inside Front Cover: *Preparing the poles for a tipi (see
article on page 21).*

*Opinions expressed in this journal attach to the respective
authors and are not necessarily those of the Editor.*

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Steiner Education is a focus for ideas, insights and
achievements in Waldorf, Steiner and all truly human
education throughout the world.

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Editorial: Learning from the Environment

Travels recently took me to two unfamiliar landscapes: the Gulf of Riga in Latvia and the Gulf of Corinth in Greece. In both places the water was soothingly calm—it was summer; the skies were cloudless; the voice of the wind scarcely rose even to a whisper; the atmosphere was Monet-saturated with light and mystery.

But the vegetation: how different! Greece with its groves of grey, gnarled olives and its vineyards with their twirling, twisting tendrils—all laden with the promise of a good harvest. Latvia with its towering red-barked pines, its graceful silver birches, its elegant summer-crowned oaks—yes, elegance: not the rugged exhibitionism of their English cousins—and its lime trees with their profusion of bee-rejoicing blossom, suffusing the air around with summer magic. In Greece, one's feet gritted on the parched earth, while one's hands reached continually for the mineral water; in Latvia one wandered on the pungent, springy carpets of pine needles, or bathed in the havens of gentle shade and diffused light, during the long, Baltic summer days that spanned some twenty hours from dawn till dusk.

The social landscape too. Latvia, where its folk tradition spills onto the street, itches under the toes, and vibrates in the throats of all and sundry; Greece where the coach loads of tourists pour past the turnstiles into its ancient sites, with their heaven-capped, crumbling columns, their nude, memory-drenched foundations and their silent mounds of fallen stone, each lump numbered by some dust-browed archaeologist who had sweated there in the heat of the day.

These are by no means the only facets of the two environments, of course, but they will serve to bring out some of the similarities and contrasts. Yet, despite the environmental contrasts, Greek and Latvian three-year-olds are all chattering away nineteen to the dozen in their mother tongues; have been born during similar confinements; will lose their milk teeth at similar stages of life; will fall in love; pursue their respective careers through their prime years; become menopausal; die and be buried, the granite headstone of one and the marble headstone of the other being the only sign to remind us that there were mountains, seas and oceans that divided their common humanity.

On the one hand, the universality of humanity somehow rises above the Gulfs of Culture on the shores of which it lives. On the other hand, each

person—each incarnating spirit—out of their very individuality, must imbibe from the environment and make of it what they can for their own personal growth. Be it the harmony of a Baltic folk festival or the discord of a Balkan crisis, be it joyful or tragic—every circumstance of life offers opportunity for growth.

In education we are concerned with optimum growth as preparation for life, vocational skills notwithstanding. This is cause for celebration. But it has to be balanced with environmental factors. These can be more far-reaching and subtle than we sometimes realise. Recent research (as reported in the science section of the *International Herald Tribune*, 10 August 2000) by a social psychologist from the University of Michigan (Richard Nesbitt), to be published in the journal *Psychological Review*, has identified fascinating differences between East and West. It is not just that "teenage boys in Botswana, for example, might discuss cows with the same passion that New York teenagers reserve for sports cars". The Eastern outlook proved to be more holistic, the Western more analytic. Further, it was where you lived that counted, not where you were born. However, the research did not purport to fuel the argument that we are all behaviourists—mammals that have somehow climbed the Darwinian ladder from Ape-level to A-level. Nevertheless, it is as if the Eastern mind grasps more from peripheral vision, the Western being affected more by tunnel vision.

The educationist can discount neither peripheral nor tunnel vision. In Waldorf terms this would incorporate the principles of *when* and *how*. Just as a dewdrop nestling in the branch of a fennel stalk, faithfully reflects the whole panorama of what is around it, faithfully images in exquisite miniature the height and breadth of its environment, so the classroom can become a dewdrop of learning. But the teacher is mediator. Were there no light, the dewdrop would reflect nothing. Similarly, were there no light of experience, and were there no individuation, the environment would bypass the growing child. A school curriculum could be seen as the whole cosmic, human and earthly environment rolled out, as it were, over twelve years (plus Kindergarten), as when a globe is projected onto a two-dimensional map. This twelve year map, in the child's hands, will have its attractions. But there may also be blind spots:

'peripheral' blind spots perhaps for the child of Western disposition, 'tunnel' blind spots for the child of Eastern disposition. Other polarities, too. The skilled teacher will anticipate attractions and enhance them, while also noticing and compensating for blind spots and one-sidednesses; and will navigate according to his or her understanding of the child's developmental progress and potential.

Since space here would not allow a year by year treatment of the theme, this issue of *Steiner Education* concentrates, though not exclusively, on two developmental stages: age 9/10 and age 18. The former, in Steiner's view, is the age which signifies the pivotal moment between a consciousness in which the spiritual environment has been more significant and that consciousness in which the earthly environment will become increasingly significant. The latter, age 18, the point at which the student stands on the brink of adult responsibilities, is the age by which one would expect the individual to have been empowered to take upon his or her own shoulders the task of self-education as part of their future direction in life.

We can now get another glimpse of those gulfs. The adage "You can lead a horse to the water but you can't make it drink" comes to mind. A child on the seashore will paddle and splash joyously in the shallows of the water; a Monet will capture its essence on canvas by painting it; a cameraman will video it; a coast guard will scrutinise it as a matter of life and death; an admiralty will sink a nuclear-headed submarine into it. But whether they will each and every one turn their several, gulfs-apart reactions into learning experiences for inner growth and for the true prosperity of all is an open question. Outwardly, humanity is separated or distinguished by colour, folk traditions, religious views, social attitudes, longitude, latitude, altitude, goodness-knows-whatitude. Inwardly, we can all of us endeavour to meet beneath a humanly common sun and create a climate of common striving. This is tantamount to reliving the ancient Olympic paradox: establish and honour a truce of *outer* hostilities, while recognising that, through *inner* motivation and ability we all are unique runners, leapers, wrestlers, discus and javelin throwers—hurled by the gods into the stadium of daily life.

To learn from the environment is one of the main factors in optimum, personal growth, but *how* that is done is of the utmost importance. While celebrating the diversity of each person's mountain

peaks of achievement, at the same time each one needs to realise and value the ultimate importance of the stretch of water, lapping below at the foot of the mountain. As water is the bearer of life, so the universality of humanity can become an ocean that unites us in calm, common, life-giving endeavour, and may thus gradually replace the all-too-often self-infuriated storms that constantly muddy the waters or destructively engulf and separate.

B.M.



Scenes from 'Black Comedy' by Peter Shaffer (here and on page 11), directed by Andrew Wolpert, and produced by Mary Taylor who also provided the photographs—see article on page 10.

Learning from Real Life

A class teacher provides opportunities for self-reliance

by BRIGITTE PIETSCHMANN*
translated by J. Collis

There were going to be 46 children in my class; but is it still possible to manage such large classes today?

It was indeed possible to do so for eight years, firstly because the parents and I made a conscious decision to share the load, and secondly because I realised that the children would be able to learn a great deal from one another, and from learning situations presented to them, without having to be kept in hand all the time. Learning from life, or 'learning by doing': how can this be planned for and subsequently cultivated? I shall review the eight years of work with my class in this light.

The first educational influence on children comes from the example set by their teacher. What does she do when a child is upset and cries? How does she look after the classroom? How carefully does she draw and write on the blackboard? These very young children (aged 6-7) need time and a good deal of attention while they absorb these things, and this is what I endeavoured to give them. Soon I noticed how they began to turn to each other for comfort, how they got out the sticking plaster themselves, and how without being asked they began to clean and tidy away the painting paraphernalia used by 46 children. In all the eight years I never needed to set up a rota for this.

During Advent some of the specialist teachers and mothers accompanied smaller groups carrying candles they had made themselves on visits to elderly, bed-ridden people to sing or make music for them. This gave the children a strong sense of their ability to do things that bring pleasure to others. We cultivated our contacts with the elderly right up to Class 8 and paid frequent visits to a nearby old people's home. (Incidentally this is also a good way of motivating recorder groups, the class orchestra or work on a poem.)

**This article was published in the German magazine Erziehungskunst (December 1997), and appears here with the Editor's and author's permission. The editor of Erziehungskunst preceded the original article with the observation: "One of the differences between today's children and those of past times is their need to be challenged at a considerably earlier age to act independently as individuals. The author allowed for this by creating situations in which the children in her class could do this and organise their own methods of collaboration. She recounts some examples here."*

In Class 2 we spent a good deal of time in the woods during 'play' lessons or when I had to stand in for colleagues who were sick. On one of our walks the children noticed a curved piece of metal embedded in the ground. They worked at it for a year, first with stones and sticks, and later with tools from the gardening workshop, until they finally succeeded in excavating an old iron-rimmed cartwheel. Some of the children organised the work, others scraped and dug; some wondered aloud about why the wheel should have rolled down to this particular spot on the steep bank, and a good many more just stood there watching the busy activities of the others.

In Class 3, fathers, specialist teachers and friends allowed the children to take part in their work. Many mothers set off with small groups to visit a blacksmith, a potter, a shoemaker, and the weavery in an institution for adults with learning difficulties. The culminating event was provided by a forester who felled a tree for them. After combining their efforts and failing to drag it away, they watched as his horse did so with ease.

Our gardening teacher is also the regional adviser for bio-dynamic farmers. He gave small groups of children an experience of the farmer's work when he took them to collect manure from the riding stables, spread compost, plough and harrow, and finally sow a field. My Class 3 children also had a lot of fun picking potatoes on a field that was too steep for a mechanical harvester. It is tremendously important for children to feel that their help is really needed. They had certainly earned the farmer's lunch they found awaiting them in the yard, for each child had cleared a whole row in a trice; their combined efforts left a nice empty field behind.

Our house-building main-lesson provided the school with a house for bees. The work was guided by fathers with the requisite skills—an architect, a bricklayer, a carpenter. This brought the world of work right into the school. The young workers were corrected in what they did, not by their teacher but by masters of their trade, or by the work itself e.g. a joint that held—or did not.

Our local geography main-lesson culminated in a game covering the whole of our medieval salt-making town. The children were divided into eight groups, each accompanied by a mother or myself. Starting at eight different locations, each group had to visit specific sites in turn and carry out observation tasks there.

Learning to assess their own capabilities

At the end of Class 4 we set out by bike to explore beyond the bounds of our immediate 'home ground'. The children gauged their own capacity before forming faster or slower parties, some of which were led by Upper School pupils. They had to use maps to find their own way, and everyone had to wait at pre-arranged stopping places before setting off on the next stage.

Parents spent many a Saturday in school working on various building projects. In Class 5 we built an amphitheatre as part of the garden design next to the Upper School building. Of course the children and their class teacher helped as much as they could in break times and after school [almost half the Steiner Waldorf schools in Germany have Saturday morning school, Tr.], shovelling gravel, laying flags or riding on the fork lift or tractor when the heavy sandstone steps were laid. Parents, children and their teacher enjoyed good meals together on these occasions. The inauguration of the amphitheatre with a play about Odysseus visiting Polyphemus became a festival. The children in their Greek costumes joined their parents in proudly admiring their handiwork: Greek theatre had come to Schwäbisch Hall! Fortunately the acoustics turned out to be excellent, so that the pupils had a real experience of how the hexameter metre related to the space into which their breath carried them.

Learning to recognise oneself in the other person

We went on our first class trip in Class 6, spending a week at an educational farm with horses, a donkey, a German shepherd dog, cats, hens and a pig. The children had to care for the animals, help accompanying mothers prepare meals, and do autumn jobs in the garden, such as picking fruit. Once again they formed their own groups for these varied tasks. The work was leisurely enough to allow time for the sacks of windfall fruit to be shipped on a raft down a small river to a collecting point. Young decorators who had chosen the job of painting a children's play area also had enough time to swing on the swings and have fun on the other apparatus. At a gathering round a camp fire the organiser of the farm thanked the class for their help;

one of the pupils spontaneously added the thanks of the whole class, naming all the adults who had helped in the project. Through making their own efforts the pupils were growing aware of the efforts others also made, and from that point onwards the class retained an inner attitude of thankfulness which continued to be expressed whenever they reviewed projects or wrote essays about them.

In Class 7 we found a grander and more taxing project for our class trip to a place near the Lake of Starnberg. Under the guidance of our gardening teacher we tidied up the neglected garden of Haus Freudenberg, leaving the whole site in apple-pie order. This enabled the organisers to reduce the cost of our one-week stay there by 1500 DM, which meant that for the first time the pupils' work also gained a commercial value. Once again an important feature was the pupils' own initiative in organising themselves into groups for work and of course also for play. Each group was accompanied by an adult.

School and the world of work

During our chemistry main-lesson we made quicklime in the school laboratory. Then we visited a gypsum factory where we saw the same process on an industrial scale. We also realised the pressures brought to bear on the labour force by the shift work arising from the economic need to keep the furnaces going continuously. The firm's chemist showed us round his lab and told us about some of the experiments, observations and evaluations he was engaged in. The pupils gained a sense of how their schoolwork involves them in life as it goes on outside the school. This is an important experience for youngsters at an age when they are beginning to doubt the relevance of what their teachers are offering them.

Introduction to working in groups

Towards the end of Class 7 I introduced group work as a method of working in school. I felt that the geography and nutrition main-lessons were suitable subjects for this. The pupils worked in groups chiefly in the recapitulation part of the lessons, where possible with each group tackling a different task. They got more involved in this than they did in discussions involving the whole class. A number of pupils developed a considerable talent for presenting the results of their work in interesting ways.

Some pupils would have preferred their teacher to tell them everything, yet these were the ones who made the greatest effort when working alone. Did they want to demonstrate what you can do on your

own? Did they need peace and quiet and the freedom to structure their work in their own time in order to be productive? These were the pupils who impressed their fellows in Classes 7 and 8 with carefully prepared essays about members of their family who had emigrated to America or about what their grandparents had experienced during the Third Reich, or biographies they had researched. One girl spoke about the life of Max Fürst. She had visited the widow of this Jewish writer in Stuttgart and been more moved by this personal contact than would ever have been possible through books alone. This otherwise rather shy girl held the class spellbound with what she had to tell them.

Projects and the class play

For their project work in Class 8, the pupils each had to choose a subject they wanted to work on under the guidance of a mentor. They also set their own time limits. These projects were presented to the whole school. There were lectures on 'How glaciers develop', or 'Graffiti—between art and vandalism'. There were acrobatics displays, a black-and-white film, and a wonderful performance of moving shadows. A group of pupils built their own electronic mixing console with which they provided music for a small fashion show by some of the girls who had made their own confirmation dresses or fashionable trousers. The pupils showed their teachers, parents and classmates what they were capable of when applying their interest, willpower, imagination and diligence.

As for the class play in Class 8: this was Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*. The class now consisted of 39 pupils. The youngsters had grown quite accustomed to working on their own initiative without their class teacher having to be present. The journey by coach to the Berchtesgaden music and theatre camp took six hours during which the pupils distributed the parts amongst themselves. Adults only gave hints if



Class 8 pupils of Milan's Libera Scuola Rudolf Steiner getting down to it!

asked for advice. Each actor chose a trainer who would help him or her learn the part by heart, stand in during rehearsals if she or he should fall ill and share in work on the different scenes in small groups. Much will have to remain unsaid about the commitment of individual pupils, for example the 'head of stage hands' who with ten helpers achieved in masterly fashion what was probably the most difficult task: quick and quiet changes of scenery.

After several excellent performances three weeks before the end of the school year, the pupils felt they no longer needed their class teacher. Although this emancipation was not unexpected, it hurt. An Upper School teacher came to my rescue and together we ran a physics main-lesson in which the pupils conducted many of the experiments themselves or tackled tasks in pairs. As their class teacher I was no longer the focus of their assaults, so that we were able to take leave of one another at a jolly gathering during which the parents presented a skit in eight parts depicting scenes from our years together.

Opening the classroom door

From my first day as their class teacher I took each child very seriously as an individual person. I was sure that talents far greater than my own slumbered in every one of them. Before, during and after the lessons I always tried to help them begin discovering their life's task. Whenever someone provided a glimpse of what his or her 'programme' might be, as Rudolf Steiner put it in *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy*, I tried to help her or him and the class as a whole to become aware of this and cultivate it by creating an atmosphere in which they could focus their attention on that pupil or the matter in hand.

It seems to me that if the youngsters are to learn from life—by doing—much depends on how modestly the teacher manages to withdraw and the manner in which he or she opens the classroom door on to the world. That they may continue to make their way in life—this is my wish for them as they grow into young adults!

Brigitte Pietschmann did her mainstream teacher training in Ludwigsburg where she subsequently taught other trainees, before retraining in the Waldorf method and becoming a founding teacher of the Schwäbisch Hall Waldorf school. After many years as a class teacher and English teacher she retrained in the new profession of 'Consultant and Development Companion for Waldorf Schools' and is now active in this work. She still teaches part-time at Schwäbisch Hall.

