

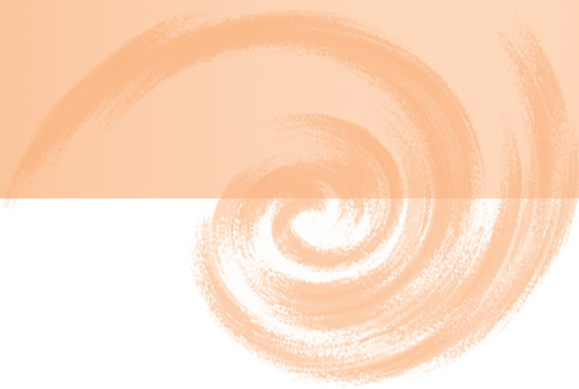


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Editor's Introduction

Ilan Safit

The Waldorf universe is abuzz with the approaching one hundredth anniversary of the opening of the first Waldorf school, and so are we at the Research Institute. Work is currently in progress to analyze and present data and insights collected from the latest Survey of Waldorf Graduates, which will be reported in a self-standing, book-length volume coinciding with 100 years of Waldorf education.

In the meanwhile, the current issue of our *Research Bulletin* opens with a chapter from a much-anticipated history of Waldorf education worldwide, composed by Nana Göbel, the co-founder and executive leader of the *Friends of Waldorf Education* (known as *Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners*), an organization that has been supporting hundreds of Waldorf initiatives throughout the world since 1976.

Göbel's book, *Die Waldorfschule und ihre Menschen Weltweit* (*The Waldorf School and Its People Worldwide*), is a three-volume tome, soon to be published by *Verlag Freies Geistesleben*, and is in the process of being translated into English by Jan Kees Saltet of the Hartsbrook School in Massachusetts. The chapter we present here, in two installments, reviews the first 50 years of Waldorf education in North America, from the first school founded in New York City in 1928 to a "change of guards" in Waldorf leadership taking place around 1979.

Göbel's history reviews the main figures, organizations, and events that led to the foundation of school after school, from New York to New England to Pennsylvania to the West Coast, and finally to the Midwest and Canada, giving rise to a network of independent yet collaborative schools and eventually to the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). While moving quickly between events, names, and times, Göbel's chapter resonates with the drama of influence and identity, as the Germanic origins of Waldorf education, often arriving on this side of the Atlantic through the efforts of pioneering visitors and emigrants, slowly takes on a unique American form.

We offer a closer look at a segment of this unique narrative by tapping into the institutional history of the first Waldorf school in North America and the personal

memories of one of its graduates, who became a high school teacher, a class teacher, a school parent, and an administrator at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City. On the occasion of the school's 90th anniversary, Carol Bärtges recounts personal and collective memories from the early days of the school. Her account and reflections, at times overlapping with moments from the wider history told by Nana Göbel, conclude with a view for the future of the school and of Waldorf education in America as a whole. Referring to AWSNA's first Core Principle, Bärtges states, "We will stand at the forefront of innovative initiative only if we can keep alive the idea that 'The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school.'"

If these first two articles trace the metamorphosis of anthroposophical insight and the Waldorf impulse into a specifically American practice, the piece that follows, written by Michael Holdrege from the Chicago Waldorf School, tracks down another meeting point of Anthroposophy and the American Spirit. In his article, "Collegiate Collaboration," Holdrege quickly surveys the historical features of American commonality and community. He finds an affinity between an American impulse of collaboration, dating back to the original colonies and the spirit of the Constitution, and Steiner's designation of collegial, collaborative leadership for the Waldorf school. Holdrege's multifaceted exploration taps into some contemporary models of management, some of them Steiner-inspired (for example, Otto Scharmer's *Theory U* and *Leading from the Emerging Future*), to offer an interpretation of the kind of Waldorf leadership suggested by Rudolf Steiner. "I think the future of Waldorf education in America," Holdrege concludes, "will depend greatly on Waldorf faculties developing the capacity to dialogue in a new way, in such a way that they become sensitive to 'an emerging future.'"

Turning from history to philosophy, this issue continues with an article by anthroposophist Fred Amrine, professor of literature at the University of Michigan, who sketches out with great excitement some parallels between the thought of the iconoclastic, late-20th century French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, and that of Rudolf Steiner. In this article, reprinted from the anthroposophical journal, *being human*, Amrine draws a broader

map, or a longer legacy, if you will, that leads from the late 18th century works of Schiller and Fichte to Steiner to Deleuze. A central claim in Amrine's piece, beyond the synoptic overview of similarities between Deleuze and Steiner, is that the philosophical breakthroughs of the thinkers surveyed always came in response to failed social revolutions. With this conclusion, Amrine emphasizes a connection between major social interactions and historical breakthrough moments advancing our modes of thinking.

A second philosophical exploration is offered in Arthur Auer's essay, "The Image Problem." Auer, former Director of the Waldorf Teacher Education Program at Antioch University, New England, matches a millennia-old philosophical question with recent psychological and physiological research, asking: How can we characterize mental images and what role do they hold in the processes of consciousness? Auer begins with Rudolf Steiner's indication that teachers must help children develop the capacity for mental picturing. Steiner makes this suggestion to the newly-appointed faculty of the very first Waldorf school in the second of fourteen lectures later published as *Study of Man*, and follows up this idea with a detailed analysis of mental images. Quoting heavily from recent psychological and neurological studies, Auer demonstrates how contemporary thinking on mental images is coming closer to the perspective advocated by Steiner, and that a re-understanding of mental images lies at the heart of a new understanding of consciousness itself. He further suggests that Waldorf education, in which mental imaging is cultivated and nurtured, might just be a seed for such a transformation.

One of the questions that Auer explores concerns people who lack the capacity to create internal sense-images, whether these are qualified as visual, aural, tactile, or other. David Gable, a musician and Waldorf teacher, takes a similar starting point in his article, "Extra Support with Music." Gable, who has been teaching music and main lessons at the Waldorf School of Cape Cod for over thirty years, begins his practical article with the condition of tone-deafness: the inability to discriminate pitch and tell notes apart from each other. This would mean, according to the terms explored in Auer's article, an inability to produce a sensory image of sound internally, where an observing consciousness could discern, discriminate, and operate on, for example, by singing or playing music in tune. Tone-deafness, however, is less frequent than assumed, and Gable himself testifies that during his extended career as teacher and musician he encountered only one person who truly lacked this capacity. The article leads us from exercises that

would demonstrate to students their ability to hear tones and discriminate pitch to detailed instruction on how to bring less confident students into the musical fold of their peers.

The goal of musical instruction in the Waldorf classroom, Gable emphasizes, is not the training of perfect musicians as much as "the engagement, the activity, and the collaboration with peers" in the shared music-making effort, an effort to rise to a plane where differences are overcome by listening to each other and striving to harmonize.