World Outlooks

Class Twelve Projects in Anthropology

by JOHN BLEACH, EMMA DAITZ AND CHRISTOPHER McEWAN

Introduction by John Bleach

I am in a fortunate position, in our school, in having my Class 12 Geography main-lesson fall in the run-up period to the individual project presentations. [The rationale behind these Class 12 projects was described by Tom Stehlik in an article entitled 'Preparation for Life: The Mt. Barker Waldorf School's Year 12 Program and its Outcomes' in the last issue of *Steiner Education*, vol.34 no.1 January 2000 pp.28-31 & 43. Ed.]

The topic of my main-lesson, A Study of Ethnology and Ethnography, leads me to ask the class to prepare a speech on a people of the world in order to share a better understanding of the human races and the interrelationships between them. The choice is theirs.

I weigh the assessment heavily in favour of their talks as against the main-lesson books, though there is still ample room for the specially gifted writers. Each person is encouraged to seek out artefacts, music, pictorial material, clothing and food appropriate to the peoples/tribes/groups they are researching, in order to enliven their talk with a kind of 'show and tell' freshness.

This year (1999) the class responded magnificently and we heard about the Inuit, the Zulus, the Spanish, Italians, Greeks, Scots, Japanese, Chinese, Xhosa, Tibetan Monks, North American Indians, Gypsies, Muslims, Cape Malays, Jamaicans, Cubans, Incas, Rastafarians, Western Samoans, Indians of India and of South Africa. Also, the Huns, British Colonials of the Cape, the Amish, the South African Kugel Tribe, Cowboys, The Blood Doll Society, Punks/Grunge, the Mayans, the Tasaday, the People of the West Indies and the Aborigines of Australia.

Each talk brought new and fascinating material, anecdotes and statistics to light. We sat entranced by some very energetic tribal dancing, rolled in the aisles at the antics of a gin and tonic sipping colonial or sat, frozen in shock, at the dark practices of bloodletting—right here in our own Cape Town.

Many of the speakers took seriously my injunction to 'cook us a taste' of the food preferences of the people they were researching, as was the case

with the examples that follow. The result was a culinary world experience for us all. In a word: delicious!

John Bleach teaches geography and English in the High School in the Constantia Waldorf School in the Western Cape, South Africa.

GRUNGE by Emma Daitz

For my 'Ethnology and Ethnography' main-lesson project I originally chose the Punks of London. However, I found it virtually impossible to access any information on modern British pop-culture so switched topics to that of the tribe and peoples of Grunge. My teacher, Mr Bleach, had stressed the importance of feeling connected to the chosen tribe and so it was appropriate for me to talk about one of which I was once a member.

The Grunge movement was born out of musical, aesthetic and philosophical rebellion against the values of middle class America in the late 1970s. Although it surfaced in other parts of the world it was originally an American phenomenon. It was a kick in the gut of a society that favoured thick-headed athletes and blonde cheerleaders, with bigger breasts than brains, to revolutionary intellectuals and artistically inclined misfits. Grunge was not only about getting even with the beer-bellied patriots and their trophy wives but also surpassing the societal level on which difference was directly connected with evil.

Most people would demand an explanation as to how I can call the Grunge movement a tribe. My own definition of a tribe is this: a group of people, no smaller than is sound for healthy reproduction, whose grouping is the physical manifestation of the primary instinct for like to seek like and live in symbiosis in order to create and maintain optimal conditions for *survival*. The Grunge movement both fits and challenges this definition.

Grunge is really just a step in the evolutionary chain of Punk and so bears the volatile anarchic and vicious characteristics of its parental line. The difference between child and parent is that Grunge, although it appears on the outside to be chaotic, is

actually much more calculated than its predecessor.

As with all tribes, Grunge has a set of behavioural and aesthetic qualities by which one can identify it. And, as I have said before, despite strong leanings in the direction of the anarchic, Grunge actually maintains a code of dress and conduct, however abstract it may appear. Grunge girl, lets call her Riot Girrrl, of a tacky trailer trash beauty queen. Her make-up is permanently smudged and infrequently removed. Her hair is a mat of damaged, dyed strands. Her physicality is either muscular or emaciated and definitely unhealthy. She washes herself perhaps once every three weeks, preferring to occupy herself with artistic endeavours as opposed to grooming herself for intellectually crippled beef-cakes. Her body, particularly during mating season, is scarred, bruised or bitten. These are marks that are made in arbitrary moments of play or flirtation and are all irresistibly attractive to Grunge boy.

Grunge boy, whom we will call Kurdt, will wear just about anything provided it does not bear the marks of macho bravado or overbearing levels of testosterone. He would wear pyjamas with Jackie-O glasses and a strand of pearls. Although his dress flirts with femininity, and he may often be seen holding hands with or kissing male friends, he is usually not gay. This behaviour stems from the desire to prove that masculinity has nothing to do with sexuality. It is also to provide competition for female predators. His hygiene, or lack thereof, is the same as that of the female. He is also usually addicted to cough syrup.

Grunge recreation equals anything wherein the words 'guzzle' or 'indiscriminately' can be found. The 'indiscriminate guzzling' of Prozac and other prescription drugs between partners is not an infrequent occurrence. Mutual abuse, usually on a petty level, is also a bonding ritual.

Music is perhaps the most central element of the Grunge movement. Through its grunge music all of the tribe philosophy and social comments can be heard. Apart from the quality of the sound the real difference between grunge and other music, particularly aggressive metal and rock, is that it is always more indifferent to its own pain than that of others. In fact, Grunge often pays tribute, albeit cynically, to the suffering of others.

Worship within the tribe is simple. They pray only to their beloved medicine cabinets and the prescriptive within. Hierarchy is slightly more complex. The Queen is always self appointed whilst the King is dragged to the throne at the will of his fans, feigning relative disinterest in the whole affair.

Their politics are anarchic, and once the new monarchs have settled in, despotic.

The Grunge King and Queen are usually more concerned with ruling over each other than their subjects, although disloyalty means sudden death. The most famous Grunge Monarchy was that of Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love, who had a daughter called Frances Bean. Their rule was the golden age for the movement and when it fell, with the advent of Kurt's suicide, Grunge ran about for several years before fading back into its punk roots and the commercial world of alternative music.

True grunge is dead. All good things must come to an end.

Emma Daitz is planning to study drama in Higher Education.

CHINA by Christopher McEwan

China is the world's third largest country, which contains more people than any other nation. China's rapidly growing population has been a source of anxiety for its government for many years. A full census taken in 1982 showed that the population had reached roughly one billion. Efforts to encourage birth control and to allow only one baby per family had some success in halting the fast rise in numbers from the 1970s to the 1980s, but China still has a million babies born every month. If more couples can be encouraged to have fewer babies it is hoped that the population will reach only 1.2 billion by the year 2000.

If all the people in China stood on each others' shoulders, they would make a chain three times longer than the distance between the earth and the moon.

In appearance, the Chinese are Mongoloid and generally quite short.

The Chinese are mostly farmers and China produces more millet, rice, sorghum, tropical cereal grass and tobacco than any other country. It is also a major producer of barley, cotton, groundnuts, maize, silk, tea, timber and wheat. China has large mineral reserves, many of which are unexploited.

Manufacturing is developing because the Chinese consider industrialisation, particularly the growth of heavy industry, to be essential in transforming China into a modern world power.

China was the home of a great ancient civilisation, which goes back 3,500 years. In 1912 China became a republic. From 1931 to 1945, China was partly invaded and ravaged by Japanese armies. After 1949, Communists, who discouraged religious beliefs, ruled China.

Rice is the most important food of China.

Dragons play a big part in Chinese culture. They appear in lots of Chinese stories. In our own fairy tales, dragons are usually fiery and nasty, but the Chinese ones live in the clouds or the waters and bring good fortune. They mean excitement and good luck. The Chinese New Year is celebrated with fireworks, while enormous paper dragons wind through the streets, carried by long chains of leaping men. It really looks magnificent.

A long time ago, the Chinese were often in danger from raiding northerly tribes. In order to keep these tribes out they developed a chain of fortifications that gradually grew into the Great Wall of China. It is some 2,400 kilometres long. This is nearly twice the distance from London to Rome. It still stands today over 9 metres high and up to 36 metres wide. It contains about 3 million tons of soil.

CHINESE LETTERING

Chinese lettering is difficult for us to learn because it works quite differently from our own kind of writing.

When we write a word down, we use the alphabet as a kind of code to capture the sounds that we make in saying a word. The letters of our alphabet are just signs that we learn. They are not pictures of anything in particular.

Sometimes in road signs we use pictures to express not sounds, but meanings. Chinese writing seems to have started out that way, more than 3,500 years ago, with actual drawings of the things represented.

Nowadays, Chinese people use marks, which are quicker to make. They have some 50,000 marks to remember. The marks are like pictures, only quicker to draw. Similarly, the Chinese make beautiful kites.

The Chinese are fanatical about martial arts. China developed Tai Chi and Kung Fu. Karate originated in Okinawa after being influenced by earlier Chinese martial arts.

Bruce Lee, the great martial artist, came from Hong Kong, which is now owned by China, the British now having handed over the very wealthy island to China.

*Making up for the production of 'Black Comedy' by Peter Shaffer (see over).
Photo: Mary Taylor.*

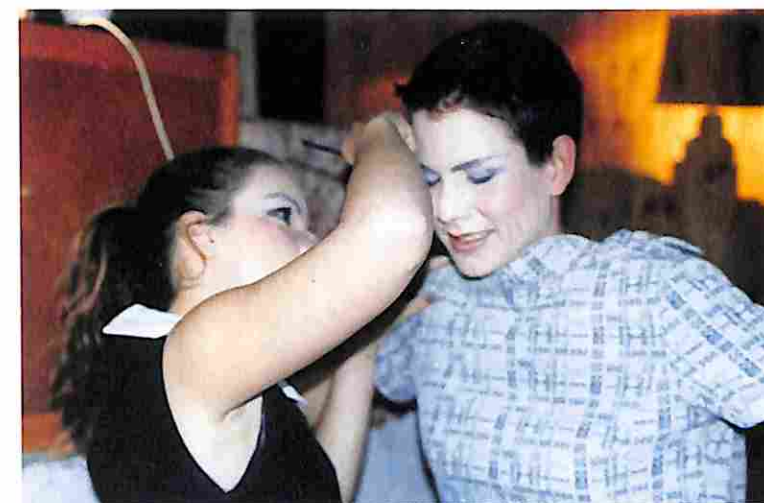
Table Tennis and Soccer are the number one sports in China. Hundreds of millions of people play table tennis every day and they are by far the best table tennis nation. They have won the World Championships 13 times. Their domination in the world of table tennis is not a matter of chance. Through an extensive programme in the primary schools every child is exposed to the sport. The best are then sent off to train together on a regular basis with specially trained coaches in a boarding school type environment.

The art of building in China has always been closely dependent on the intimate feeling of the Chinese people for the significance and beauty of nature. They arranged their buildings with special regard to the spirits of air, earth and water, their ambition being not to dominate nature by their creations, as Westerners mostly do, but to co-operate with it, so as to reach a perfect harmony. Their architecture results from religious and philosophical ideas. Tombs are the most ancient architectural monuments still existing in China.

In general, the women in China had no economic independence. Their work was devoted to household tasks, which brought them no income.

A great tragedy was the crippling practice by which young girls' feet were tightly wrapped to prevent normal development. This is still practised today and hundreds of millions of girls have to go through this. The result is deformed, tiny feet, which is deemed to have great artistic and sexual value. The Chinese consider small feet beautiful.

Christopher McEwan is taking his special interest in science into Higher Education.



Directing a Play

by ALEX WOLPERT*

Project Outline

Initially my aim was to write a set of jazz pieces as my Class 12 project; however, my interest in drama took over and led me to consider writing a play. The obvious compromise then was to find a play for which I could write a jazz score.

After several conversations and many hours in Samuel French's in London, a shop specialising in drama scripts, I found *God*, a play by Woody Allen which seemed to lend itself to being accompanied by a jazz score I could write. Mary Taylor and I agreed to do our project together, she doing the producing and I the directing. I asked around at school for willing participants: eight came forward from Classes 10 and 11, and after several read-throughs I cast the play.

God is very bound to New York of the 60's in its humour and frame of reference. During the following weeks of rehearsal I realised that the play was neither funny nor appropriate for the context of my project. Torn between sticking with it out of pride and looking for something else, I went back to French's and spent a good day looking through their selections. Now I had a working concept for relating the criteria for my choice (modern, funny, and short) to the context of my project with its collaborators, and with its intended audience in mind. It occurred to me that a spoof of *Macbeth* would be a good idea, however none of the available scripts was very inspiring, and script writing was not going to be part of this undertaking.

After much deliberation and many conversations with both my internal and external examiners, I chose *Black Comedy* by Peter Shaffer. I took my decision to the cast who had then been rehearsing *God* for four weeks. Having heard my reasons for the proposed change and having read parts of the script, they agreed. There was, however, a slight snag: the group of actors to whom I was already committed (and who had already committed themselves to working with me) consisted of one boy too many and one girl too few. I was determined to keep the group. The solution was to

cast Jonathan Horsfall as Miss Furnival—a compromise at the time, but one that turned out to be a comic bonus with local audiences.

I had already begun to write the jazz score, and now realised I would have to write something more modern and upbeat to suit this play. The music written for *God* was good practice and made the second process of writing much easier although the music was different.

The challenge remained the same: to conceive the direction artistically and technically; socially to be able to work with a group of enthusiastic, untrained and inexperienced young people (myself being one of them!); and to test my perseverance in the face of financial, administrative, and timetabling obstacles with the demands of my ongoing A level study programme and the cast's GCSE work. Seven weeks into rehearsals I encountered a problem: Rohan and Charlotte pulled out, leaving me with the need to find two new actors rapidly. Natalie Forward and Jacob Jones took these parts. The cast enjoyed the work in the dark—the action takes place, as far as the cast is concerned, in darkness, due to a fuse that has blown—and since to a certain extent I had type cast, character work became both interesting and amusing. There were many technical hitches including the absence of a usable trap-door in both venues, this led to creative alternative staging in which the whole group was involved. The last seven days we were rehearsing over eight hours a day with set building in the evening. This intensive and exhausting final spurt was considerably helped by the speech work and staging advice from Geoff Norris, and proved an ideal lead-in to the performances.

Personal Assessment

Having never had any directing experience before, I



had no concept of how this process would work out in practice. I only knew that I wanted to engage the audience in something short and witty, embellished with jazz, a combination unknown to me at Michael Hall.

Looking back now I think this was achieved despite my having to alter and scale down my original plans for the music. Although I had to acquire dramatic and staging expertise, what I learned most were social skills. The need to co-ordinate, keep the whole in mind while attending to details, coax, be firm and diplomatic and find the appropriate limits to which the work could be taken, and above all to be patient were all new experiences for me, and gave me the chance to grow in precisely those areas I was weak in. The whole process showed me how unskilled I was in this social sphere. Each new situation called upon improvisation and adaptation in human interaction.

In my drama classes at the London Junior Guildhall School of Drama I had learned the value of warm-up exercises; in this project I learned the skills of being responsible for introducing them regularly and consistently. The Guildhall work is based on the Method approach, and here I had the opportunity to teach something that I had been learning. I realise also that while it was right to rely on others to provide huge amounts of back up, I should have checked and kept oversight of various details that we slipped up on.

The rehearsals and co-operation with the cast and the interaction with the other members of the supporting team on the whole went well thanks to their enormously positive good will. There were several rehearsals that did not go smoothly, and one particularly disastrous one has provided me with the chance to analyse in some detail where things went wrong.

It was in the beginning of the final week and everyone seemed tired at the start of the session. Instead of insisting on a particularly vigorous warm-up, I made the mistake of being soft and cutting down on the very activity that might have brought them together in the common energy required. A couple of the actors were still wobbly with their lines and I expressed my irritation in unhelpful ways. I was also impatient with the lounging about by the actors not actually on stage, and unreasonably short-tempered with one of the cast who was going through a personal crisis unrelated to our work. I realise now that my reactions to this build-up of stress were to make it all worse.

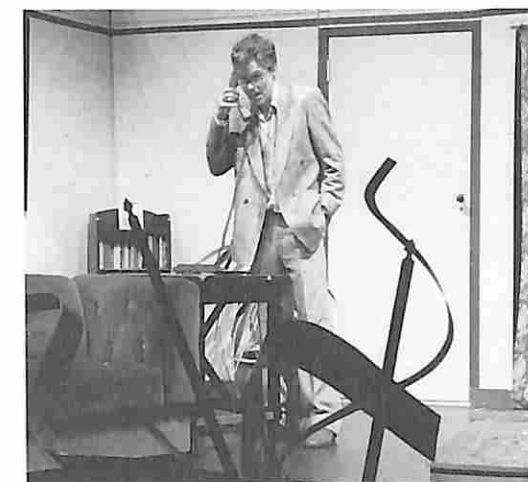
I should either have cancelled the session or stopped and found a refreshing activity from which to build it all up again slowly. It was as much due to their loyalty as to my bloody-minded perseverance with the

session that we got anywhere at all, though I now see that it was an inefficient use of limited time and energy.

The decision to take the risk of putting on the first night at Chequer Mead, a theatre in a nearby town, turned out to be right financially and artistically, though it was not without its moments of misgivings and cold-sweat. The expectations we placed on ourselves because of the public venue raised our efforts to a higher level and stimulated much adrenaline.

In assessing the value of this work I am very glad to acknowledge the endlessly generous assistance I received from so many people, particularly Mary Taylor, of course, and the whole cast. Without their unstinting and dependable support I would not have been able to realise this project. One of the great virtues of Michael Hall is the ethos in which individually motivated help and skills rise to meet needs, and I was privileged to enjoy that from so many individuals. The negative aspect of this ethos is very often a last-minute, eleventh hour approach. I did my best to avoid this, and I knew I would have to set and push for my own standards myself. I realise now that was an essential part of the project. My aims and efforts were met with great encouragement and support.

Further scenes from the play
'Black Comedy'
(here and opposite).

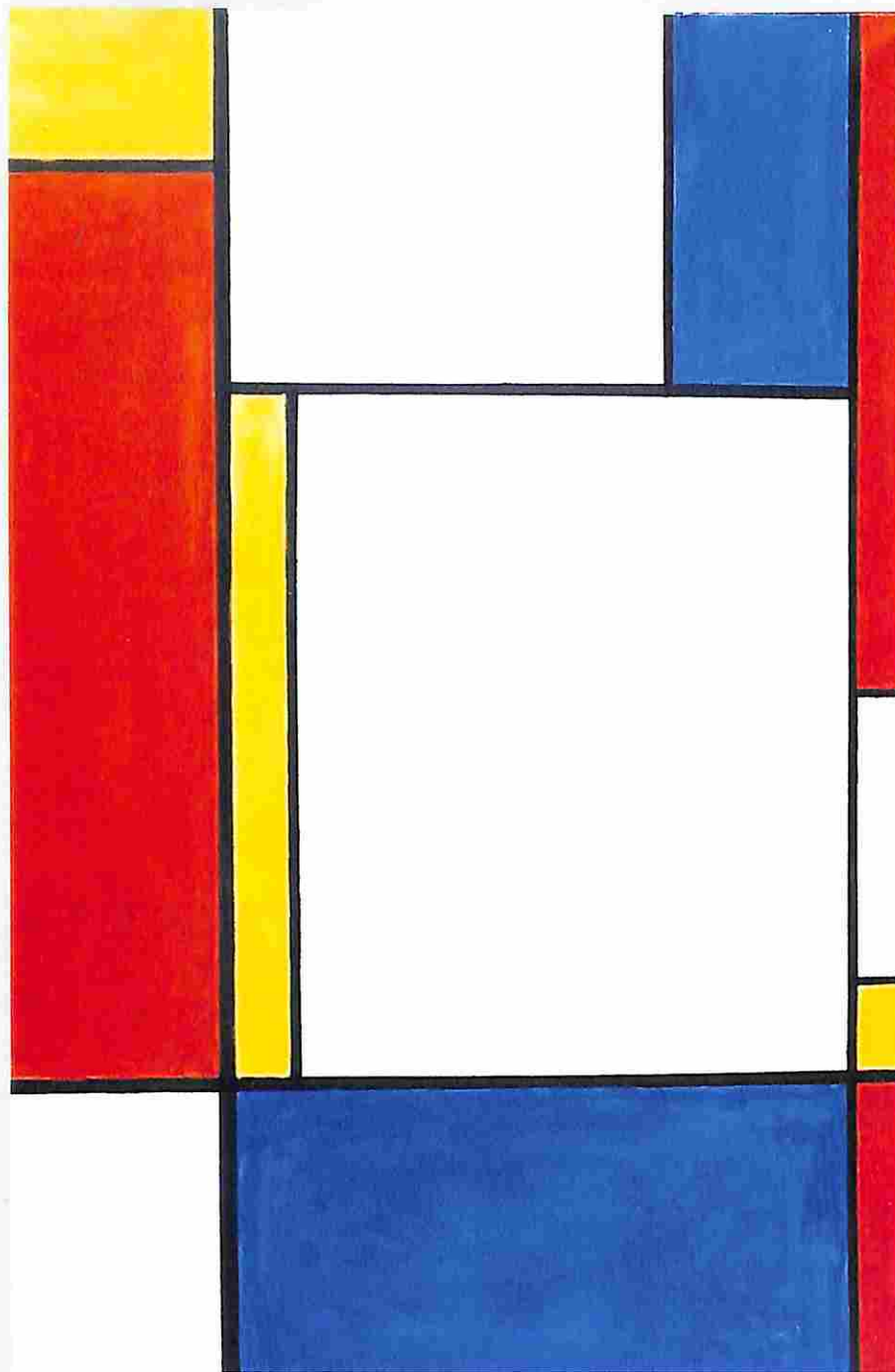


*This and the following two articles by Ismar Kaesbach and Karla Silva are, like previous articles, the result of project work in Class 12, here by pupils from Michael Hall in Sussex, England. However, the Michael Hall projects, as will be apparent from their scope, stretched over more of the year than one main-lesson, the subjects not being required to relate specifically to something in the Class 12 curriculum. These two approaches to individual projects are not, of course, mutually exclusive. Ed.

Mondrian: 'Less is More'

Discovering style amongst the high risers of Manhattan and London

by ISMAR KAESBACH



In Class 8 I went with my class to America where we spent one day in New York. Part of it was spent going up the World Trade Centre and looking round Manhattan. I was absolutely overawed by the scale of the buildings I saw and this is where the theme of the modern architecture first became of interest to me. Then in Class 9 I started attending the Guildhall School of Music and Drama every Saturday and so got to see some the modern architecture in the City of London and became fascinated by it. So when we were asked to pick a theme for our Class 12 projects I decided to combine architecture and art, as art had always been something I had enjoyed.

I began by looking at artists who used architecture as a theme, because in this way I could combine architecture and art. Delauney was one such artist whose cubist painting of the Eiffel Tower shows great dynamic. The German artist Feininger used great planes of colour to portray his theme



In the spirit of Mondrian: second picture of a project – see front cover for the first and see opposite for the culminating picture in this sequence of paintings.

of architecture. After looking at these two artists I looked at Mondrian who did not use architecture as a theme in most of his works but was greatly influenced by it, especially modern architecture. Mondrian was the

artist I eventually stayed with and whose work I looked at for my Class 12 project.

Mondrian, who was born in Holland, lived from 1873-1944, spending a lot of his life in Paris and his final

years in New York. It is known that Mondrian looked at Vermeer's interiors in quite some detail, especially the composition of these paintings which influenced his larger works. Another influence on Mondrian was Theosophy which was a movement that tried to find a universal brotherhood, and from which de Stijl followed—something that played a huge role in Mondrian's later life. De Stijl artists usually just used the horizontal and vertical lines to create their compositions, being similar to theosophists in that they were trying to find a universal way in bringing all the different art forms together. In his years in Paris, Mondrian also became influenced by the cubists who formed a very strong movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Beside these influences, in his search to find his own style, Mondrian was also continually experimenting with different styles.

In Mondrian's early years in Holland, flowers and nature were two of his main themes and often his paintings showed different natural cycles. In his paintings of towers and sand dunes one can also see the first signs of abstraction towards the vertical and horizontal lines. Then in his years in Paris, trees became Mondrian's main theme which he used to explore cubism. From here Mondrian's path of simplification and destruction started, which he found necessary as he thought reality was an abstraction, preventing the artist from expressing himself. So in contrast to cubism and the culture of that time, which showed a lot of turmoil and movement, Mondrian arrived at his own style of Neo-Plasticism which was very similar to de Stijl. This style was very calm and involved the method of using vertical and horizontal black lines filled in with primary coloured rectangles. In his final years in New York, Mondrian even went on to break up the black lines into little rectangles, which shows the influence of jazz and a vibrant culture. It took Mondrian many years to reach this stage of abstraction, which is perhaps why it is quite hard for many people to understand. This was one of my aims and interests in the projects to reach a better understanding of Mondrian's abstraction by following a similar path with the theme of architecture.

Having a lot less time at my disposal than Mondrian had (!), I tried to portray this process to abstraction with three paintings. In the first painting I used photographs of buildings in London to create the composition, which turned out to be quite realistic. For this painting I used stencilling, which takes a long time, using the monochromatic colour of blue. This gave me the possibility to concentrate on light and

space in the composition and to highlight the repetitiveness of modern architecture. I also exaggerated the perspective to emphasise the vastness of modern buildings.

For my second painting I used the method of analytical cubism where you look at the image from many different viewpoints. This method breaks up the image and releases you from reality; it also gives the composition of buildings a lot more dynamic and movement, which helps to draw the eye into the composition. For me this painting was a path of discovery as I did not know how it would turn out.

In my final painting, I used the method of de Stijl to try and create an abstract, balanced composition with vertical and horizontal black lines and primary coloured rectangles. In this painting the third dimension was created by the quality of each colour, with blue receding, while red 'jumps out' at you.

Through these paintings I have come to a greater understanding of Mondrian's work although there is still a lot I can learn about this artist and his ideas. I would strongly advise anyone interested in this painter to see the originals of works from most parts of his artistic career, if possible. There are some in the Tate Modern in London.

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Shedding New Light on an 18th Century Building

by KARLA SILVA

At first I had other ideas for my Class 12 project, but when the possibility of designing the interior of the Entrance Hall of the mansion came up, I gave everything else up and stuck to this idea.

I had several reasons for my decision: being from Brazil, the beauty of an 18th century building attracted me; the mansion is located in my school grounds, which gives me unlimited accessibility; and the ready availability of information, as I am a pupil at Michael Hall, was just what I needed.

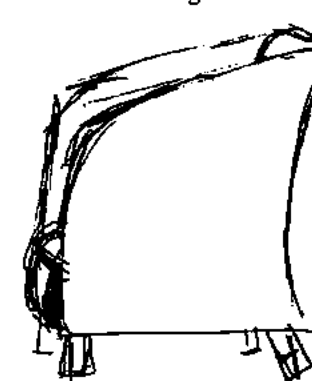
When I began researching the past of the mansion, I discovered a lot about why it looks the way it does. There were lots of modifications throughout its existence, which explains why it doesn't quite work in some places in terms of lighting.

I spent a lot of time in the mansion looking for ways of bringing light in. I couldn't understand why a room, which had plenty of large windows, could be dull. The reason I came up with was that, yes there were enough windows to make it a light room, but the light had to be dispersed. Then I began thinking how to do this, and after asking several people for advice I had the idea of placing mirrors on those walls which are most illuminated by the light coming through the windows. I learned in physics that the light striking the surface of a mirror is reflected at the same angle, so it was the perfect solution. Not only that: there is a wall which had been put in not so long ago to create an office space, and which could be replaced by a glass wall, enabling light from the window of the office to light the Entrance Hall even more.

Even with all of this in place, however, there would still be places where light couldn't reach, so I began thinking of ways of introducing artificial light which wouldn't cost much and would look good. With this in mind, and of how to use all the space provided in the Entrance Hall, I asked my supervisor's advice and we had the great idea of transforming the Inner Hall into a gallery. By installing spotlighting and standard lamps directed onto the works of art, the area would be transformed. With this idea, I had come up with two solutions at once: how to light the walls and at the same time make good use of the space which is at present a bit empty.

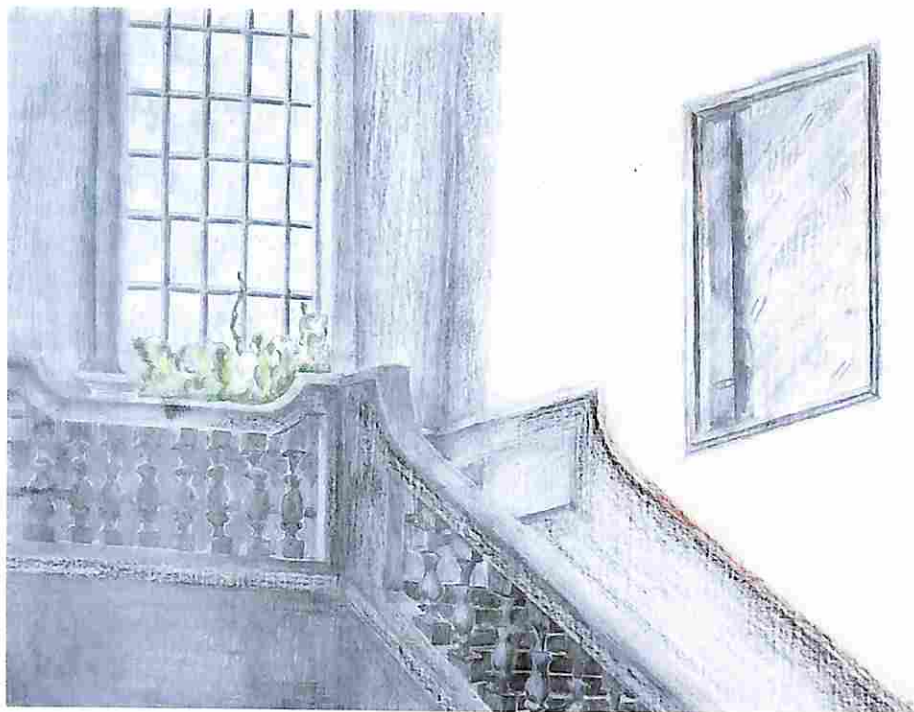
The use of racks across the walls would minimise the problem of having lots of holes on the walls, which is not permitted by law as it is a building with a preservation order. They would hide the electric wiring, without having to break the walls, which isn't permitted either, and would enable us to hang different sizes of paintings, as we would use hooks to attach the paintings to the rack.

The furniture was thought out as well. The use of simple designed furniture would bring out the natural beauty of the mansion. The set of furniture has to be light weight, so that when events take place in the mansion, such as the monthly craft market, one would be able to move the furniture easily. I thought of having a set of arm chairs which would have thick strong material as covers, not too low because anyone who might be waiting there for an interview would have to get up easily when called; nor must it be too comfortable, because we don't really want someone sitting there for ages; and last but not least important, it has to look good with simple lines but modern.



Pursuing still further the idea of having things on display and using all the space provided, I thought of placing a cupboard on either side of the fireplace. Again, I chose something light, not to clash with the 'classical' style of the pillars. The cupboards would be made out of glass, tall and thin, with four or five shelves, and could display the work of children, all through the year. I thought of colours for the wall as well, colours which would look good not only on the walls but would tone in well with the furniture I would design.

As my project is still 'work in progress', next year will be more practical. As well as making working drawings for all the above ideas, maybe I shall make shades for the standard lamps, as well as investigating the prices of materials and furniture.



Sketch for 'after' with enhanced daylight (above) and photo of the staircase as at present (below): part of a Class 12 student's year project to make the interior of an eighteenth century mansion more conducive to third millennium consciousness, despite the limitations imposed by law through its having been identified as a 'listed building'.

Introducing the Old Testament in Class Three

by DEIRDRE NICHOLSON

Introducing the Old Testament stories at the beginning of Class Three was a wonder-filled experience for myself and for the children of my class.

In Class Three we describe the journey of man from paradise to earth—the same journey that the children are making from the dreamy spirit-filled world of childhood to the real world of matter. As the children enter their ninth year, they become more aware of the world around them. They begin to realise that their actions have consequences, maybe not immediately, but certainly later. It becomes possible to reason with them, and children at this age are more able to accept an objective code of behaviour, just as the Israelites accepted the Ten Commandments. The child at this age feels a strong connection to the characters of the Old Testament with their wilful, often obstinate ways. These characters reflect the strengthened ego of the nine-year-old. As the children become more conscious of the world around them, we introduce as many crafts as possible. Crafts that Adam and Eve needed to survive in the New World, building shelters, cloth-making, spinning, weaving, cooking, basket weaving, pottery and many, many more.

The first day of the new term, and the beginning of Class Three was spent introducing all the new children to the class and in playing games that helped to bond us together as a whole class. This helps to foster a sense of belonging and 'safeness' that the children at this age can find so difficult to feel, particularly as they approach their nine-year-old 'crisis'.

I have a child in my class whose birthday falls on the first day of school, and this was celebrated in a new way. I had had a brass crown made, studded with 'jewels', and a heavy cloak with a large collar of ermine-type material. The children truly felt the weight of kinghood /queenhood when they entered the room with curtains drawn

holding a candle. As the birthday child walked to the front of the room to a specially prepared table and throne, the rest of the class sang 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. There followed a ceremony that left the children with no doubt that they had entered a new phase of their life.

The next day began with the telling of the story of the beginning of all things, of chaos and the move towards order. Later, I told the stories of Lucifer and St. Michael. ('And let there be light' is a wonderful source book.) We painted every day that first week, and for a large part of the first main-lesson, from the stories of the Creation. We ended the week with magnificent and awe-inspiring paintings of 'God said, "Let there be light"'. The children went home filled with an Inner Light of wonder sparked from these magnificent tales.

We went on to paint every day of the creation. We did bubble paintings, for example, on the day when the waters above and the waters below were separated. Finally, we arrived at the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. Here the God of the Old Testament makes it absolutely known that he will not stand for any nonsense. You either do what he says, or you suffer the consequences. At this time, the children seem to make

an adjustment in their way of looking at the world that you can almost feel. The class becomes even more attentive than usual and they start to express themselves in a way that clearly shows that they are ready to move forwards into what is for them a new world.