Finally, Van James, an artist and seasoned art educator with over three and a half decades in various Waldorf classrooms, recalls the term "Waldorf misunderstandings" and puts it to critical use in his field. The term, originally coined by Christof Wiechert, refers to entrenched practices in Waldorf education based on misunderstandings of Steiner's initial instructions and the wider developmental picture it draws. Rather than admonishing teachers for straying from authoritative law, James shows the pedagogical futility of certain visual practices, such as excluding black from the paint box offered to children, or presenting students, during main lessons, for example, with finished visual pictures, rather than a set of daily developing renditions. As a result, James' article bears important lessons not only for its own field of art instruction but also for other aspects of Waldorf education that may have become subject to unchecked orthodoxy.

Given that our *Research Bulletin* is dedicated to – if not avoiding then at least growing from – new understanding of Waldorf misunderstandings, we find this a good point to conclude the article sections of the issue before moving to the regular reports from recent Research Institute initiatives and the world of Waldorf Publications, both online and in the physical world.

We hope you will find interest and support for your work in this springtime selection.

Authors who wish to have articles considered for publication in the *Research Bulletin* should submit them directly to the Editor at: theresearchbulletin@gmail.com.

Waldorf Education in the US and Canada 1928-1979

Part 1

Nana Göbel

This chapter is taken from Nana Göbel's forthcoming, three-volume history of Waldorf education, Die Waldorfschule und ihre Menschen Weltweit (The Waldorf School and Its People Worldwide); it was translated into English by Jan Kees Saltet.

Soon after Waldorf schools were founded in Europe, news about the new education spread to America through the anthroposophical network. The first actual teaching, to my knowledge, took place in Hawaii, at the *Free Kindergarten and Aid Eight Organization* in Honolulu, where Constance Birks-Elliott gave eurythmy courses and worked with indigenous children in the school of Mrs. MH Churchill in Waiialua.¹ She had been sent to California and Hawaii by Marie Steiner in 1925. This means that Birks-Elliott was working with pedagogical eurythmy in the middle of the Pacific Ocean at the same time that Elisabeth Baumann was working on the same task in Stuttgart. There were several people in the USA who were interested in taking steps with the new form of education in whatever way they could. Katherine Wannamaker, an American woman of considerable means, whose daughter was attending the Waldorf school in Stuttgart, met Emil Molt in Stuttgart in 1927,² and asked his advice on how to further anthroposophical activity in the United States. It wasn't long before she and her husband were supporting the founding of the Rudolf Steiner School in New York.

The First American School: Rudolf Steiner

In the autumn of 1928, a circle of anthroposophical friends in New York founded the first Rudolf Steiner school in the United States. Irene Harriet Brown (1881-1934), a cousin of the painter William Scott Pyle and a painter herself, felt an inner responsibility towards Rudolf Steiner. At the recommendation of Marie Steiner, she invited Lucy van der Pals-Neuscheller (1886-1962) and her husband, Leopold Neuscheller (1885-1976), to come to New York in 1923, in order to anchor eurythmy in North America. Ita Wegman suggested to Irene

H. Brown that she should invite a young doctor from Switzerland, Christoph Lindner, to come to New York, and Irene Brown later sponsored the founding of the first small Waldorf school in 1928, helping with both finances and accommodation. A full description of the early development of the school is given in the second chapter of the section on individual school portraits of this book.³ In 1940, Henry Barnes (1912-2008) became a class teacher at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York. Apart from three years in the military, he served the school until 1977. Like Ernst Weissert in Germany and Francis Edmunds in Great Britain, Barnes played a leading role in shaping Waldorf education on the East Coast of the United States for decades.



From Stuttgart to NYC: Karl Ege

William Harrer (1905-1978), an engineer, first taught briefly in Essen, Germany, after which he fled National Socialism and taught at the Kings Langley School in England. He then emigrated to the United States and became a class teacher in New York City. Harrer was later recognized and appreciated for his many years

1 Martina Maria Sam, *Eurythmie. Entstehungsgeschichte und Porträts ihrer Pioniere*, 2014, p. 208f.

2 Sophia Christine Murphy, *The Multifaceted Life of Emil Molt*, 2012, p. 246.

3 Editor's Note: See also Carol Bärtges' essay, "The Rudolf Steiner School at 90: Personal Reflections", in this issue of *Research Bulletin*.

of work in the leadership of the Rudolf Steiner School. Mindful of the circumstances of colleagues in Stuttgart and at other Waldorf schools in Germany, he organized the shipping of food packages from the school in New York during the years 1946/47, and he also sent school supplies to Stuttgart, all of which were thankfully received and highly appreciated.

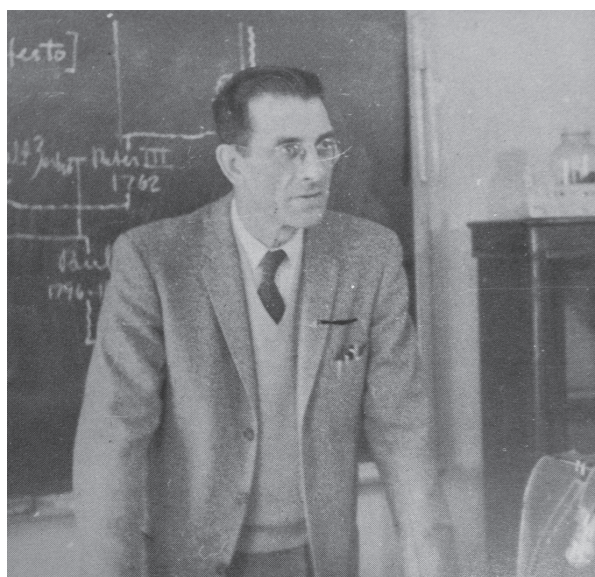
During the first years after World War II, colleagues and schools, no matter their location, kept in touch and knew what the others were doing, as can be seen from the frequent exchange of letters among them. It wasn't so much a matter of the East Coast being dependent on Europe, as some would have it; there was mutual trust and recognition that they were all working creatively out of the same spirit. As a spokesman for the New York faculty, William Harrer was in touch with his colleagues in Stuttgart; an example of this is the way he collaborated with Erich Schwab to make it possible that Henry Barnes and Elizabeth Chambers could participate in the international Waldorf Conference in Stuttgart, which was held from March 31 to April 6 of 1948.

In 1948, the Rudolf Steiner School in New York approached Karl Ege (1899-1973), one of the last members of the Stuttgart faculty to be recruited by Rudolf Steiner, inviting him to come to New York and help build up the high school. Ege came, helped people understand the mandate of self-government and supported the faculty for a long time. It took until 1955 before the teachers at this first American Waldorf school ventured beyond the elementary school, and Karl Ege led the first ninth grade, which ended up graduating four years later as the first class of an American Waldorf school to move through the various grades to high school graduation.