As a class, we talked about what it would be like to have to survive once everything you had relied on was gone. We made felt as a form of cloth-making, and we went out to a farm to make a shelter in a Port Jackson forest, by bending poles down and weaving the walls with cut saplings. By the time we had finished, we had a large shelter that everyone could lie down in.

He made the slaves
cut their own straw
to make bricks and
he had them flogged
if they did not make
enough bricks. Life
for the Israelites was
now even harder than
before.



Many of the children wanted to camp out in the structure for the night. (It was still standing, a year later, and the children often asked about it.) By the time we got to Noah and the flood, it was time to start thundering out God's words. (This was really fun!) At the end of the first story, when I had done just this, God had just told Noah that everyone not in the ark was going to die. In the stunned silence that followed the story, one child—very melancholic in temperament—turned to me and asked in a small, reedy voice, "Why was God so cross?"

The date given in the bible for the beginning of the flood is February 17th and I managed to tell this story on the 17th February 1999. The coincidence in the date did not escape the children and if it had started to rain I think I might have had several very anxious children on my hands!

Moving into a measurement main-lesson, we continued to work with the Old Testament theme and measured out the dimensions of the ark, drawing it on the road outside the school. (McGregor is a very small and quiet village.) We discovered that the ark was too wide to fit in the road and that it stretched from the school to the police station! We guessed that it would have been taller than the hotel, and we were all amazed at how the Plagues of Egypt provided endless opportunities for imagination. One day, after the story of the plague of frogs, whilst we were recalling the story, I started to get up onto my chair saying, "Oh no, I think we have a plague of frogs in the classroom!" The children all responded by also getting onto their chairs and even their desks. They could really 'see' the frogs all around them. They then had to get to the blackboard and back through the frogs. The resultant theatrics were wonderful to watch. The choleric leapt off the desks, ran to the front, lifting their legs high; the sanguines, slipped and slid through the frogs, falling over several times on the way. The melancholics took each step with utter disgust, and plenty of, "Ugh! Oh,

this is horrible." The phlegmatics were just about ready to attempt the task after everyone else had finished, having paced slowly up and down the desks, looking for the right gap in the imaginary frogs.

I used the Old Testament stories to look into the Jewish faith as a whole and we celebrated the festival of Purim in the traditional way. We baked Hammentaschen bread and gave it away to all the children in the school. I told the story of Ester, and the children all stamped their feet and hissed every time Haman was mentioned. We dressed up as the ancient Israelites would have done and we brought blankets and rugs into school to build a huge Bedouin-style tent in which we had all our lessons for three days. We sat on large cushions and really got a feel for the Israelites' way of life. Needless to say, we had a great time.

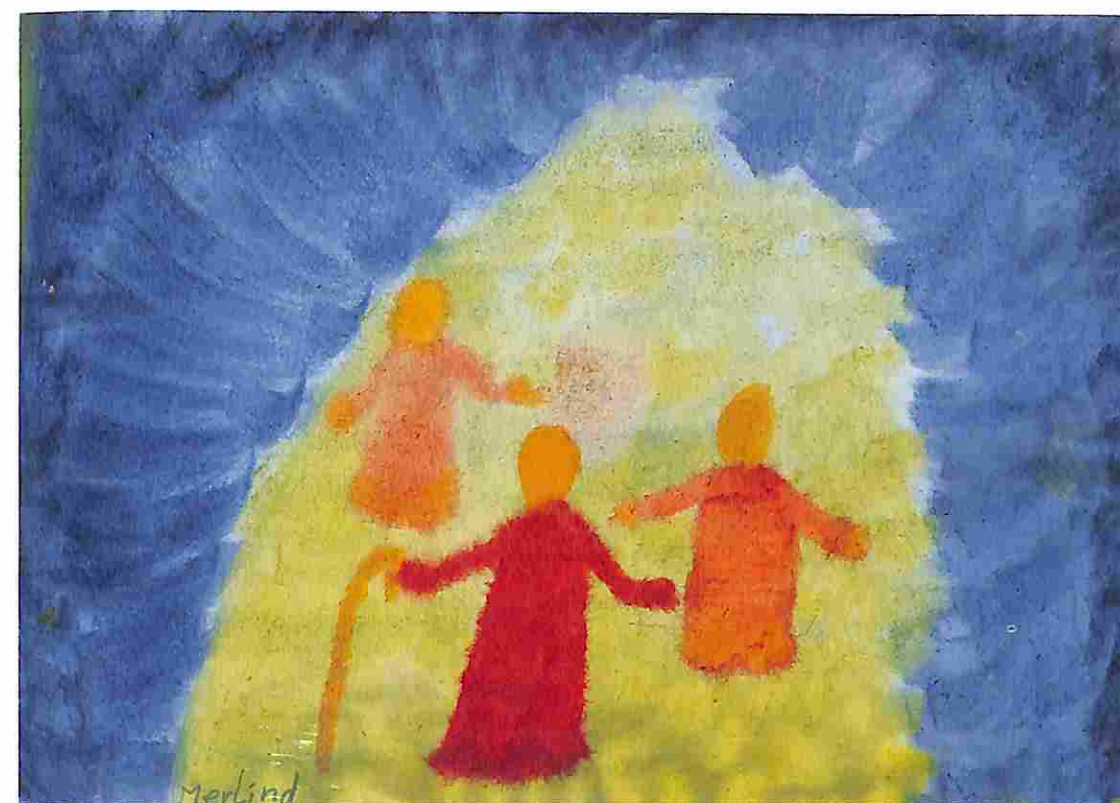
By presenting the Old Testament in a very real way for the children they were able to truly live into the experience. They were able to feel a connection to the characters and started to express their feelings for the actions of these people in a way that showed that they really felt for them.

The Old Testament stories in Class Three were a wonderful and enriching experience for both myself and for the children of my class. If you are about to begin Class Three, I wish you every success. Feel with the children, laugh and cry with them and immerse yourself in the Old Testament times and I can guarantee that you will emerge renewed and refreshed, with a strengthened class and a new sense of purpose.

Deirdre Nicholson is a class teacher in the McGregor Waldorf School in South Africa. The school lies high in the hills on a sunny plateau in a region famous for its vineyards—and, on very rare occasions, for frogs!



From the main-lesson 'Introducing the Old Testament in Class 3': The children of Israel captive in Egypt (page 17); The rainbow at the end of the Flood (page 18); Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat-eared corn and the seven lean-eared corn (left); The parting of the Red Sea (below). The three paintings are in watercolour.



Diplomacy on Track

Work experience abroad: the international environment of the Waldorf movement enhances the opportunities of a former pupil

by ALEX FORDER

Last March (1999), every year 12 student from my local comprehensive, Dyffryn Tâf Comprehensive went for a week's work experience. Most students allowed the school to arrange their placement. Having had a very boring placement the previous year, I decided to arrange the placement myself, this being what older students advised me to do. This was around November. One evening I was talking to my mother about my work experience and we came up with the idea of the British Embassy in Copenhagen. This made a lot of sense to me. Being half Danish and unable to talk the language, it would give me a better idea of the place and its relations with Britain.

The next day I wrote a letter to the embassy, telling them of my plan. They took a long time to reply. Initially I thought they were very stuck-up and didn't have time for such things. However, I was mistaken: the reply I eventually received was very encouraging and they were very keen to have me. In the New Year I had the task of booking the trip to Denmark. It was strange: I was the only pupil to leave a 30 mile radius of the school.

My week at the embassy began at the end of March. On the Monday morning of my arrival, having walked through security gates at the entrance, I was warmly greeted by the people of the Information Section, where I spent three of my five days at the embassy. While there, I did many basic jobs such as photocopying. I also had the task of designing name badges for the embassy's annual Spring Drinks Party, an event which I also filmed.

I was at the embassy when NATO started their campaign in Kosovo; it was very interesting to hear what the people there thought. I also worked in the Commercial Section, this was less interesting because there was less work that I could do. In the Consular Section, I helped produce passports and visas; it was fascinating to actually see how it was done. I also visited the Management, Defence and Political Sections, the other sections to any major embassy.

One morning on the way to the embassy it was snowing and I forgot to buy my ticket. Just before my stop, a ticket inspector, who is never around when you have a ticket, caught me totally unaware. He gave me a fine for the equivalent of £50. I refused to pay and walked away. While walking to the embassy, I was unsure how my 'colleagues' would react. Fortunately, they were as disgusted as I was with the train company and told them to cancel the fine. This was a taste of Diplomatic Immunity and I liked it!

After a very enjoyable week there, I decided I would like to do something like this after university. I was told I just needed a degree, but I decided to be more precise and apply to study International Relations. Recently, when I was last in Denmark, I visited the embassy and joined some of the people who worked there for a lunch. It was good to see them again, but hopefully, in the near future, it will be for a professional visit.

Until making the transition at the end of the Lower School, Alex Forder attended the Steiner school in Nant-y-Cwm, South West Wales, which lies at the foot of the Preseli Mountains. He is now on track with an A level ticket, studying International Relations at Keele University.

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Touching the Ground Lightly

Building a tipi with a Class 3 in London

by DAVID TASKER

Holy mother earth, the trees and all nature are witness of your thoughts and deeds.

Balham in South London may not be the place that most would associate with the cry of the eagle or the rampaging herds of buffalo but for two weeks during the grey cloudy days of November there were squaws, scouts and Indians a-plenty, busying themselves with tribal chores in a small sanctuary of parkland, hemmed in by city roads and busy railway lines.

The Class 3 building main-lesson has always struck me as being an important milestone in the growing up (or coming down) of the child. No longer content with playing 'childish' games, our nine-year-olds are wanting something more, something of a real challenge. In fact 'real' seems to be the operative word here—real activities with real tools, real technology and engaged in a balanced and managed process with defined tasks, skills and materials. What a tremendous leap from those dreamy days of Class 1 and 2 to this crucial threshold year. Freshly landed on planet earth our intrepid nine-year-old explorers are looking for survival skills and it is interesting that the primary physical human needs of food and shelter become the centre stage of the Class 3 curriculum in the form of main-lessons on farming and building. The third primary need of health and the skill activity of medicine is delayed in the conventional Waldorf curriculum until another threshold age, that of puberty and the fourteenth year.

Children throughout their kindergarten years have, in one sense, been building and creating spaces and enclosures for many years, albeit in a very free and intuitive way, using materials that happen to be close at hand: now in Class 3 there needs to be a level of participation, a first understanding of the needs of shelter, of how local materials and resources can be identified and marshalled to meet these needs. It can also be a first introduction to the practice of architecture, the technique (*tect*) of translating an idea (*archi*) into matter (*ure*) and of course in its broadest sense this activity underlies many diverse creativities such as writing, cooking or gardening.

This connection between the realm of ideas and matter can be beautifully symbolised by a building in the way that it relates to the sky with its roof and to the earth with its walls and foundations; and the tipi with its radiating poles soaring skywards with feathers and pennants fluttering from the pole tips is a classic example. How can the Class 3 children grasp this essential fact through their will?

Initially the idea of using a tipi for the building project was generated from the necessity of finding a building that could be largely fabricated within very limited classroom and workshop space, which required minimal foundations and was therefore as independent as possible of inclement British November weather. In previous years I had instigated Class 3 building projects at Michael Hall and York which used green larch poles in the round and was keen to continue to explore this technology for children. As the preparation for the main-lesson gained momentum, it became apparent that the tipi and the American Indian culture integrated some important themes: an ecological awareness and sensitivity, a living awareness of the sanctity of building—of the tipi itself as a model of the cosmos together with a level of craft technology that seemed absolutely right for Class 3.

The main-lesson was structured in two halves: an initial exercise in making a model tipi where the principles of construction could be readily understood at a scale with which the children were



'Young Foresters' gaining ecological awareness.



Model tipis in the classroom (here); and (opposite, from above down) erecting the tipi; an exotic bird is landing; at least one historic march to the scaffold has been a joyous one.

familiar and which was readily accessible, followed by the preparation, fabrication, and erection of the full-size tipi.

Throughout the period, the American Indian mood ran deep in our veins and was emphasised with stories, songs and Indian-inspired form-drawing and crafts. Despite the alluring pull of the commercial world of electronic science fiction, it was both surprising and refreshing how readily and enthusiastically the class entered into the Indian imagination and every effort was made, throughout both stages, to subscribe to the authentic Indian vernacular and, where this proved inappropriate, to approach the situation with the eyes, ears and hands of an Indian. Special mention must be made here of *The Indian Tipi* by R. and G. Laubin. This is without doubt the definitive work, full of authentic tribal customs and building techniques and essential for any aspiring tipi builder. *Indian Crafts and Lore* by Ben Hunt, an American publication and now possibly out of print, is more superficial but full of ideas and accessible classroom techniques.

The model-making exercise started with perhaps the most simple yet profound building activity of all—raising an object from the ground towards the sky, from the horizontal to the vertical, from gravity to levity. Using 150mm long applicator sticks (3mm

timber dowels) every child experienced the phenomenon of the stick falling from the upright position with its free point always landing somewhere on the circumference of an invisible circle. This stick became our sun pole (rather than a totem pole) and the experience that this 'individual' pole must be literally rooted in the ground to stay upright is an important observation. The pole marks a centre position on the earth and forms a link with the sky. Even in the classroom, when the low November sunbeams shone through the windows the children were able to experience this link by observing the shadows cast; observing and being aware of the position of the sun both on the journey to and from school and during the day was an important part of the children's activity. From the single stick forming a 'point' on the ground, a second stick was tied to the free end with the direct observation that the freedom of the sticks is now restricted to a 'line' in space. How many more sticks are required to create a stable free-standing structure? No matter how well we may be able to answer this question it is still one of the most obvious but remarkable phenomenon to experience—the sudden and total stiffness and stability of the tripod, the inner quality of threeness. The class were divided for the model making into four 'tribes' and each child within the tribe experienced



this development from the 'free' individual stick to the stable community of three sticks with particular emphasis on the specific knot details and sequence of erection which would be used for the full-sized tipi.

Once the tripod was complete, tied at the crossing point with a generous length of chord remaining, further poles could be placed in the three clefts at the top of the tripod. There appears to be considerable tribal variation in the number of poles used for a tipi: we chose to use an additional nine poles which seemed a manageable number as well as giving plenty of opportunity to explore the wonders of the number 12—its wholeness and many factors and in particular the qualities of threeness—the tripod and material stability, of fourness and its 'human-ness' of front and back and two sides as well as its solar aspect of the four cardinal directions, a reflection of our sun pole. Much time was spent in learning the traditional sequencing of applying these nine poles to ensure a smooth and elegant junction at the apex and we used a traditional technique as taught by Scarlet Whirlwind, the 'Indian Mother' of the Laubin's.

The concept of plans and elevation seemed to need little explanation as the children could readily match the number of pictures they had been drawing with their direct experience of their model tipi, of looking directly from above (the crow's view) or from the side (the buffalo's view).

The skin was made from small offcuts of cotton sheet and we used a template from a traditional pattern from the Sioux tradition. Each tribe cut their own template from the master copy, handed down through generations of Sioux elders, and then marked this out on their own piece of cloth. This level of handcraft proved to be just the right level of challenge for a Class 3 and some simple cross-stitch sewing of wind flap guy ropes and toggle holes was co-ordinated with their handwork lessons. Within some basic constraints each tribe was free to decorate their skin, based on the many Indian patterns and natural forms that had been practised during the main-lesson, and the model-making exercise was concluded by a corner of the classroom being given over to an Indian scene, each tribe pitching their tipi in a landscape.

So how could the model be used to build a full-size tipi, large enough for all four tribes together? Here the class could meet the idea of scale 'first hand'. Our small 150mm model sticks would now have to become tree trunks four or five times the height of a child 5000 to 6000mm long! Since harvesting forest timber of this size from South London would be a mighty challenge for the most wily Indian scout, we were most fortunate in having a parent who was a tree surgeon, and through his contact the class was able to



"Timber!"

spend a day at a National Trust woodland in Sussex.

We were under the guidance of a forest warden who had actually planted the mixed larch and hardwood trees some fifteen years ago; a man who intimately knew the trees and plants and animals of the forest, how to recognise the age of a tree and whether these could be sacrificed for our tipi: a real latter-day Indian! He showed us his collection of forestry hand tools and the correct way to fell a tree. And how the children loved to shout 'timber' when each of our fourteen young larch trees scrunched to the ground! Now the children could really get to work, sawing branches off from the trunk; and, by pacing its length, the base could be cut at around 16 feet, the maximum length that would fit safely onto the roof rack of the car and also give us the right sized tipi for the class. Each trunk was carried like a prized trophy by the combined efforts of a tribe from the depths of the forest to a clearing where our transport was parked. Exhausted yet well satisfied, our harvest contained 14 fine larch trunks including a slightly longer heavier trunk for the western pole and two lighter poles for the smoke flaps, together with small branches of oak for use as toggles and tent pegs. Thanking mother nature for her fruits we left the forest lands by singing and chanting our Indian songs.