Teacher, Poet, and Co-Founder of Hawthorne Valley Farm initiatives: Arvia MacKaye Ege

Ege married Arvia MacKaye in 1950 and remained active in the United States for the next 20 years, supporting the founding of other schools. Amos Franceschelli (1912-1999), a broadly-educated teacher of unbending intellectual integrity, joined the high school faculty to teach mathematics and physics;⁴ Nanette Grimm taught biology and chemistry; Christy MacKaye-Barnes literature; and Henry Barnes history. Dorit Winter, who later became the director of teacher training in the Bay Area, experienced this group of teachers first-hand as a student. She graduated from the high school in 1964, and described her teachers as the *Pantheon* of Waldorf educators of North America.⁵



Unbending intellectual integrity: Amos Franceschelli

As the school expanded, there wasn't enough room for the high school, so additional quarters had to be found. A friend of the school, Beatrice Straight-Cookson, came forward with a sum of money to be put at the disposal of the school, but they still had to find accommodation.

In the spring of 1955, a building on East 78th Street suddenly came on the market, located only one block away from the East 79th Street school building. Katherine Reeves, the school secretary, barged into Henry Barnes' classroom one day, and called him to the telephone. "Yes, we'll go for it!" was his answer when the person on the other end of the line asked whether the Waldorf

4 Michael Ronall, Portrait of a Waldorf Teacher. Amos Franceschelli. In Memoriam. <http://www.bobnancy.com/waldorf/franceschelli.htm> (site visited 6/30/2018). Amos Franceschelli was married to the sister of Juan Berlin, who built up the Waldorf school movement in Mexico.

5 <http://www.waldorftoday.com/2012/05/the-waldorf-teacher-someone-you-can-steal-horses-with/>.

School wanted to buy the building.⁶ The two buildings are being used by the school to this very day.



Vegetable garden Threefold Farm in 1929

American Leadership and Expansion

Starting in 1926, a few farmers had been working on the *Threefold Farm* in Spring Valley, one hour north of New York City, where a large anthroposophical community had settled. In July 1933, Ralph Courtney (1885-1965) organized a conference there, where one of the participants, roughly 40 in number, was the young Henry Barnes, who was almost 21 at the time. He had been invited by Miriam Stockton, the mother of his best friend, Peter. Stockton may have been partially motivated by a cause to lift the young man's spirits, as he was still affected by the death of his best friend, who had taken his own life a year before.⁷

Ralph Courtney, the organizer of the conference, was asked by Rudolf Steiner to work on spreading anthroposophy in America. Charlotte Parker put up the money needed, which was used to buy the estate in Spring Valley. Mrs. Parker also supported the conference by paying for the travel expenses of Maria Röschl, Ernst Lehrs, and Ehrenfried Pfeiffer.

They were the speakers at this first anthroposophical conference in the United States, which was held under a large open tent, put up in front of a small wooded area. Henry Barnes was still inwardly grappling with the suicide of his friend and wondering if it had anything to do with his education at the Lincoln School in New York, a school inspired by John Dewey where the two of them had become friends. He was so taken by the presentations which Maria Röschl and Ernst Lehrs gave about the Waldorf school that the thought came to him to travel to Stuttgart and get to know the Waldorf school first-hand. Barnes took off for Stuttgart, where

he attended the teacher seminar for a year. He subsequently traveled to Dornach in Switzerland and worked for half a year at the Sonnenhof, a curative home in Arlesheim. Both experiences turned out to be essential preparation for his future work in the USA. Before returning, however, he spent four fruitful years at the Michael Hall School in Forest Row, England.

Henry's colleague, Patricia Zay Livingston (1924-2017), was also connected with the Rudolf Steiner School in New York for a long time. Her parents had helped build up the Anthroposophical Society in New York. Together with her siblings, Patty attended the Rudolf Steiner School up to grade eight. Her high school years were spent at the Birch Wathan Girls' School. After doing other work, she trained with Arvia Ege and taught handwork in grades 1-8 at the Rudolf Steiner School. One of her classmates, John Gower Root, who went by the name of Johnny (1925-2014), later taught history in the high school and inspired numerous students with his razor sharp, humorous thoughts. It goes without saying that in later years, Patty sent her own children to the Rudolf Steiner School.



Trained in Stuttgart and Dornach: Henry Barnes

Thorn Zay, Patty's younger brother, taught sculpture and handwork at the school; her sister, Sabine Nordoff, taught eurythmy, first in New York and then in High Mowing, after which she went on to found the Green Meadow Steiner School in Spring Valley. Jean Zay, Thorn's wife, her sister, Barbara Francis, and her husband, Keith, all taught at the Rudolf Steiner School, as well. But the school consisted of more than just family members! It was Patricia Zay-Livingstone who developed a handwork curriculum for American schools, which forms the basic outline for handwork teaching in

⁶ John M. Barnes, *Henry Barnes – A Constellation of Human Destinies*, 2008, p. 35.

⁷ John M. Barnes, *Henry Barnes – A Constellation of Human Destinies*, 2008, pp.13ff.

the US till this very day. She had a great deal of patience and her artistry made the students feel inspired. In addition, she took on administrative tasks for a number of years and coordinated teachers conferences. In her characteristically quiet and determined way, she introduced many young colleagues to the foundational principles of Waldorf pedagogy. In her retirement years, she helped the Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School, where her daughter, Pamela Giles, was a class teacher, and where her brother and his wife had also come to teach in the meantime. Free from classroom obligations, she later also found the time to support Ronald Koetzsch with the publication of *Renewal*, the magazine published by the American Waldorf movement, which she did with an unerring feel for quality. During her retirement years, she was asked to travel and advise new schools and take on the chairmanship of the Pedagogical Section in the United States, a task which she reportedly fulfilled with modesty and wisdom.

During the years that the Waldorf movement grew and expanded, a fruitful exchange took place with colleagues in Europe, which grew even stronger when National Socialism dominated Germany and a number of carrying members of the Waldorf movement emigrated to the United States. In 1934, the Goetheanum organized a two months lecture tour through the United States, in which Günther Wachsmuth, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer and Hermann von Baravalle were the speakers. Hermann von Baravalle (1898-1973) would give a picture of the pedagogical impulse given by Rudolf Steiner, and his lectures were well-received. In 1937, this lecture tour led to an invitation for Hermann von Baravalle to teach at the Edgewood School in Greenwich, Connecticut, which later led to the founding of the High Mowing School by Beulah Emmet (1890-1978).⁸

Around 1939, the St. Hubert's school in Sudbury, Massachusetts, led by Dorothea Huckel, began to work out of the Waldorf impulse, and in 1939 a small school was founded in Maine close to the Canadian border. Elisabeth von Grunelius, who led the first kindergarten on the North American continent, Sophie Porzelt, Hermann von Baravalle, Hermann Poppelbaum and a few others spent time in the United States, some of them for a considerable number of years before they returned to Europe.

In a report about an English pedagogical conference at the Goetheanum, Hermann von Baravalle had this to say about developments in the US:

The Edgewood School in Greenwich, Conn., one of the best-known progressive schools of the country, decided by unanimous acclamation of the faculty on January 3, 1938, to introduce an organic daily schedule, modeled on indications by Rudolf Steiner for Waldorf schools. In the months after it had been introduced, both individual visitors and delegations from other schools came to study how this worked out in practice. Lectures about it were organized, for example, at the faculty meeting of one of the large New York schools, the Brearley School [...]. At Yale University in New Haven, which houses the largest collection of books on Goethe in America, it has become regular practice to add literature from the Goetheanum, seen as the natural continuation of Goethean culture, and at the University of New York, Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy is being introduced in university lectures and workshops.⁹

It seems as if he was pretty proud of this development. In 1939, Erich Schwabach traveled through the United States and held a series of 70 lectures about Waldorf education. During the 1940s, three more Waldorf schools were founded, thanks to the enthusiasm of Hermann von Baravalle. Inspired by Alarik Myrin (1884-1970) and his wife Mabel Pew Myrin (1889-1972), two highly generous benefactors, the Kimberton Farms School in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1941. In 1942, the High Mowing boarding school in Wilton, New Hampshire, was started under the devoted leadership of Beulah Emmet.



A Founder of Kimberton Farms School: Alarik Myrin

⁸ Hermann von Baravalle, *Die Waldorfschularbeit in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika*, N 22. September 1946, p. 151.

⁹ Hermann von Baravalle, *Die Waldorfschularbeit in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika*, N 35, p. 135.

Hermann von Baravalle worked tirelessly, helping with each individual school initiative and, in addition to organizing conferences, made sure universities were equipped with publications appealing to an academic public. One thing was clear: there were not enough qualified teachers. To remedy this situation, he lectured at the *Educational Summer Conference* from August 21 until September 2, 1945, as did Hermann Poppelbaum, Erica von Baravalle, Dorothea Huckel († 1964), and Christoph Lindner, M.D. Also involved were the painter Richard Kroth (1902-1959), who taught at the Kimberton Waldorf School, as well as Ruth (1907-1999) and Hans-Ludwig Pusch (1902-1976).

At the end of World War II, pioneering initiatives of all the fields within Waldorf education had been started in the United States, including a kindergarten at the Kimberton Farms School, elementary school grades in New York and Kimberton, and a high school in High Mowing.¹⁰

Post-War Developments

In 1946, the first Waldorf teacher training in the United States started in the education department of Adelphi College. Hermann von Baravalle headed this training, teaching a course about principles and methodology of Waldorf pedagogy.¹¹ The president of the College and the board members decided to build up an Adelphi College Demonstration School, financed by Alarik Myrin and headed by Hermann von Baravalle, a task which he dutifully took on. This *Waldorf Demonstration School of Adelphi College*, in Garden City, Long Island, NY, opened on September 29, 1940.¹² It was the first Waldorf school that functioned within the framework of a university. Elisabeth von Grunelius taught the kindergarten, Betty van Vliet (née Raab, 1911-1970) eurythmy, and Erica von Baravalle taught the first grade. This marked the start of the fifth Waldorf school in the United States.



The Eighth Grade, Rudolf Steiner School, NYC, 1960s

10 Hermann von Baravalle, *Die Entwicklung der Waldorf-Schulbewegung in Amerika* ^{FK} 9, 1951, p. 311-319.

11 Hermann von Baravalle in a letter of August 2, 1946 to Dr. Erich Schwebsch. Archiv BFW 5948.

12 Hermann von Baravalle, *Die Eröffnung der „Waldorf Demonstration School“ am Adelphi College, USA*. N 2. November 1947, p. 175f.

A few people had a strong influence on the further development of the Waldorf movement, so much so that their strengths and weaknesses, their character and understanding of Rudolf Steiner's educational lectures shaped the movement to a remarkable degree. For that reason, it is important to know something about them. One important family was the Gardner family.

John Fentress Gardner (1912-1998) saw himself as a writer and pedagogue. His main occupation was as director of *The Waldorf Demonstration School* in Garden City, a task to which he was appointed by the Myrins when Hermann von Baravalle was on a lecture tour of German Waldorf schools for several months in 1951. Under his directorship, the school was to become a Waldorf school for Americans and by Americans.¹³ Gray clouds descended, for, sad to say, John Gardner did not work together with either Hermann and Erica von Baravalle or with Elisabeth von Grunelius.¹⁴ The three of them did not want to provoke conflict any further, so they kept silent but knew that this directorship inevitably meant they had to go their separate ways, even though it was they who had started a school they all loved. Starting in 1953, Erica von Baravalle went to teach in another school on Long Island, Elisabeth von Grunelius returned to Europe, and Hermann von Baravalle focused on the teacher training.

Gardner was married to Carol Hemingway, the youngest sister of Ernest Hemingway. After college, he worked in biodynamic agriculture and supervised psychiatric patients. During World War II, he served in the Navy and was stationed in Guam in the West Pacific. When the war was over, he earned his teacher certificate and, as mentioned above, started his educational career at the Waldorf School of Garden City, becoming its director in 1951. In time Gardner built up the school from kindergarten up to grade 12, supported financially in this endeavor by Alarik Myrin. In this capacity, he began working in the teacher training at Adelphi, where, from 1964 until 1978, he led the *Waldorf Institute for Liberal Education*, which became accredited under the auspices of the University in 1967.¹⁵

This teacher training offered a master's degree. The Garden City School flourished for many years, even though there always was underlying tension with other

13 Douglas Gerwin in an email of 10/8/2015. Gerwin adds, "From the Garden City perspective, the Steiner School in Manhattan was perceived as being overly Euro-centric (a term that did not exist at that time, of course). From the Steiner School perspective, the Garden City school was thought to be insufficiently anthroposophic."

14 Hermann von Baravalle in a letter of 10/20/1951, to Sophie Porzelt. Archiv BFW 6007/08.

15 Hermann von Baravalle, *Die Entwicklung der Waldorf-Schulbewegung in Amerika* ^{FK} 9, 1951, p. 311-319.

schools, specifically the Rudolf Steiner School in New York. John F. Gardner and Franz E. Winkler († 1971) built up the Waldorf School of Garden City more and more in contradistinction to the program followed by the Rudolf Steiner School of New York. They took issue with tendencies which they depicted as too German, un-American, or Theosophical. In 1973, Gardner withdrew, but installed a successor and from then on concerned himself only with the *Waldorf Institute for Liberal Education*. In 1976, John F. Gardner, influenced by his former student Richard Walton, turned away from anthroposophy and joined the *Born Again Christian* movement.¹⁶ This influence infiltrated the high school faculty. When the parents noticed this, they managed to get the support of a mediator in a process that resulted in the dismissal of six high school teachers and John Gardner. The school was plunged into a deep crisis and almost had to close its doors. It survived, however, thanks to highly motivated parents.¹⁷

In September of 1948, representatives from all existing Waldorf schools traveled to the pedagogical summer conference held at the Kimberton Farms School. Ilse (Elisabeth Augusta Maria) Metaxas (1900-1987), who was Hermann von Baravalle's sister, became involved for the first time, even though she had only just arrived in the US in order to teach eurhythm as a professor at Adelphi College. The courses she gave at the conference were inspiring. Later, from 1963 until 1974, she headed the first eurhythm school in the United States. The summer conference was held in collaboration with Kimberton Farms, which was one of the pioneer institutions for biodynamic agriculture in the United States.¹⁸



Highland Hall School, Los Angeles

16 As is to be expected, different people give different versions of the story. Many people think Gardner did not turn his back on anthroposophy at all, but was only looking for a way to enable the individual teacher to learn to act out of his or her own spiritual experience.