For the remainder of the main-lesson the accent was firmly based on the huge willing forces that any construction project requires whether it be a small tipi or a large civil engineering project. It was also the stage where clear, well-organised management was essential. Traditional communities relied on a co-operative effort from all sections of the community,

from young children to the old, to come together to achieve the major projects of the year—harvest time in the fields and building are two prime examples. The occasions when the old timber cruck frames were hauled into the vertical position was a great moment, a celebration in the life of the community. For our tipi project to be completed within the main-lesson period and with all children being actively involved in all stages, the parents of the children were asked to help during the practical part of the main-lesson. This brought a new and very invigorating mood to our work; the children at this age seemed to seek something new in their relationship with the adult world, the first inklings of the master-apprentice role replacing that of the parent-child.

Our first task was to debark and smooth the larch poles, and for this the gentle art of whittling, practised by so many children at this age with small penknife, had to be augmented with larger draw knives with one to one supervision from parents. The poles averaging around 6m in length were too large for the classroom but we were fortunate to have fine weather for this essential outdoor activity (see inside front cover). The other activity undertaken by the class as a whole in this second week was to find the right location for the tipi on the parkland surrounding the school. Here we had to find a balance between our classroom thoughts of how an Indian would choose—prevailing wind, solar orientation, proximity to trees and water and the 'lie' of the land—and what actually felt right whilst walking around. We selected a sun pole and made a simple ceremony of erecting this on our chosen site; now we could experience the shadow of the pole and how this reflected the position of the sun. During the week, the children became aware of the position of the midday sun, of where the tipi opening would face to the east and the orientation of our basic tripod structure. By continuing our main-lesson work on the twelve-fold number diagram we were able to take the experience of three- and four-fold symmetry with our eyes and hands, to abstract this in the form of number



Harvesting the larch poles.

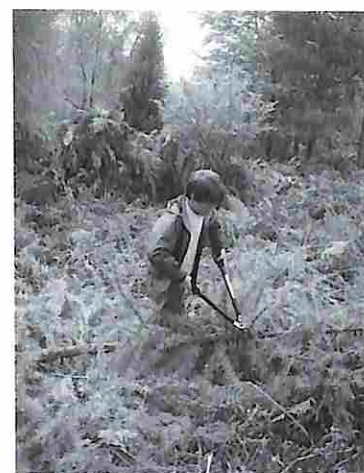
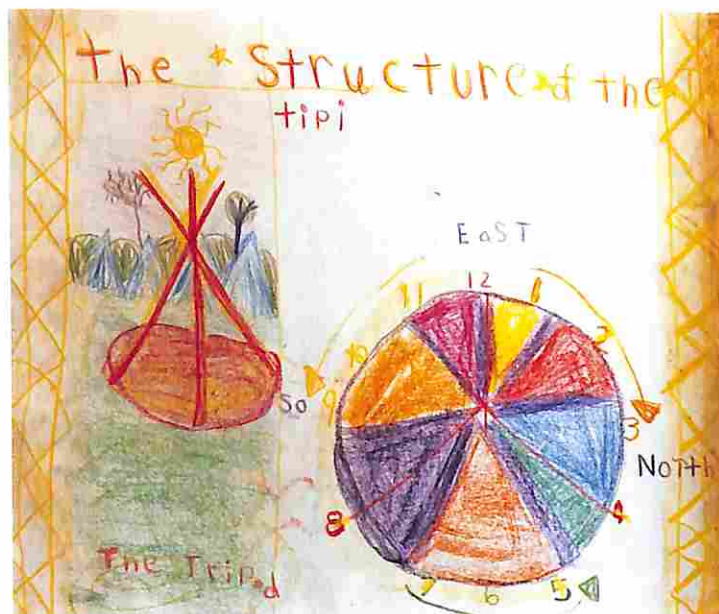
diagrams in the main-lesson books, and then to apply these principles in the tipi construction.

For most of the second week the children worked in their four tribes alternating between the essential building activities, and although this required additional adult assistance it did mean that the groups were sufficiently small to allow all the children to become fully involved and to avoid the 'onlooker' syndrome which would have run against the spirit of this main-lesson. Each tribe practised the technique of erecting the tripod—quite an achievement for some of the more lightly built children—in the hauling up of the heavy larch poles and the finding of a balance point to enable the third pole to be manoeuvred into place. The skin was made by sewing offcuts from old white cotton sheets donated by school families and the shape marked off from a scaled up template; with all tables and chairs stacked against the classroom walls there was just room to lay the skin flat on the floor. For practical reasons the long lengths of running stitch were completed by two parents in an evening using electric sewing machines. The children, however, were able to undertake the small sewing and cutting tasks—of attaching the many tabs to the skin, the wonderful oval doorway and the toggle holes to connect the skin above and below the door opening. Other activities included the preparation of small oak and ash sticks, many found by the children from around the school, for the toggles and holding down pegs as well as stones and kindling sticks for the small fire pit at the centre of the tipi. For many of the children the idea of a fire inside a dwelling of their own making was difficult to grasp and to make a fire in a tent even more farfetched, yet the combined challenge of creating an enclosed space, warmed and enlivened by fire, seemed in some way to echo the challenge for these nine-year-olds.

Decorating the completed skin was a wonderful time with each tribe contributing a band of coloured Indian forms around the perimeter, derived and practised from their many drawings in the main-lesson books. Here the waxed block crayons, so much a part of the early school years, could now be used in a new context, a broader landscape. Somehow the decorated tipi skin represented a picture of the building process as a co-operative group endeavour, where each child could see their own contribution as part of an integral whole.

The excitement and expectation of the children on the final day was quite memorable. Would the skin fit neatly and tightly around our pole construction? Would all of the class and two teachers be able to sit around the fire? How would the fire burn; and would our smoke flaps be effective? On a damp, misty

Main-lesson bookwork and (opposite) one of the delighted 'bookworkers'.



Far from the cry of horn and hooter.

November morning the whole of Class Three ceremoniously carried the decorated skin, supported on the tall western post towards the conical form of the remaining posts, like an exotic bird seeking to settle in a new land. To our combined relief and delight, the skin wrapped around and embraced the carefully positioned poles. One by one the children gingerly entered through the small oval opening, a new birth and journey into a world of their own making. It was quite a squeeze but, yes, we did all manage to sit around the fire pit and experienced a moving fire ceremony devised by their class teacher.

Having bid my last farewells, I left the four tribes and their class teacher squatting around the fire in the tipi. On leaving the school grounds to return home to York, I glanced around to see the conical form of the tipi set against a backdrop of trees, the thin tips of the larch poles pointing upward towards the sky; a slow plume of smoke was curling between the wind flaps. The sound of the children singing their Indian songs began to be masked by the roar of passing trains and the hum of city traffic.

Postscript: my warm thanks go to Kymberley Chase who, as the class teacher, not only allowed me the freedom to devise and deliver the main-lesson but also gave invaluable advice, encouragement and assistance throughout; also to the parents and friends of the school who, at very short notice, gave generously of their time.

David Tasker taught this main-lesson as part of the practical requirement of the Michael Hall Teacher Training Seminar, from which he graduated. He lives in York, practises as a Chartered Civil Engineer, and is currently a part-time visiting lecturer at the Prince's Foundation School of Architecture.

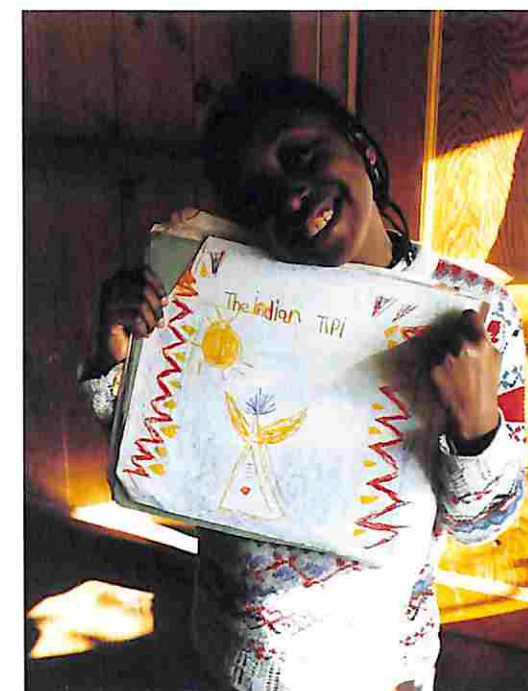
REVIEW ARTICLE

The Future is Now: Anthroposophy at the New Millennium edited by Sevak Gulbekian, Temple Lodge Press, London, £11.95, 265pp.

For many of us the new millennium has offered—and offers—an opportunity to take stock: to pause and reflect upon "the challenging times ahead, [with] a chance to reassess, prepare and be awake" (back cover 'blurb'). In this volume, Sevak Gulbekian has asked 18 distinguished Temple Lodge writers "to offer their thoughts on the question of where the earthly manifestation of anthroposophy stands at the present time, and to what extent it is fulfilling its tasks" (ibid.). More specifically, they were asked, "Where are we now in relation to [Steiner's] vision, and how has anthroposophy developed over this [the 20th] century? Where do we stand in connection to the battle of the spirit?" (Foreword). Even to a relative newcomer to anthroposophy, many of the names will probably be familiar—Gilbert Childs, Michaela Glöckler, Brien Masters, Thomas Meyer, Bernard Nesfield-Cookson, Nick Thomas and Olive Whicher, to name but a few. A rich feast of insight, wisdom and challenge was therefore my overriding expectation as I opened the covers...

The book is divided into two major parts—"The

Continued on page 35



Yes, the Sun Shines on All but What Difference is it Making?

A festival of Youth Olympics in Delphi 2001

by BRIEN MASTERS

It was a bold idea: bringing people together who would almost certainly be unlikely to make that kind of contact under normal circumstances—Israelis and Palestinians, Serbs and Albanians, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, for example. Moreover, 'catch 'em while they're young', say 11-year-olds, before they have had drummed into their child-sized and child-impressionable consciousnesses that as well as being born in Israel, of Israeli parents—and, in some lucky cases, with Israeli grandparents—they have been born into a potentially life-threatening political zone. And having caught them while they're young, introduce them to the equally young human beings who are the offspring of those who are the supposedly potential life-threateners—while, of course, conversely, feeling equally life-threatened. And having brought them together, let them engage in some mutually satisfying activity, so that when they go back home, they may realise with opened, or at least opening minds and hearts: on the other side of that checkpoint live our good friends Mohammed or Miriam.

The three vital components that were needed to put this idea successfully into action were (i) identifying a mutually satisfying activity; (ii) finding an acceptable place where it could take place; and (iii) enabling teachers of these children to become enthusiastic and committed towards the idea. Eyal Bloch, a class teacher in the Jerusalem Adam School, one of the Waldorf schools in Israel, was quick to identify the activity: the five *palestic* events, the pentathlon, of running, leaping, wrestling, discus and javelin throwing from Ancient Greek athletics. With substantial support from The Institute of World Affairs, teachers and head teachers from the areas mentioned—as well as others such as Northern Ireland and The Irish Republic, Alexandria and Greece—were invited to an eight day Seminar, together with facilitators, amongst whom was Nada Ignjatovic Savic from Belgrade, a highly skilled worker for growth through conflict.

Foremost amongst the teachers, naturally, were those who taught gymnastics or sport, since a form of

the pentathlon (the five Greek athletic events) was to be used that did not require the intensive training one associates with 'professional' sport and athletics. The form of movement proposed was essentially non-competitive (for competition, if it crept in, would be counter-productive to the whole idea, even before anyone got as far as blowing a starting whistle). It derives from *spatial dynamics* a form of gymnastics that has been evolved by Jaimen McMillan of Stuttgart together with colleagues. Through spatial dynamics the *essence* of the discus throw, for example, is experienced without the complex and highly strenuous twirling that manifestly allows the muscular part of the movement to play a role that can easily override grace of movement. Similarly with the other events. The vision, therefore, was of a mini-Olympiad.

But where could such an event take place? Clearly it would be ridiculous to emulate the international practice of 'bidding' for the next Olympic games. (Sydney's successors have already started to get themselves locked into that.) National rivalry, media and commercial competition were three of the elements that the organisers wanted to exclude completely from this arena. One has only to think of the personally demeaning and internationally despairing situation caused by the use of drugs in the 2000 Olympic Games, which threatened to overshadow the event (see 'Drug claims cast cloud over Games' in *The Times* 22 September 2000 and numerous other reports)—a kind of bizarre race between the chemical industry and the bodies responsible for overseeing fair play e.g. the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), the US Track and Field (USTF), the UK Athletic (UKA), the US Olympic Committee (USOC), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Weightlifters Federation (IWF) to mention some of those quoted as being involved in the various disputes. Professor Ljungqvist, chairman of the IAAF's anti-doping commission, indicated the extent of the problem: "It is a major problem for us... It has been happening for quite a few years."

So, with the prospect of getting back to the lofty spirit of Ancient Greece, the idea was eventually born of holding the Festival of Youth Olympics in Olympia itself as a *cultural event*—no axes to grind. Even more happily, as negotiations went on this was transferred to Delphi, where, some two hundred years later than the first Olympic games (582 BC as compared with 776 BC) the Pythian games took place for the first time, followed by a similarly long tradition.

In this way, two socially healing principles from Ancient Greece were incorporated: that of the *Olympic truce* and that of the *Delphic orchestric*. As is well known, the Olympic truce decreed that, every four years, when the Olympic games were in progress, the warring tribes/city states of Hellas—Thebes, Athens, Sparta etc.—would cease hostilities. The Delphic orchestric meant that artistic activities (music, dance, poetry etc.) were introduced into the games, in addition to the athletic events and the chariot races.

This, in broad outline, gives the background to the preparatory Seminar for adults this year, which sought to create a preparatory vessel for an Olympic Youth Festival in summer 2001, with both events taking place in Delphi.

'Navel of the Earth'

Delphi! This amazing and truly awe-inspiring environment is not only a place of outstanding topographical interest, majesty and beauty, deemed to be the centre of the earth by the Greeks (they called it *omphalos*). All people were able to come there to consult the Pythian Oracle, until its demise in the 4th century AD, as *free people*. In Delphi, even slaves became free men (literally). One might say: to be human was the only passport needed to enter the sacred site at Delphi. Being human permitted you to sail up the Gulf of Corinth, disembark in the bay at the foot of Mount Parnassus, set foot on the pilgrims' way, wend your way through the olive groves, up through the steep-sided gorge, climb the overhanging slope to pay homage at the temple of Athena (one of the only three round temples in Greece, exquisitely graceful and perched on the shoulder of the mountain a thousand feet or more above the track at the bottom of the gorge), purify yourself at the Castalian spring, enter the sanctuary of Apollo, move ever upwards on the inclined pathway flanked by hundreds upon hundreds of carved images, to the temple in which—instead of the statue of a God or Goddess, as was common—the priestess, who was the medium for the Delphic Oracle, uttered words of veiled wisdom in reply to the life-question you had brought there as the

earnest mission of your community, your country or simply yourself.

To return to the Seminar: apart from the introduction to spatial dynamics, it offered modelling with clay, and preparation to visit the five main archaeological sites—Athena's temple, the Castalian spring (where we sat in the shade of trees and sketched with charcoal), Apollo's temple wherein presided the Pythian priestess, the amphitheatre and finally, highest of all, the stadium. There were also sessions in non-violent communication, lectures on Ancient Greek culture, lessons in Greek dancing, the learning of a hymn to Apollo (with original words in Greek) for which we all gathered round an old war-horse of a piano in the restaurant of the hotel where we were billeted, enjoying the generous hospitality of its entrepreneurial proprietor Panos Kaltsis.

So what better preparation could there have been? We had precisely the three ingredients required: (i) a new form of movement with its roots in Ancient Greece, the culture which is the mother culture of so much that we all share, here at the beginning of the third millennium; (ii) a setting with truly awe-inspiring vistas which, through its very 'spirit of place', inspires harmony and balance and the resolution of polarities; and (iii) a socially universal atmosphere in which all could unreservedly join hands (n.b. the Greek for 'truce' *ekecheiria* means holding hands). With these ingredients, the Seminar provided the recipe for a dough that can be mixed, thoroughly kneaded and cooked to perfection during the ensuing year, back in the classroom. Surely then, the banquet of a hundred or two youths converging next August will be one which will provide nourishment that will help realise the ideals and aims of all those who are seeking to solve the impasses which beset us in so many corners of the planet.

In Delphi, the social, geographical and cultural environments can form a triad of great promise for the future. While Helios was the god of the external sun for the Ancient Greeks, Apollo could be described as the inner, spiritual being of the sun. If *that* sun, now in a modern form, can shine in Delphi, might it not shine elsewhere, too? It could make all the difference.

Brien Masters is Director of the London Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Surrey Roehampton. Dr Masters' main publications comprise resource material for classroom use—poetry, songs and stories. His world-wide lecturing and workshops focus principally on educational themes, music and the development of human consciousness as seen in the light of anthroposophy.

What is a Forest Kindergarten?

by SUZANNE BRODERSEN

Translated by Peter Ramm

There are many examples of this phenomenon in Denmark, for this form of day institution has been in existence for over sixty years. Already in the years before the Second World War there was a wish to bring inner-city children out into the country in order to benefit from fresh air, freedom of movement and good healthy food. This was arranged through the existing day institutions which booked buses to pick up the children quite early from strategic points in Copenhagen, bringing them back around 5 p.m. During the early years, the children were able to shelter in the buses when it rained all day, change their clothes and eat their sandwiches. As time went on, small houses were built in the forest, offering the children greater protection during the cold part of the year.