17 A thorough presentation of these events is to be found in Stephen K. Sagarin, *The Story of Waldorf Education in the United States: Past, Present, and Future*, 2011, p. 52ff. Sagarin was both a student and a teacher at the Garden City Waldorf School, which is perhaps the reason why he gives ample space to the story.

18 Hermann von Baravalle, *Die pädagogische Sommertagung in Kimberton, Pennsylvania (USA)*, N 3.10.1948, p. 159f.

Going West

The next summer, a combined conference took place in Los Angeles and San Francisco, to which more people came as more schools were being founded. First of all, there was the Green Meadow school in Spring Valley, New York, which began in 1950. For a long time, it was one of the few American Waldorf schools that featured organic architecture. It was followed by the founding of the Highland Hall School in Los Angeles, CA, the first Waldorf school on the West Coast. The school had been experimenting since the end of the 1930s with elements of Waldorf pedagogy, but it took till 1955 for the decision to be made to change the entire school into a Waldorf school. Dr. Virginia Sease took part in this transformation, as well as John Brusseau and others. Hermann von Baravalle came back from Europe, where he had been from 1954 until 1958, and joined the Highland Hall School. He began by organizing a public summer course there from June 27 through July 6 of 1958. In the wake of this course, Highland Hall school opened its own teacher training course, shepherded by von Baravalle. After that a summer conference was held each year, followed by – an important addition – a summer school in Highland Hall for children from various schools in the city. Additional land was acquired next to the school on a hill in Northridge, to be used for a high school building and to secure further expansion options. In the course of the school year 1972/73 a few experienced teachers started building up the Waldorf Institute of Southern California there, which worked closely together with the Highland Hall School and continued the work started by Hermann von Baravalle.

In 1959, a Waldorf kindergarten started up in Fair Oaks, Sacramento, CA, and a first grade was added after half a year, in 1960. After the initial years, the Waldorf school of Sacramento moved to a large property situated on the American River, an important region in the history of the settlement of California. The teacher training moved to Sacramento, starting its first course on October 2, 1962. Part of the reason for the move was that there was a large demand there, according to Hermann von Baravalle.¹⁹ Sacramento and Hermann von Baravalle maintained a close relationship. He lived in California between 1958 and 1970, first in Carmichael, then in Sacramento, and after that in North Hollywood. When von Baravalle returned to Germany, in 1970, where he lived alone and in penurious circumstances in Murrhardt and Wiesneck, Franklin G. Kane, Board President of the Sacramento Waldorf School, wrote a letter to Ernst Weißert to offer financial support on

19 Hermann von Baravalle to Ernst Weißert, 9/8/1961. Archiv BFWs.

behalf of his school, even though the school was being built and had very moderate means.²⁰

In the 1960s, the Waldorf school movement moved even further west, reconnecting (consciously or unconsciously) to the very first impulses given by Constance Elliot-Birks. Two kindergarten teachers from Munich, Mrs. Ruoff and Ruth Stepputis, started a kindergarten in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Ho'o Mohala Pua Waldorf School in Honolulu, Hawaii, opened its doors on October 2, 1961, after lengthy preparations by Zena Schuman (1902-1998), Betty C. Wilson († 1998), Eric Wakefield († 1978), Jesse Edwin Whitlow († 1980) and Peter A. Lee (1904-1977). Clorinda and Charles Lucas put up the money for a property in the Niu Valley, which was sparsely populated at the time. The Waldorf school of Honolulu became the starting point, which led to the founding of all subsequent Waldorf schools on the islands of Hawaii.

With the founding of a kindergarten in 1965, the Waldorf School of Detroit became the first pioneer school in the Midwest. The founders were Dr. Rudolf and Amelia Wilhelm. Rudolf Wilhelm, an allergist, who had attended a Waldorf school himself as a child in Germany, had first-hand experience of the advantages of Waldorf education. This formed the background to his efforts to found a school in Detroit, where he had settled. The couple finally succeeded in acquiring a school building, designed by Albert Kahn in the second decade of the 20th century, located in the historical section of town called *Indian Village*, where the Detroit Waldorf School has been housed ever since.

The school has lived through the highly dramatic changes that overcame Detroit in the second half of the 20th century. With the exodus of the middle class from the center of town, the school population changed radically. By instituting special sponsorship programs, the school succeeded in attracting a large number of their Afro-American neighbors, which made it one of the most respected schools in Detroit. With the founding of this school, the US Waldorf school movement had pillars in the West, in the middle of the country, and in the East.

The second part of this article will appear in the next issue of Research Bulletin.

Nana Göbel is co-founder and executive leader of the Friends of Waldorf Education, in which capacity she has supported hundreds of Waldorf initiatives throughout the world. A Waldorf school graduate, Ms. Göbel also trained and worked as a banker, co-founded the European Forum for Freedom in Education, as well as an organization that provided humanitarian support to children in need in Eastern Europe following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. She has been serving on the initiative council of the Anthroposophical Society in Berlin for the past twenty years and as the General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany from 2003 to 2008. Her history of Waldorf education, *Die Waldorfschule und ihre Menschen Weltweit* (The Waldorf School and Its People Worldwide), from which this chapter is taken, is currently being translated by Jan Kees Saltet.



Nana Göbel's The Waldorf School and Its People Worldwide

²⁰ Franklin G. Kane to Ernst Weißert, 9/22/1970. Archiv BFWS.

The Rudolf Steiner School at 90

Personal Reflections

Carol Ann Bärtges

The following is excerpted and adapted from talks given to the faculty and students of the Rudolf Steiner School on the occasion of its 90th Birthday.

Study the past if you would define the future
– Confucius

This year, the Rudolf Steiner School is celebrating its 90th anniversary. But the story of our New York City school begins even earlier, a century ago, in Stuttgart, Germany, with the founding of the first Waldorf school under the guidance of Rudolf Steiner, his pedagogical vision and wider worldview.