Following the Student Revolution of 1968, the wish for children to grow up in free and natural surroundings grew by leaps and bounds. Education began to focus on nature, and many local day institutions established 'forest groups' that spent a considerable part of each day outside. Such forest kindergartens were also established by the Rudolf Steiner kindergarten movement, which itself had been in existence in Denmark since the beginning of the 1950s, with the biggest kindergarten at the Vidar

Skolen, Copenhagen opening in 1964.

Ever since, the number of kindergartens had grown steadily. To begin with, they were only open during morning hours, but gradually their hours have been extended due to the growing pressure from the many working mothers. Today, a large percentage of young, single mothers are forced to seek full-time employment in order to support their families.

Most Rudolf Steiner kindergartens spend at least one whole day outside in their local forest, where they build a fire, make soup, have ring games and tell fairy tales in a very simple shelter made from branches. Some of these kindergartens are outside every day, though based in a proper house where the children gather every morning and where the festivals are celebrated. There are many variations of this model. Thus on Sjaelland alone there are 46 kindergartens, and none of them has the same setting or the same daily rhythm.

In the last couple of years, kindergarten teachers in Denmark have expressed strong opinions as to the nature of a so-called forest kindergarten and what the daily programme needs to include in order to qualify as a Rudolf Steiner kindergarten. Some believe there are insufficient imitation possibilities within the forest setting, thus falling short of Rudolf Steiner's view that



imitation is of vital importance for the child's growth during the first seven years of life.

These thoughts are contradicted by other Steiner pedagogues, all competent teachers, capable of forming a daily programme rich in meaningful imitation. There are even kindergartens that celebrate all the yearly festivals out in the forest, together with parents, grandparents and friends. Their argument is based on today's child being too confined in the prevailing city environment and in great need of fresh air, peace and quiet—all of which would be vital

stepping stones during the first seven-year period, and providing a balance to anything that might be lacking.

From this description it will become clear that the Rudolf Steiner kindergartens in Denmark are not only very different in their basic makeup, but are evolving all the time. Thus there are study groups at the Copenhagen Kindergarten Seminar which have chosen to work with this theme so that teachers can keep abreast of current thinking and practice, and hopefully offer the most suitable conditions for the growing child.



Worth more than Crown Jewels? Berries and other treasures gathered by the Kindergarten children.



Suzanne Brodersen trained as a kindergarten teacher in the state system before carrying the kindergarten at the Vidar Skolen in Copenhagen for many years. More recently she has been teaching at the Kindergarten Seminar, Copenhagen.

The joy of movement and balance, as well as food for other senses, in the rich, natural environment of Denmark's woodland (above); and (below) at the end of the day, of course, Mother Nature, for all her beauty, cannot be the only carer.

The Teaching of Current Affairs in Steiner Schools

by BEATRICE GREENFIELD

The teaching of current affairs in Steiner schools, as in the teaching of any subject, can take on many forms, especially as the subject 'current affairs' does not manifest per se anywhere in the Stockmeyer Curriculum (from which the two quotes below are taken). So, if it is not in the curriculum, why teach it at all? Especially as we teachers can sometimes feel stretched to fit in all that we would wish in the most artistic way possible.

When students reach the Upper School "altogether it needs to be realised that when the child reaches puberty it is essential to awaken in him an unusually keen interest in the outer world" (Stockmeyer p.101).

In the teaching of history one needs to develop an interest in the historical connections. Why is there conflict in the Balkans? Perhaps the conflict has been brewing for many years but has never been recognised. So how far back in time should we go? The Ottoman Empire? The Russians coming to the aid of the Serbs? The start of the First World War or Marshall Tito and Unified Yugoslavia? In trying to answer the original question a whole historical picture can emerge, not to show a bias for any one particular side, but to help each student form an understanding of the problem. Some of the students joined the Derby Help for Kosova campaign. This is a local self-help organisation which collected two trucks of food, medical supplies, blankets and such like and drove them straight into the war zone. We were able to welcome Bob Myers who was one of the organisers of the campaign, and co-author of *Taking Sides*, to talk about his own personal story of how he became involved and tried to help.

A similar approach could be made with many other conflicts in the world. If we look at the many problems in Africa, should we start with the Scramble for Africa or just view the effects of Imperialism on the Modern World?

In class, when these issues have been discussed, many interesting questions have been raised. One such question was regarding the role of the United Nations in solving these conflicts—after all the UN forces are in many areas of the world trying to keep the peace. Here we discussed the history of the UN, its difficulties of the past and difficulties that it has to

overcome now. Why are there only certain countries that send troops, and who decides which? Where does the money come from to pay for the services that the UN has to offer?

One need not restrict this purely to political areas but also industrial and personal topics e.g. gender issues.

This growing awareness of historical connections awakens an interest in the world around them and with it an interest in current affairs.

"[T]he child should have developed a feeling for the beauty of the language... he should endeavour to learn to speak with what one could call a taste for the beauty of the language. Only when this stage has been reached, and continuing until puberty, should the pupil learn to express himself in such a way that he could convince someone else of his own opinion" (Stockmeyer p.33).

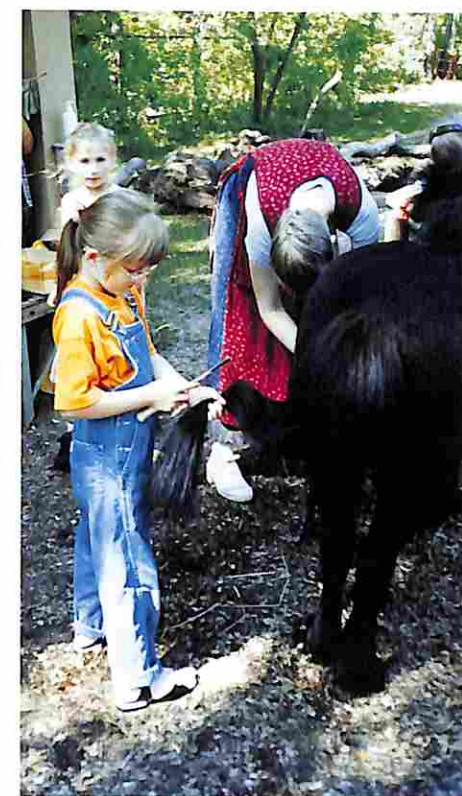
The students entering the new and often formidable world of the Upper School are also entering a new era in their own personal life. Not only are their bodies continuing to change but also the spiritual and intellectual aspects of their being. A growing awareness in the world around them is coupled with a desire to discuss any new-found knowledge. How can a student talk about and discuss issues which are so vitally important, be it their favourite music or a question from last night's broadcast?

Many students find a debate forum fulfils their needs in this respect. It provides a framework in which they first learn to stand up in front of the class to talk about what *they* want to talk about. Many gain confidence when they have presented a topic to the class and it has been well received—a growing feeling within the student that their ideas and thoughts are worth listening to.

Continued on page 34

(opposite) Four seasons, as children enjoy the garden in Riga's Kindergarten: (top right) playing in the snow, (bottom left) two 'conkering' heroes regaled on their Michaelmas thrones', (top left) 'making hay' while the Latvian summer sun shines and shines and shines, (bottom right) all ponytails get special attention at spring-cleaning time.

Photos: Ligite Gaile.



But what about a more controversial issue, for instance: Should Genetically Modified foods be grown in this country as an experiment? This is not a favourite topic or hobby that they have been wanting to talk to everybody about. Students would have to research and study information about this topic and work out how this might affect them. Could a student actually have a firm standpoint on this or any subject or are they just happy discussing around the subject?

Perhaps here we should introduce some ground rules for debate. Firstly, to say someone else is wrong is unacceptable; after all, if anyone has made a statement they must be able to substantiate it with reasoned argument. Secondly, one must listen to what others have said. Wait until the other person has finished speaking. Thirdly, play Devil's Advocate if you wish, as long as you do not do it to upset anyone. Lastly (although this list is not exhaustive and is adaptable for each class), observe confidentiality. This is most important, as each student needs to feel that the debate forum is a safe haven to play at discussing a topic.

So let us embark on our first task, to discuss the topic of GM foods. Of course the first point is to look at the original title and realise that not just the historical aspects are involved but also the experiments which are current. Information can be obtained from news reports and from the Internet, all of which can be shared around the class. This is an interesting time for the students, as they have to find information from different sources and maybe discuss it with their parents who are also a valuable resource.

On the day in question, two students have been picked to lead the discussion; one 'for' and one 'against'. Also one person to perform the role of chair. The question of what constitutes the role of a chairperson is asked and a whole new area of opportunity is opened up for each student to experience the ability to control the forum. For the quieter ones and more forceful ones alike, to be seen to be fair, non-judgmental and unbiased is quite a test.

The chairperson asks the person 'for' the topic to speak first and a brief outline of their findings is put before us. The person speaking 'against' is introduced and we hear their point of view. Now the chair throws the discussion open to the floor. We find out what the others have discovered about the topic and interesting points are aired. Two of these were:

"As monks were genetically modifying our peas and beans in the Middle Ages and this was accepted by the Church and the State, why cannot the experiments be accepted now?" "You stated that these experiments are continued in Africa where

they are needed to help feed the starving people there, but if they have to pay each time for the new seeds they will never become self-sufficient; so is this more about companies making money out of GM products than feeding starving people?"

Each member of the class has to ask at least three questions directed at the platform but others can join in the debate if they feel that they would also like to contribute anything towards the answer to a question or even that they wish to reply to a given answer. On the more controversial topics, with many people clamouring for their say, the chairperson has their work cut out.

The enjoyment that many students gain from the ability to discuss current affairs is obvious. The discussion does not end with the lesson but can often carry on beyond. From a timetabling point of view, this lesson should only take place at the last spot of the day—and there may be a colleague who would be pleased to give up the last lesson on a Friday afternoon!

From the students' point of view, not only is it their forum in that they are discussing the topics, but they also choose the topics to discuss. And what a variety we have had over the years! After telling them that they can discuss whatever they want, it is quite interesting to observe that they are not solely interested in 'Sex, Drugs and Rock'n'Roll'. We have had questions on the 'lowering of the age of consent', 'the legalisation of cannabis' and 'whether Kirk Cobaine is really dead'. But we have also had other areas of discussion: for example, fox hunting, whether there should be a State religion (interesting here in that the two protagonists were both discussing their opposite point of view), witchcraft, the environmental impact of cars, and women in politics. The last was interesting in that although in the newspapers, around the time of the last election, this seemed to be a major issue, it was queried as an issue at school: *of course* women should be in politics if that is where they want to be and what they want to do, what is all the fuss about?

Of course we have been talking about issues that could easily be placed in a 'for and against' arena, but we know that current affairs are not always as straightforward as that: nothing is black and white and if there are many people involved there can be many different points of view.

Take the case of Elian Gonzales. If you have a small island like Cuba standing against a major power like the USA, plus the people who are personally involved, fighting for a little boy who had just lost his mum, the stakes were not only high but there were many who had their opinion and wanted to get involved. This, as with others, called for a

different approach. The class had to find out as much as possible about the whole saga and on the day in question each was given the name of a person that they were going to role-play. The major players were: the President, Elian's father, Elian's grandfather, his aunt, local school teacher, local toy shop manager, Gloria Estafan and the press. This needed careful orchestrating and a deal of knowledge of the timing of events. Each student would state their interest in the proceedings at the time they would have become involved. As each student finished speaking or negotiating their position another student would be brought forward to re-negotiate from their point of view. When the President had his say the Cubans in America would jump up to have their say but what about Elian's father? He had to be brought in and of course the press would be involved at every point. The toyshop manager wanted to give toys to help Elian, reports from his new school were given, Gloria Estafan raised everything to a higher profile and the press joined in. Then the President ordered the troops to take Elian. Elian's family in America did not like this but the child was united with his father. The person who played the President at this point in time looked totally bewildered, trying to work out what to do next as everybody around him was asking questions and demanding answers. Perhaps that is exactly what the real President felt.

The student who asked the original question about Elian was probably right in being confused about the issue, especially as we have only the press version of events; and maybe the scenario that was acted out did not give any sound answers, but it did raise awareness about what had become a complex issue.

Beatrice Greenfield teaches English and history in the Upper School in Michael House in the English North Midlands. She came to Steiner education from a background of youth work, having spent ten years in Lewisham, a rich ethnic district in London, and in Nottingham.

Corrections to Dates

In the previous issue vol. 34 no. 2 the date of Susie Douch's graduation was 1979 (p.4); and, of course, last year was the 250th anniversary of Goethe's birth, which was on 28th August, 1749 (p.8).

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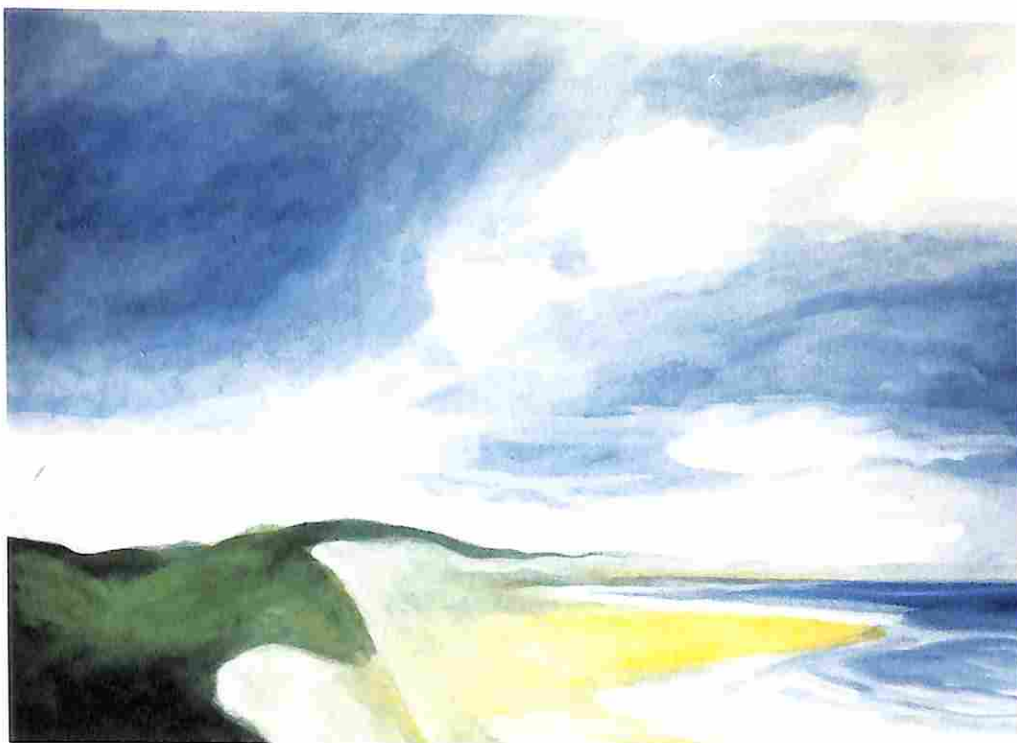
future of anthroposophy' (10 chapters, including Richard Seddon's useful chapter on the development of the movement in Britain); and '... Meeting the challenge' (6 chapters), which looks at individual themes—including the *threefold society*, education (literacy), racism, teenage self-development, freedom in thinking, and the interpretation of life. A number of these issues clearly have major relevance for Waldorf education. The line-up is completed with Gulbekian's context-setting introduction, Hans Peter van Manen's appendix, and a Further Reading section listing titles by the 18 featured authors. In a brief review I can only touch all too briefly upon those contributions which I found particularly interesting.

In his Introduction, Gulbekian invokes Aristotle's thinking to help locate Steiner's thought within the broad evolution of consciousness. For while Aristotle "was directing human thinking from the heavenly to a new experience of the earthly", with his thinking forming "the very basis of modern life and the scientific outlook of our time" (p.14), Steiner "began the long process of re-spiritualisation of the re-ascent to the cosmic" (ibid.). Gulbekian implies that it is important not to make a 'fetish' (my term) of anthroposophy as *the* only true path, for "the challenge facing the anthroposophical movement today... will be to recognise true modern spirituality... when it does not have the words 'Rudolf Steiner' or 'anthroposophy' stamped on it... Will we be awake enough and sufficiently unprejudiced to perceive anthroposophy in the new forms in which it will inevitably appear?" (p. 15). Prescient questions indeed.

In the first essay, Sergei Prokofieff refers to the "attacks of the anti-Michaëlic powers which will without doubt significantly increase in the immediate future" (p.37)—an analysis which resonates with what are arguably pernicious, even evil forces engulfing some modern Western mainstream education systems. Education is taken up explicitly by Brien Masters, who offers a thought-provoking perspective on the pressingly relevant early literacy question; and by Edward Warren, who argues for 'the Self' being central to teenage self-development, and college and university education.

Drawing on Steiner's striking statement in Volume 1 of *Karmic Relationships*, that "When...a child is obliged to learn to read and write [too early],

Continued on page 44



(above) Through water colour painting, students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) aged 15/16 enter into the landscape of the country – with its changing skies, its shifting sands, its undulating greens and its ever-present feeling of moist air – and hence into something of the 'Spirit of England' which indwells the language in which they have the opportunity to steep themselves.