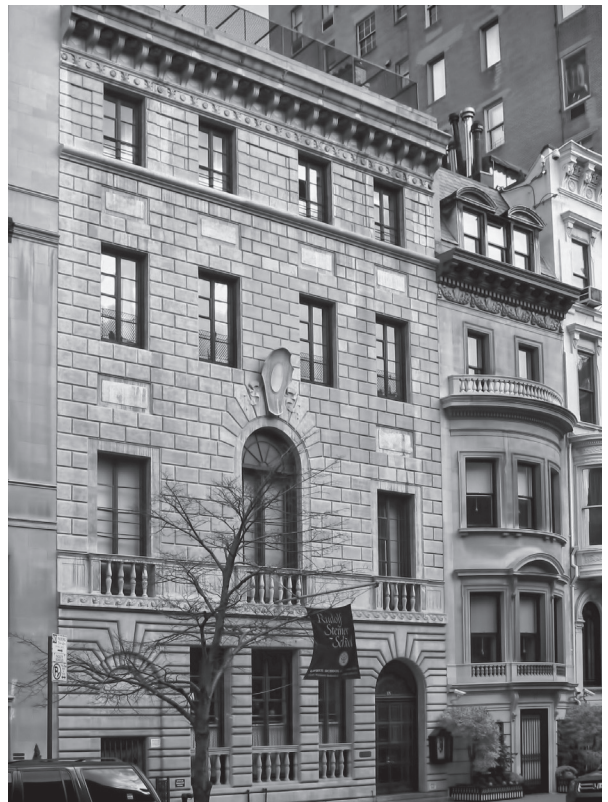
Like other contemporary great education reformers here in America – John Dewey and his Chicago Lab School, Felix Adler and his Ethical Culture School in Manhattan – Steiner was a progressive thinker who wanted to reform education after the devastations of World War I. Steiner imagined a school that would address the individual development of the children, where teachers could meet the needs of the students through guiding them into direct experience of the world, thus stimulating the imaginative thinking so critical for judgment and responsible innovation.

What I have learned about our school's history comes through six decades of personal involvement as student, teacher, parent, and administrator, as well as from reading the wonderful accounts written by our former Faculty Chair, Henry Barnes, in the publication, *Educating as an Art*, and by our former history teacher, Jann Gates.

In 1923, a young educational reformer and, in my opinion, an early feminist thinker, Virginia Birdsall, found out about the Stuttgart Waldorf School through her friend, Irene Brown, a fellow teacher at a girls' school in Orange, New Jersey. Virginia travelled to England to hear Rudolf Steiner speak about education in a series of thirteen lectures and returned to the United States filled with enthusiasm. She gathered around her a group of bold and creative women and men who were interested in starting a Waldorf school in North America. Irene Brown found a townhouse building at 111 East 39th Street, Manhattan's Murray Hill neighborhood,

and raised money to buy it. Thus, in 1928, the first Waldorf school in North America began.

The school moved several times before it found its present two homes: After a year on 39th Street, it moved to the former site of the Dalton School, on West 73rd Street. It then moved to East 91st Street for a few years during WWII, until it lost the lease a few years later. Right at that time, a beautiful, spacious building, designed by the famous architects Stanford and White, came on the market. It was close to Central Park, where children could play at recess; it was near the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where classes could go and learn. But it was going for the enormous sum of \$50,000. The whole community agreed that it would do whatever it could to realize this opportunity, and in 1944, the school moved to 15 East 79th Street where our Early Childhood and Lower School still are today.



The Rudolf Steiner School, 15 East 79th St., New York City

The Rudolf Steiner School had enjoyed good enrollment throughout the 1940s. But when the war ended and

ex-patriot families from Europe were able to return to their homelands, the school experienced a sudden drop in enrollment, which persisted into the early 1950s. The board and faculty considered the possibility of closing down the school, but, as Henry Barnes reports, this option was rejected after each and every faculty member expressed a commitment to the school's survival.

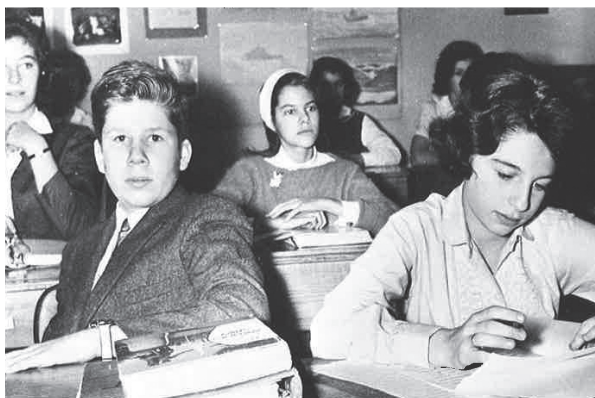


Legendary English Teachers, Christy Barnes (left) and Ruth Pusch.

With the guidance of Karl Ege, who had come to Steiner after thirteen years of teaching at the Stuttgart Waldorf School, the teachers now explored the implications of a faculty-administered school and wrote a constitution that reconfigured the corporation and the Board of Directors giving a central role to the Faculty Council, the name at the time for the College of Teachers. Not only were the faculty determined to keep the school open, it was precisely at this precarious moment that the faculty asked: "Now, how about a high school? We're only K through 8th, and that is not complete." Knowing some of the characters involved, it is not surprising to me that the idea for the high school arose, so at least it seems, precisely when the school was at a very dangerous point of closing. These pioneers felt that a high school was crucial, and they agreed that some of the elementary school faculty, some of whom were serious academics, should prepare to take on the high school grades and create a true upper school. The school community jumped on the opportunity when the 78th Street building came on the market – only one block away from the Lower School. A drive for funds was launched, and very quickly, three months later, the Upper School building was bought in 1955. The first high school class graduated in 1959. Current students, who would take to perusing the high school's various yearbooks, might recognize in the students' photos some of their own teachers such as Renate Poliakine (Sculpture), Rallou Hamshaw (High School,

Arts), myself (High School, English), and Ryan Cameron (Lower School, Language Arts).

The core of teachers in the 1940s, comprising such individuals as Henry and Christy Barnes, Karl and Arvia Ege, Thelma Dillingham, Kari Van Ort, Dorothy and William Harrer, Hans and Ruth Pusch, among others, were joined in the late 1950s and 1960s by Patti Livingston, Thorne Zay, Jean Zay, Harry and Almuth Kretz and Almuth's brother, Ekkehard Piening, Danilla Rettig, Amos and Lisle Franceschelli, and Barbara and Keith Francis. Most of these remarkable individuals were my teachers. For these pioneers of Waldorf education, pedagogy was interwoven seamlessly with anthroposophical insights into humanity and the world of nature. The sense of shared endeavor among the teachers and early board members of the school—whose activities encompassed a broad range of cultural and practical undertakings arising out of anthroposophy—was palpable.



Freshmen at the Rudolf Steiner High School, ca. 1965

A further example of how a deep and shared connection to anthroposophical ideas helped the school forward comes from a moment in the early 1990s. I was now a high school teacher as well as a parent, with two young children in the Early Childhood program. The school found itself, again, in dire financial turmoil and a question arose from board members whether it would make sense to cut costs by closing the high school. At the time, our school's by-laws were such that the College of Teachers represented 60% of the board. How wise that was, for when it came to a vote, the college members, who live the daily life of the school and its students, voiced their strong opposition to such a plan. We went to work on the budget – consolidated positions, took voluntary pay cuts, and froze salaries. We were determined to keep the high school of the first Waldorf school in North America open. With a small but highly selective student body (indeed, as advisor to the class of 1993, I had only eight students in the class),

our sacrifice and diligence paid off. The high school was kept open, and with the help and expertise of dedicated parents, alumni parents, and board members, we worked to remediate finances and get the school back on track. When my own children were in the high school ten years later, classes were full. These moments in the school's biography—when the shared vision of the faculty and its willingness to sacrifice for the good of the entire school carried us into the future—are an enduring legacy that I carry with me from the past and into the future.

Through a Personal Lens

The past is never where you think you left it.

Katherine Anne Porter

From the stories my mother tells, I took an active part in choosing the Rudolf Steiner School at the age of four. My mother, a Holocaust survivor, and my father, a first-generation Ukrainian New Yorker, had heard of the international atmosphere at the school and came for an interview. Then, as now, the school's application process involved parents bringing their child into the kindergarten to play. All went well until it was time to leave, when I simply refused to do so, clinging to the kindergarten teacher's legs and sobbing hysterically. It was thus clear that this was my school and that I intended to be here. And I have been here ever since, perhaps because no one has wanted to see me throw another tantrum.



A Waldorf Nativity Play on a New York Stage

The Rudolf Steiner School was of course a very different place in the 1960s, but also very much the same as it is now. Just as we have now, we also had an Advent Spiral Walk when I was in Kindergarten, where we walked in a spiral form created by fragrant pine boughs laid out on the floor. I credit early feelings of self-confidence to that ritual, for it was a real challenge to walk that huge spiral form into the center all by oneself, light the large candle that stood there, walk the spiral form back out into the room, and place your little candle somewhere along the path without once tripping or burning everything down.

As today, there was still a great deal of free play in the Kindergarten, where we didn't sit at desks, but where we learned by doing—we baked bread, we painted, we played with natural toys, and we developed our imaginations through social interaction with our friends. I seemed to have gravitated toward a very particular type of social interaction—as my report card confirms: I got married five times in Kindergarten—all those silk scarves and ropes came in handy for my bridal veils and bridal processions!—and since 'divorce' was not a word in anyone's vocabulary at the time, I simply kept collecting husbands as the year progressed.



Henry Barnes and the RSS Class Teachers, K through 8, 1960

I had one class teacher for eight years; her name was Virginia Paulsen. All in all, she would take four classes through—32 years of class teaching—as well as spend-time doing other things in the school. Ms. Paulsen was skilled in all subjects, but she had a special love for literature, history, and drama, and she certainly influenced me deeply in all those subjects. She was also firm about manners and community awareness. She called lateness a "social disease," and neither students nor teachers nor parents were ever late to her classes or meetings. By 5th grade, I knew that I wanted to be a teacher someday as well.

I entered 9th grade at the height of the Woodstock generation's rejection of the status quo. We listened to Folk music, Rock, Motown and Funk. The Vietnam War was going on, and the boys in my class lived with anxiety about the draft for most of high school. The draft ended when we were in 12th grade. It wasn't unusual in our high school common room to hear people discussing what they would do if their draft number came up once they turned 18. You could defer if you attended university; you could defect to Canada; very rarely, you could get a religious exemption or substitute a few years of community service somewhere. There were

candle-light protest marches against the war happening at regular intervals down Broadway. I lived on the West Side, and my parents allowed me to participate in such protests because half of our high school was there, walking arm in arm, holding candles in those night time vigils.

When I entered high school, the dress code still prohibited girls from wearing pants to school. Not only did we have to wear skirts and dresses every day, but our science teacher, Nanette Grimm, stood at the front door every morning with a yardstick, measuring the length of our skirts. They were not allowed to end higher than two inches from the middle of your knee. My class was impatient with this rule, and we fought hard to get it changed. We wrote letters to the faculty, we argued; we got sent home. Finally, the boys in the class came up with an idea to show solidarity with their female classmates' plight. They decided they would wear only skirts and dresses to school until we girls could wear pants as well. The faculty thought the boys would give this up after a few days, but they held on. We girls lent them our clothes and bought more skirts and dresses at thrift stores. After three weeks, the teachers were impressed and had had enough; the dress code was permanently changed.



*Virginia Paulsen and the team of
Class Teachers, ca. 1965*

The Rudolf Steiner Upper School still feels today like the private family home it once was. When I was a student here, a dumbwaiter still passed through an airshaft and could travel from floor to floor. Originally, when the building was a private residence, the kitchen was located in its basement and servants would haul up with this miniature elevator trays and dishes to the dining room, which is now our assembly room, or to the

bedrooms on the upper floors. When I was a student, the dumbwaiter doorways were still open on various floors, so when we wanted to cut class, we would hide, two students at a time, inside the dumbwaiter.

In the late 1960s and early 70s, the building's sense of "home" was not just a feeling for some of our Steiner families. Our Director of Maintenance, Hans Kaufman, actually lived with his three daughters on the 6th floor of our Upper School building, where our 7th and 8th classrooms are now located. How I envied their luxury of rolling out of bed and walking one flight of stairs down to their 8:00 am main lesson!



One April Fool's Day, when I was a student, the local police paid us a call. Neighbors were complaining, said the visiting Inspector. He pointed to the flag pole that hangs outside the 3rd floor English room. Gazing in horror, the Upper School Chair realized that someone had taken down the school flag and hung laundry on the pole instead: women's girdles and bras, men's boxers and undershirts, stockings and socks were gaily fluttering in the breeze. High school teachers had to have a good sense of humor in those days, for we were an inventive and mischievous lot. I have many more stories I could tell.

When I was a senior, the school bought an old farm and 500 acres in Harlemville, New York. This would become the Hawthorne Valley Farm. It was originally owned by our school and had very few of the buildings you can see there today. There was no school across the street – just fields and a beautiful river. There was no dining hall, or Community Hall, just the main house. A kitchen was established in an old, red saltbox down the road. Because we were the oldest students, our job was to spend three weeks there, preparing the farm for all the younger children who would be coming for their farm visit. The first thing we did was to make the rope-mattress bunk beds, which remained in the main house for close to thirty years. We cleared fields, drove tractors, dug gardens. We helped renovate the dairy

barn. We created stone paths and built bridges across the river. The farm eventually became a separate association with the grounds and campus you see there today: a visiting student program, a farm store, a dairy and vegetable farm, an EC–12th grade Waldorf school, a bookstore, the Nature Institute, etc. It was immensely exciting to be part of such a future-oriented project, one that we seniors would not have much time to enjoy, ourselves, but one that we were leaving behind for many generations of students to come.