(below) Tutors practising javelin throwing through 'spatial dynamics' at the conference in Delphi, Greece in preparation for the youth Olympic Festival 2001 – see article on page 28.



Upper School pupils at the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School (bottom left) 'etching' the concrete forms which induce enhanced life forces in the water flowing through the cascade; a group (above) working in the school grounds near the flow form; a child in the Lower School (bottom right) fascinated by the eddying movement of the water; and (on page 38) a Lower School group during one of their gardening lessons – see article on page 38. Photos: Foppe Jellema



Everything in the School Garden is not Always Rosy

Reflections on sixteen years of work in the garden with children

by FOPPE JELLEMA

It is not easy to be a teacher and a gardener simultaneously. This is an experience that I have had for many years during the time I have been teaching gardening at the Rudolf Steiner School in Edinburgh.

When I came to work at the school in the 1980s I was first and foremost a gardener. The grounds had been neglected for a long time and needed to be re-landscaped. This aspect of *immediate* change—such as the felling of an unwanted tree, or the building of a retaining wall—appealed very strongly to the pupils; but the planting of bulbs or annuals usually took a little bit more persuasion to get involvement from the youngsters. However, I concluded that there are pupils who are more inclined to work with pickaxes and suchlike tools, testing their growing strength; and there are pupils who are better suited to the finer work that tending plants requires. It has been my endeavour to cater for both groups of pupils. So, for instance, some made dried flower arrangements, others rather swept leaves.

Yet I discovered that both groups had one thing in common: *an enthusiasm for when the environment was cultivated and used as a resource for craft activities.* Where 'the outside classroom' supplied material for what was done inside, in a main-lesson—such as the percentage/profit & loss main-lesson in Class 6, in connection with selling vegetables to parents and working out the profits to be made—it always gained the pupils' interest. This is why, when Aonghus Gordon came to our school and spoke about his Hiram vision, this immediately made sense to me. In the first place, the pupils want to *do* something skilled. Beautiful shrubs, bushes, plants and flowers, in their eyes, are secondary.

There are three aspects to gardening. The *productive*, the *educational* and the *curative*. Where one aspect takes over in any given situation, sooner or later it becomes an unhealthy garden. In a school garden, good produce is as important as sound gardening practices taught to the pupils. Working in the Kindergarten to enable the small ones to see

adults putting their hands into soil whilst tending flower beds, in an age where more and more work is taken over by technology—and that *not* being referred to as getting 'dirty' hands—is another important aspect of the task of encouraging children to become more connected with the environment. It is the challenge of a gardening teacher to be sufficiently aware of addressing all three aspects in the preparation of a lesson—like any other Steiner teacher might address the three soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing in the classroom indoors. In the garden the educational process is referred to by different names but still it is the same principle with which one is working.

Foppe Jellema was brought up in Holland on a dairy farm. Despite being discouraged from working on the land in his teens, he discovered that that was nevertheless the line he wished to follow. He came to the UK in 1974 and after working at Coleg Elidyr for three years establishing a beef herd, he joined the staff at the Rudolf Steiner School of Edinburgh.



Though there is no shortage of water in Scotland's climate, bringing the element right into the environment through these flow forms not only enhances their quality of life at Edinburgh's Rudolf Steiner School Kindergarten but also provides the all-too-rare experience in modern life of how water moves in a non-mechanistic way. This childhood experience is something that, later in adolescence, will repay detailed study, vital today, if the biological sciences are going to get further than cloning.

What Shall I Wear Today?

by ROSWITHA SPENCE

Do you leap out of bed first thing in the morning and get into the nearest clothing your hands happen to find, or do you arise more slowly and ponder on what to wear? Do you dress according to convention, or are you creative with the content of your wardrobe? Where do you experience yourself between these polarities? Whichever is your individual way, clothing is part of our daily routine, regardless of how conscious we are about it. How we are dressed plays a larger role than we realise, in the way we live in our body, in how we move, feel, and in the way we affect each other. So what is clothing all about?

The animal world has its clothing bestowed on it by nature, according to characteristic need and Divine order, but the human being is born naked, and climate and modesty require that we find other ways of covering our bodies. Looking at the physical form we inhabit, we see three distinct areas that each need a different approach to the shape of the garment: the limbs, head, and trunk of the body.

The limbs, almost sticking out like radii that extend in all directions, need freedom of movement above all else so that we can walk with a firm stride or run and jump, swinging the arms and reaching out to life all around us. Here clothing needs to be tube-shaped so that we can express our will and perform the deeds so essential for daily life.

The head has quite other tasks and is the last part of ourselves that we dress. In its rounded form it is the polar opposite to the limbs, like a miniature cosmos. Yes, the hair is a partial clothing, but to 'keep a cool head' for clear thinking is something we all know to be good advice. Hats are therefore a protection against extreme weather conditions, and, for the rest, a delicious opportunity for extravagant fantasy.

Joining head and limbs is the middle realm, the trunk, that in its form is like a combination of the other two; lineal ribs and pelvis that create rounded spaces for the rhythmic system and the whole complexity of digestion etc. Here the need for warmth is paramount. To maintain a healthy co-operation between all the many complex organs housed in this central realm, the garments we choose can destroy or sustain our equilibrium and sense of well being.

The texture, or fibre and weave of the fabric used for any garment is another area which deserves

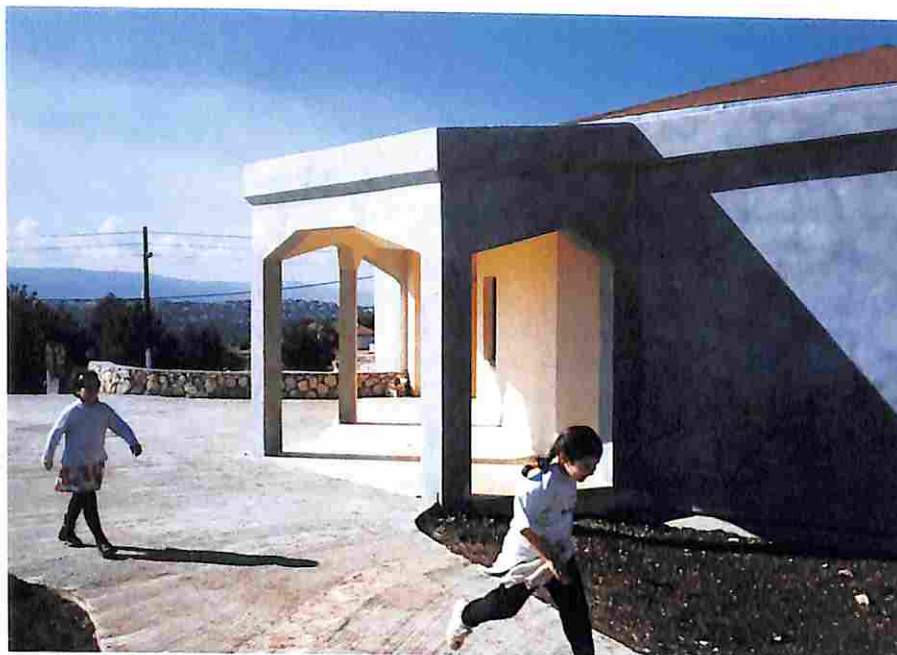
attention. Let us first look at fibre. This affects our life forces of warmth and cold and the general breathing of the whole body, particularly the skin. In fact we constantly experience the surface of our clothing in our sense of touch, especially with our hands. There are three basic substances from which fibres are spun: the animal kingdom of wool and silk, the plant kingdom of cotton, linen, rami etc., and the mineral kingdom, of which most substances are so-called man-made or synthetic. The question that arises here is how to know what to choose. Ultimately only trial and error can be any help because every human being has a unique range of body temperatures. So some fibres hinder while others help a healthy balance between body warmth and seasonal climate. It is interesting, however, that natural fibres are undying favourites when it comes to the beloved blue jeans and T-shirts.

When we look at how these fibres are united into fabric we know the difference of a knit or woven cloth in the way it drapes and adjusts to our body, but the variety of weaves and knits is unlimited, as are the finishing processes they undergo in the factory. So here the choices depend on the purpose for which the fabric is intended; for example, the weight of cloth for a sleeve to be comfortable is much lighter than what is needed for the wear and tear of skirts and trousers.

Colour

But what about colour? This realm is the deepest and most unconscious part of how we respond to what we like or dislike. Colour is closest to how we feel and what mood we experience at any given moment. In fact we are bathed in an aura of colours, though few people are able to see them. At the beginning of human evolution our auric colours were our garments, but through the ever awakening consciousness of self and the hardening forces of the physical, we have lost our ability for supersensible perception. And so over the ages we have replaced the aura with fabric and forgotten how this came to be. Nevertheless, these auric colours are still invisibly present and so the colour of our garments, like an unconscious echo, can be a powerful influence on how we relate to each other, even enhancing or disguising social interaction. Witness how colours look different, depending on who is

Colour and organic forms bring warmth and life to the stark and stony environment of the Harduf Waldorf School pupils in Israel: (above) the school entrance with Mount Carmel, of Elijah fame, in the far distance; and (below) some of the single-storey classroom units—architect: Dro Tzur.



Continued from page 39

wearing any one given tone; for example, how red glows on the person who loves to wear it and just screams on the one who does not!

There is often an inner argument in progress when debating the practical versus the aesthetic priority of any new purchase. Perhaps the practical applies most to what we have to wear for our profession, our uniform, or our protection, or just what might be

most appropriate; whereas the aesthetic relates most to special occasion clothes, weddings being a good example. In between lives a vast range of leisure wear which swings either way but is really a combination of both.

If we look at the world of sport we are given an amazing panorama of everything of the above and much more. Take any one sport and see what clothing is needed to protect the body, allowing for the specialised movement attaching to the 'tool' of the

sport, such as ball, rope, ski etc. and the general design, whether traditional or fanciful, never mind about all the many other details that the industry needs to take into account to make your sporting wardrobe complete.

Talking of industry: the world of fashion is a big one! How far do we allow fashion to dictate what we wear and how much are we able to design and create our own style without the skills or cash to make our own clothes? Ultimately it is a matter of how we assemble and co-ordinate the content of our wardrobe, how we wear our clothes, or whether we let them 'wear' us!

Blue jeans are somehow beyond fashion and are a unique phenomenon in the whole history of clothing. No other garment has been so universal and broken the barriers of age, sex, occasion, climate, nationality and culture. I once called them a uniform for individuality because only in the shop are they alike; once worn they become like a second skin and no two are ever the same. Over the ages clothing can be seen as an expression of the evolution of consciousness. I find blue jeans expressive of 20th century consciousness which strove for the all-human, beyond creed, witness the human rights movement, Amnesty International and so many others.

The T-shirt is another phenomenon that is so comfortable and popular, but here we are subject to the whims of the world of slogan and advertisement. Have you noticed how the picture on the chest of the person you are with works like a magnet so that your eyes look at it instead of into the eyes of your companion? Children especially love to wear the latest craze of holiday souvenir, monster or whatever, but is the human body meant to be 'seen' in this way? A step further is the whole Designer-Label industry which certainly seems to be trying to wear us, to whatever extent we allow.

Children's Clothing

So how do we approach our children's clothing, help them develop, through time, a healthy attitude to find their own style and freedom in their choices of what to wear? When first a child enters the world to 'wear' a physical form, the bodily proportions are totally different to those of the adult: large head, fat tummy and chubby little limbs wriggling in all directions. Here the image of a star comes to mind with head, hands and feet reaching for heaven and earth. Protection and warmth are the most essential, ideally in natural fibres and of soft, clean colours. The whole being of the child is still very tender and sensitive to all the surrounding, so we need to clothe more than

just the physical body. At this time we are given the opportunity to stretch our imagination to the realms from whence this new being has come and try to create the colour, music and movement in which he or she can feel at home.

Those first early years until the change of teeth are crucial to a healthy start in life, and clothing plays a large part in how the child's body can grow. As a general rule of thumb the quality and 'goodness' of all they wear can help them the most. Whereas, in their next seven-year phase appearance matters, attractive dresses or smart wear can be very important for their evolving self-confidence. 'Beauty' is here a general guideline.

As teenagers, however, quite new features arise, with independence becoming the arena for testing their mental muscle, especially in the realm of dress. Have you ever asked yourself why they love to wear black so much? Black is the colour where 'self' can confront itself, where there is no escape from reality and 'truth' is most accessible; and there is a deep hunger for truth in young people that asks for patience, understanding and a generous stretching of soul from the surrounding adult world. Ideally, teenagers should be allowed to choose their own wardrobe and go the whole gamut of mistakes and be admired for it. How else can they truly find their own style?

Finding our own style: what can that really mean? We have the need to be comfortable, look nice and generally fit in with society. But we also need to be able to make ourselves visible in the sense of who we are, in harmony with the place, people and situation in which we find ourselves. The clothes we wear are the 'skin' in which we choose to reveal ourselves to the world. Thus we search for garments that 'become' us, that assist us along the journey of who we are wanting to become, to help us make the transition from old habits and traditional styles into a new free confidence of showing the world who we truly are.

After a full Steiner education, Roswitha Spence went to Art School in Germany, going on to work in the costume departments of the English National Opera and Royal Shakespeare Company, as well as a spell with a West End Couturier, London. Marriage and family brought her to Emerson College, where she has worked for over 30 years. She now teaches puppetry and form-drawing, also giving workshops abroad. She has worked extensively on costume for Shakespeare productions. Having had an article published in Steiner Education, January 1999, she is now engaged in writing a book on the subject.

BOOK REVIEWS

Mathematics in the Classroom: Mine Shaft and Skylight by Amos Franceschelli, Mercury Press, spiral, 209pp £14.95.

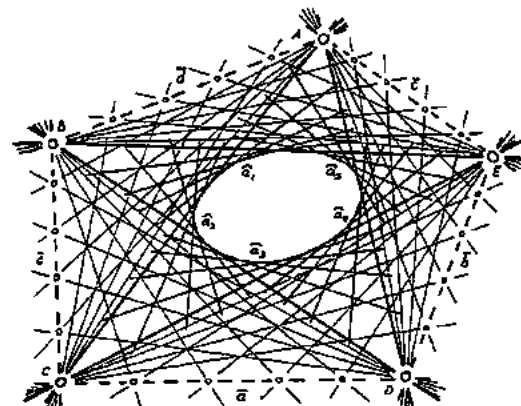
This book gives a clear and approachable introduction to projective geometry and inversion, as well as some exploration of the nature of mathematics and what it has to offer in a Waldorf education. Amos Franceschelli was the mathematics teacher at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City and the book is based on his experience and insights. It is a practical resource for the mathematics teacher, while at the same time philosophically reflective (though with a light touch) and opens up for the interested non-specialist some of the more inspirational aspects of mathematics. It makes a significant addition to the mathematical literature influenced by the insights of Rudolf Steiner.

There are three main sections. The first consists of articles on the nature and role of mathematics as applied in the classroom. One article broadens our view of the subject by describing seven different facets which the teacher can bring to pupils. Another demonstrates how a Waldorf approach to mathematics teaching develops what Franceschelli calls "appreciative thinking"—involving empathy and understanding. Examples from the Waldorf curriculum include moving from the whole to the parts and basing geometry on movement, thus making mathematics more human by incorporating feeling and willing as well as thinking. In the last of the articles, the book's subtitle *Mine Shaft and Skylight* becomes clear, when Franceschelli explores whether mathematics is, in addition to being the foundation of science and technology, a gateway to supersensible experience, as was believed by Plato and Steiner. Franceschelli illustrates how the teacher can use mathematical concepts to awaken in children a first experience of ideal reality.

The section on projective and inversive geometry is a description, almost in diary form, of how Franceschelli developed and taught a main-lesson block. Projective geometry is unique in mathematics in its ability to awaken a sense of wonder. This approach first introduces the three fundamental elements of projective geometry—point, line and plane—and shows how to lead the students' thinking to the ideal forms and their inter-relationships. These are then extended to the elements at infinity. Because these can't be seen nor imagined, but only thought, they stimulate inner movement in the students. The principle of duality in space is introduced briefly, and duality in the plane explored in some depth, bringing out the elegant symmetry and disciplined thought implicit in this topic. In the chapter on inversive geometry we are led through practical examples to experience how a limitless expanse can be imaged into a minute finite space.

There are many constructions, practical hints and worksheets. The exercises are tried and tested and

hence approachable for both the reader and the class. In one example, we experience the mystery of a conic section curve emerging from an apparently random arrangement of lines on a plane. The mathematics is sound and thorough, though some proofs are omitted. This is an elementary introduction to projective geometry, and is, to quote the author "mostly intuitive and constructive ... but not geometrically hollow". However a proof is given of Desargues' Theorem which is both beautiful and transparent, requiring the use of the reader's mathematical imagination in three-dimensional space.



An ellipse, as envelope, produced within an arbitrary, irregular pentagram from five tangents—see pp.116ff

Franceschelli gives a good description of how the subject matter was presented and how the students responded. The beauty and inspirational possibilities of mathematical thought are brought out very effectively. Links with perspective in art are hinted at; the philosophical implications of points at infinity and the centrality of light are discussed more fully—though in additional background material for the teacher which is clearly separated from what was explored with the class.

The book concludes with three assembly scripts for a class to perform. Each focuses on a different mathematical motif—balance in algebra, permutations and combinations in bell ringing, the geometry of light—and each brings will and movement into the students' understanding. These are simple but fun, and use drama to bring the subject to life.

Mathematics in the Classroom: Mine Shaft and Skylight is a gem of a book. It will be of great value to any mathematics teacher, illustrating many aspects of the subject, from the practical to the spiritual. Of equal benefit is the wealth of pedagogical experience which the author brings. Readership will not be limited, however, to maths teachers. The book will also delight anyone wanting an introduction to projective geometry or a deeper appreciation of the spiritual fascination of mathematics.

John Godwood

Light Beyond the Darkness by Doré Deverell, Clairview Books sb 127pp £8.95.

This extraordinary book is written in three parts, though its bipartite style falls onto either side of the watershed in the author's biography: the drowning of her son. Yet both styles are permeated by a profound emotional sincerity. Were this not so, the cynic would no doubt be quick in dismissing her interpretation of the events which she describes that take place in her dream life, and at other spiritual levels, as speculative. But the anguish that is encompassed by so many of the events 'in real life' impel the reader at least to be open minded about the psychic events described as having phenomenological validity. Being so voluminous, and having the consistency that they do, can hardly add up to anything else; and one can fully appreciate George Ritchie's endorsement of the book for those involved in the tragic problems arising from suicide—first hand witness that he is to near death experience.

Quite apart from the main theme of the book, the fact that Deverell has been personally burdened with a huge share of the problems typical of our time, not only gives her account added poignancy but an authenticity born of suffering and compassion.

Young people today are amongst those whose interest in psychic phenomena is as natural a thing to them as breathing. This book will surely find its way onto theirs and many others' bookshelves.

B.M.

Practising Destiny: Principles and processes in adult learning by Coenrad van Houten, Temple Lodge Publishing sb 229pp £11.95.

This is the second volume of three on adult learning written by one who has worked in the field for a large part of his rich life. It is written "primarily for adult educators" (p.3) with the person in mind who appreciates clearly designed stages in their programs (q.v. the chapter headings such as 'The adult educator's two fundamental principles and seven professional fields', 'Independently developing the three judgement processes', 'The ability to encounter—four preconditions' and much more).

As may be gleaned from the above, much thought has gone into the principles and processes here outlined, resulting in a method which, given the "experienced facilitator", would seem to be fairly immune from slips 'twixt cup and lip'.

Some of the sections have general relevance beyond adult learning, for example: clock time, living time or rhythm, psychological time and ego time. Another interesting feature of the book is that a good fifth of it is given to a collection of essays by seven authors on other aspects of adult education. Their styles of writing and approach are noticeably congruent.

Though it may not seem to be in line with the statement "It is not a good idea to set up a program lasting several years such as is customary for most professions nowadays" (p.167), it would be interesting

for Waldorf teachers to compare the New Adult Learning ideas put forward here with the unprecedented way that Steiner foresaw a group of Waldorf teachers working collegially, year in, year out, in order to develop both esoterically and exoterically the form of education which he considered a vital element in the renewal of modern culture.

B.M.

From Limestone to Lucifer by Rudolf Steiner, Rudolf Steiner Press, translated by Anna Meuss sb 239pp £12.95.

There are many angles from which this collection of lectures could be reviewed: the exuberance which Steiner obviously felt in the presence of the workmen to whom he was speaking and whose questions he was dealing with, the lesson-like structure of some of the lectures and the occasional street-like language (brought out nicely and with obvious relish by the translator) and jovial air that is rare in anthroposophical literature; the kaleidoscopic juxtaposition of topics—the Eiffel tower beside the cosmic ether, a red rag to a bull beside the need in children for calcium supplement, turtles walking without heads next to whooping cough, pleurisy beside what seems on the surface to be a touch of side-swiping: "let alone the opera"; the down-to-earth and uninhibitedly direct way with which Steiner deals with topics that could easily get stuck in philosophical aloofness (reincarnation, Christianity, the life after death); and much more.

In an education magazine, it is appropriate to dwell on some of the references to childhood—which occur every six of seven pages on average—though there is no direct indication that the lecturer had mind that his listeners included many 'family men', which presumably was the case. The references are not merely passing ones: Steiner is referring to familiar aspects of childhood (the seven-year rhythm in childhood and the phenomena associated with it: first and second teeth, sexual maturity, the sleeping infant etc.) in ways that can deepen the experienced Waldorf teacher's understanding. There is some emphasis on the early years (was he anticipating its current topicality?), medical issues, the development of the brain (about which empirical research seems to be increasingly concurring with Steiner), literacy and its damaging effects when introduced prematurely, ancient languages and education, and the soul's greater 'breathing' processes of sleep and being born.

More than one might expect—refreshingly so and somewhat conscience-pricking—are Steiner's frequent references to his book *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment*. He claims that his insights into the topics that the workmen have asked him to focus on are not so very inaccessible. In the inter-continental tidal-wave of evaluation that is currently surging onto so many educational shores, it is heartening to be reminded of what can lead to true value for the growing human being.

it is *torture* for the soul that wants to develop and unfold in accordance with its own nature" (p.165, my emphasis). Masters suggests that "early exposure to literacy prevents individuals from bringing their spiritual gifts from the past to expression in the present" (pp.165-6). On this view, then, the adult-centric imposition of early literacy does a kind of soul-violence (my term) to the young child, prematurely wrenching it away from its crucial spiritual concerns; and humanity might therefore be "systematically but unwittingly using [literacy] to dig its own spiritual grave" (p.157). What we might term (after Maurice Berman) the *re-enchancement* or *re-animation* of literacy teaching is well captured by Masters: "[Through the Waldorf approach to literacy] the child is kept buoyant on the stream of the spirit of the letter... [so that] when finally the *letter* of the letter is arrived at, the teacher is less liable to have to deal with the leaden and frequently traumatic struggle of learning to read" (p.168).

Masters is surely right in stressing how modern mainstream literacy is often "killing the appetite for literacy" (ibid.). It follows that the crucial question becomes how the teacher can introduce the 'spiritual torture' of literacy to the child in a way that minimises such soul violence—with the teacher holding a sensitive awareness of what the child might be sacrificing or losing in the process of its insertion into the world of literacy. Waldorf will surely have a very considerable, even decisive contribution to make as the adverse pressures on children, currently being perpetrated by mainstream policies and frequently described in the media as 'damaging', increasingly come to light.

Education is also touched on by Olive Whicher, who argues for a deepening of science beyond its current one-sided materialistic world-view: "Education is a prime example of where this task lies. Is it not obvious that if children... are only introduced to scientific concepts based onesidedly on the idea of the force of gravity..., they will quite naturally resort to activities in which such forces work, even to the point of killing each other" (p.208). Moreover, "It is of utmost importance that in the coming twenty-first century an understanding of the laws of ethereal formative forces should come to the fore in science and education" (p.209). In sum, "Today..., the heart of the matter is that...we should uncover and teach the true laws of living organisms" (p.211).

Yeshayau Ben-Aharon offers us a fairly optimistic perspective on the 'threefold global

society', pointing out that "a third, new social force is beginning to become conscious of itself beyond the economy and the state...—the new civil society in which forces of moral freedom and free responsibility for the earth, human rights and free culture are emerging" (p.44)—or what he calls "the emerging global social sector of free civil initiative and action" (p.45). Examples like Philippine Agenda 21 and the Manila 1998 conference 'Shaping the Future' are presented as illustrative cases of this nascent threefoldness. Along with others in this volume, Ben-Aharon sees it as vital that anthroposophists be prepared to forge alliances with friends outside the movement (p.56)—not least because, according to him, "the global anthroposophical movement stands...isolated and bordering on ineffectivity" (ibid.). Echoes here of Steiner's statement that "The time is over when we could allow ourselves... sleepy sectarianism" (30/11/19, quoted on p.156).

Michaela Glöckler also focuses on the social and community question; for her, too, important progress in human cultural life is now increasingly being initiated by great lay organisations (like Amnesty International), and not those responsible for the realms of science or politics (p.63). For Glöckler, "the most important task for the coming century [is] to attain social competence"—whereby one's own actions must leave the freedom of others' actions unimpaired" (p.73); and our urgent need is for the countering of one-sidedly materialistic thinking with "spiritualised thinking that takes the divine into account" (ibid.). Yet she also cautions us that an increasing concern with 'external', social and cultural questions must not deflect attention from the crucial *inner* work or self-knowledge and self-development which must be a necessary accompaniment of social and cultural initiatives.

Nick Thomas also stresses both the community aspect of spiritual science, and the importance of reaching out to others: "spiritual science must be a *community enterprise* in a spiritual sense so that individual human work and cosmic thought are in synergy"; and "strength will ensue when spiritual science can *ever more embrace what others are doing that is fruitful...*" (p.77, my emphases).

Like others in the book, Peter Tradowsky explicitly emphasises the key importance of *thinking* in the evolution of consciousness. For him, the future of spiritual science "should thoroughly overhaul thinking, for thinking as a will-filled activity of the 'I' is in the gravest danger" (p.80); and in this spirit he cautions strongly against "despising thinking and science when one wants to enter the

spiritual world" (p.81). Tradowsky is also very forceful on the threefold social order, stressing that we must first understand and build enthusiasm for the notion, and then "*realise it within the Anthroposophical Society*" (p.155, his emphasis). This work is needed, not least because "so many [modern] problems are the result of culture, law, and economy" (p.150).

As with any book of this nature, there is a certain unevenness of contributions, largely unavoidable in such a rich and diverse collection. The volume sobers more than it inspires, which may be entirely appropriate, if Tradowsky is anything like right in his pessimistic claim that "Humanity is in the midst of an immense social tragedy, and there is no end in sight" (p.89)—with a great deal of hard, deep work needing to be done, particularly on the threefold social order. There is, surprisingly, only limited reference in the book to the impact of the media and the new information technologies (e.g. pp.85, 152). The book unfortunately has no index, and a brief biographical sketch of each author would have been welcome to this reader. But notwithstanding these minor irritations, this is an admirable anthology that for me strikes about the right balance between sobriety and optimism as we enter a new millennium with a remarkable blend of trepidation and expectation.

I will conclude by quoting from several poignant epigraphs from the book: first, a typically resounding statement from Steiner in the final year of his life, and which introduces this book: "In the course of the twentieth century, humanity will either stand at the grave of civilisation, or at the beginning of the epoch of when Michael's battle on behalf of his impulse will be fought out in the souls of those people who, in their hearts, have united reason with spirituality" (19/7/24). And second, from Gulbekian's Introduction (p.4): "[A]ll the catastrophes befalling the world and humanity which we have to experience are due to the fact that the great majority of people still tries to cling to materialism". As I write (1/9/00), and read this very day of one-third of the world's habitats being at risk from global warming (*The Times*, 31/8/00, p.10), and witness the escalating damage being wrought by a one-sided, spirit-impooverished 'consciousness', more apt or prescient commentaries on our world's current predicament would indeed be difficult to find.

Richard House

World List of Rudolf Steiner Waldorf School Associations

The full list of schools, Kindergartens and training courses as well as information in countries not listed below may be obtained from the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science, Goetheanum, CH-4143 Dornach, Switzerland.

AUSTRALIA Association of Rudolf Steiner Schools in Australia, 213 Wonga Road, Waranwood, Victoria, Australia, 3134.

AUSTRIA Österreichische Vereinigung freier Bildungsstätten auf anthroposophischer Grundlage, Endressstrasse 100, A-1230 Wien.

BELGIUM Federatie van Rudolf Steinerscholen in Vlaanderen, Kasteellaan 54, B-9000 Gent.

CANADA Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, c/o David Alsop, 3911 Bannister Road, Fair Oaks, CA 95628, USA.

ONTARIO Waldorf School Association of Ontario, 9100 Bathurst Street, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 8C9, Canada.

DENMARK Sammenslutningen af Rudolf Steiner Skoler i Danmark, Strandvejen 102, DK-8000 Århus.

ESTONIA Eesti Waldorikoolide Ühendus, 14 Koidula Tänav, EE2100, Rakvere, Estonia.

FINLAND Steinerpedagogiikan seura ry-Föreningen för Steinerpedagogik rf, c/o Lea Blafeld, Jyväskylä Rudolf Steiner-koulu, Honkajarvintie 6, FIN 40600 Jyväskylä.

FRANCE Fédération des Écoles Rudolf Steiner en France, 11 rue de Villaines, F-91370 Verrières-le-Buisson.

GERMANY Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen e.V., D-70184 Stuttgart, Heidehofstraße 32.

IRELAND Irish Steiner Waldorf Education Association, Raheen Rd., Tuamgraney, Co. Clare.

ITALY Associazione Amici Scuola, via Clerici 12, I-22030 Camnago Volta (COMO).

LATVIA Lētīšhe Asosācija für Waldorf-pādagogik, Pirmā iela 26a, Rīgarajons, LV 2164.

LUXEMBOURG Verāin fir Waldorfpādagogik Lëtzebuerg, 45 Rue de l'Avenir, L 1147 Luxembourg.

NETHERLANDS Bond van Vrije Scholen, Hoofdstraat 14B, NL-3972 LA Driebergen.

NEW ZEALAND Federation of Rudolf Steiner Schools, PO Box 888, Hastings, Hawke's Bay.

NORWAY Steinerskolene i Norge, Prof. Dahlsgt. 30, N-0260 Oslo.

ROMANIA Federația Waldorf din România, Bd. Marasti nr.59, sector 1, RO-71331 Bucuresti.

SLOVENIA Drustvo prijateljev, waldorfske šole, Rodiceva 2, 61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.

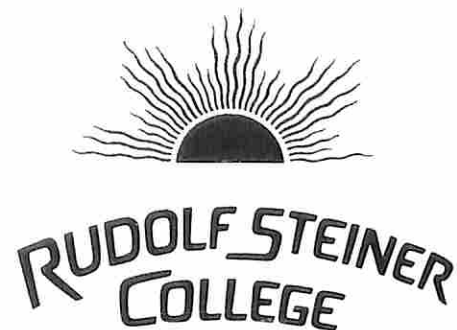
SOUTH AFRICA Southern African Federation of Waldorf Schools, PO Box 67587, Bryanston, Transvaal, 2021 Johannesburg.

SWEDEN Waldorfskolefederationen, Fridhemsgata 17, S-12240 Stockholm, Sweden.

SWITZERLAND Koordinationsstelle der Rudolf Steiner Schulen in der Schweiz, Robert Thomas, Carmenstrasse 49, CH-8032 Zürich.

UNITED KINGDOM Steiner Schools Fellowship, Kidbrooke Park, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5JA, GB.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, Chairman, 3911 Bannister Road, Fair Oaks, CA 95628.



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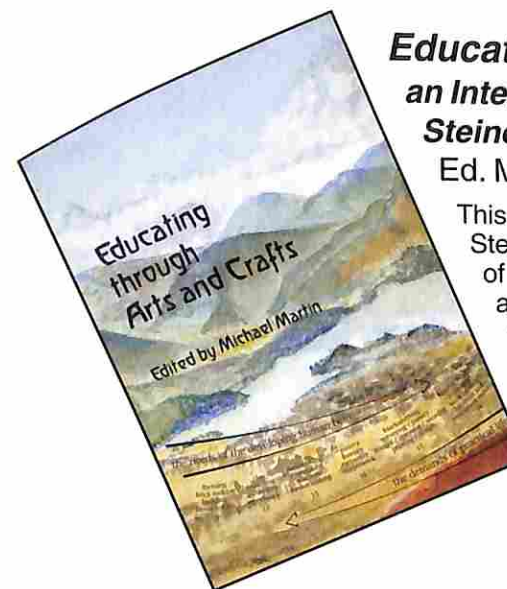


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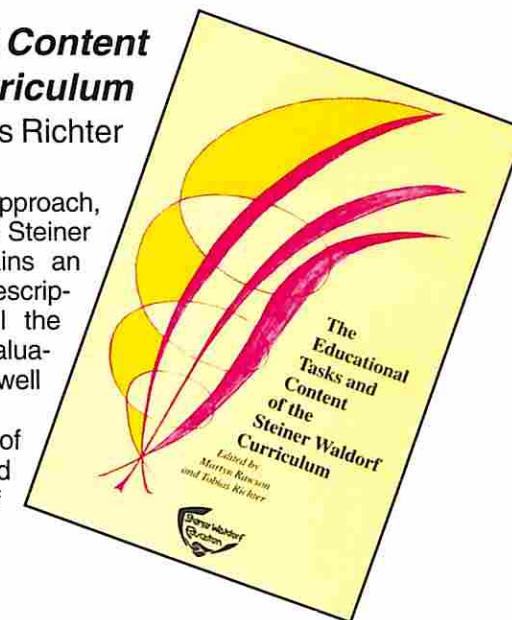
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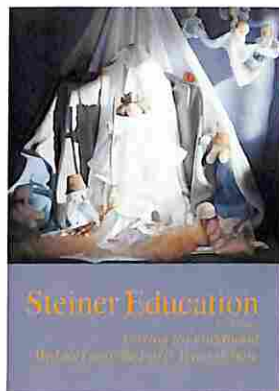
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