Challenges for the Future

A number of years ago, at an AWSNA summer conference in Portland, Oregon, Virginia Sease of the Anthroposophical Society in Dornach spoke about how the biography of a school was really like that of a human being. I sense that at 90 years, this “first Waldorf school of North America” is ready to shed its skin and rise from its institutional ashes like the golden phoenix it wants to become. Renewal is essential, and I believe it will happen if we experience the same trust in collegiality and shared vision so wonderfully demonstrated by the energetic, early pioneers of our New York City home.



The High School Language Department, ca. 1965

Looking ahead, I see a number of challenges for the Rudolf Steiner School and for Waldorf education in general. The world has changed since the first Waldorf school was founded in 1919 – what once seemed radical is now accepted practice: coed education is the norm, not the exception; music, art, and early exposure to world languages are widely recognized as crucial (public schools around the country introduce recorders in elementary school); the concept of project-based and experiential learning is well-known; gardening and outdoor activities in nature are not infrequent in many schools (a number of private schools in New York City, like the Manhattan Country Day School, own farms upstate where their students spend time). So, what will keep us unique? What will differentiate us from other progressive models of education? In my opinion, we will stand at the forefront of innovative initiative only if we can keep alive the idea that “The image of the

human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school.”¹ This means being able to learn from the historical occasion of Rudolf Steiner’s philosophical impulse and hold fast to our shared agreements to work with anthroposophical insights of the growing child. Our spiritual heritage should not dissipate but deepen and ripen and inform our future with healthy, responsive innovation. We must also then have the courage to speak these thoughts and share these insights with the wider community of the school and the world. This, of course, while sounding so basic, is nonetheless very difficult to do, for it is always challenging to articulate clear thoughts that strive to move beyond the empirical and quantifiable. Without this trust in our shared understanding of the spiritual realities underlying human development, we remain “apologists,” and neither curriculum nor school practices will compellingly change to meet the future. The pressures and expectations of a dynamic society require a solid foundation. As we celebrate ninety years of our school’s biography, we might ponder what the author of *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler, once wrote:

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.



The author in her High School English classroom, Rudolf Steiner School

Carol Bärtges' roots run deep in the Manhattan schist of the Rudolf Steiner School. She is a graduate, as are her two children, Max and Sarah. Holding undergraduate and graduate degrees in English and comparative literature, Carol is a full-time English and drama high school teacher at the Rudolf Steiner School; her long association with the school includes serving as a class teacher, Chair of the College, and Chair of the Upper School. For ten years, Carol was a member of the AWSNA Leadership Council as the representative for the Mid-Atlantic region, and her deep interest in mentoring and faculty development continues in her work with the Faculty Development Committee of her school.

1 AWSNA Core Principles, #1.

Collegial Collaboration

Becoming Receptive to an Emerging Future

Michael Holdrege

Of the many aspects of “The Foundations of Human Experience” (“The Study of Man”) that energize and engage Waldorf educators in the United States,¹ I would like to focus on one in this essay. I do this in part because it reveals an aspect of “the American soul” that is largely hidden behind the image that appears of the U.S. in the world press, but more importantly, because it relates to something in the “American way of life,” which is of particular importance in the context of collegial working in Waldorf schools. The latter represents the potential for a higher level of collaboration than has yet to be fully realized in many of our schools.

In his opening address to the “The Foundations of Human Experience” (Aug. 20, 1919), Rudolf Steiner speaks of the Waldorf school as a cultural deed that must be organized collegially without external supervision through a school board (or executive) from above. The next morning, he spoke to the teachers of a higher form of community, the “College Imagination,”² where the impulses living in each individual are carried from one to the other, enhancing these and creating a vessel open to the spirit of our time, one that can enable the community of teachers to recognize and meet the educational tasks called for in the current historical epoch.³

In this short essay, I will explore a few indicators of the pertinence these opening words have for Waldorf schools in America. In the United States of today, one is faced with an increasingly divisive and morally vacuous political atmosphere, one that is strongly influenced by the interests of immensely powerful corporations and a thin layer of very rich individuals (“the 1%”). Starting in the late 1970s, a growing cynicism and distrust toward many of the basic institutions within the United States—government, corporations, big banks, media, police, etc.—has made itself evident. There is a widespread sense that the system as a whole no longer functions in the way it was intended to. Whether liberal

or conservative, a sense of mistrust and dissatisfaction is pervasive. The man elected president in 2016 (and who shall remain unnamed) is not the cause of this dissatisfaction, but is, in many ways, emblematic of things that have gone awry in the past half-century.^{4,5}

Although America is a land of great contrasts and conflicting tendencies, if one looks behind the very visible worlds of Coca Cola, Disneyland, McDonald’s, and Hollywood, beyond the issues of racism and extreme poverty, of gun control and senseless violence... it is possible to discover the seeds of “a higher self,” the presence of qualities that resonate strongly with the task of Waldorf education as described in “The Foundations of Human Experience.” Goethe, as he often has, had put it best:

Two souls reside, alas, within my breast,
And each one from the other would be parted.
The one holds fast, in sturdy lust for love,
With clutching organs clinging to the world;
The other strongly rises from the gloom
To lofty fields of ancient heritage.⁶

It is to this second soul that we turn when looking for the American affinity for collegial working in anthroposophy and Waldorf education. Indeed, if one looks more deeply to the historical origins of the United States of America, one finds impulses of a very different nature than those that appear on the surface of today’s society.

Legacy: The Magic of True Listening

To understand the potential kinship Americans have to Rudolf Steiner’s idea of collegial leadership, it helps to look back at the human interactions that allowed for the *uniting* of the states of America in the 18th century. After the Revolutionary War (1775-83) that had freed the American colonies from the influence of the British crown, there was anything but unity in the land. As free and independent colonies, there was no structural relationship strong enough to bind them together beyond ties of immediate expediency. That they

1 In this article, the terms “United States,” “U.S.” and “America” will be used interchangeably, as is ordinarily done in the English language.

2 In America, the Imagination that Rudolf Steiner presented on the morning of August 21, in which he describes the possibility of our collaboration with the 3rd Hierarchy, is referred to as “the College Imagination.”

3 These opening words of *The Study of Man* have been the subject of considerable reflection in Waldorf circles in the US. An excellent expression of this is the recent book published by the Pedagogical Section Council of North America: R. Trostli, ed., *Creating a Circle of Collaborative Spiritual Leadership* (Chatham, 2014).

4 Cf. Robert Reich, *The Common Good* (New York, 2018), pp. 4-5.

5 Although he may, in the end, serve as a much-needed wakeup call for hitherto lethargic reform movements!

6 Goethe: *Faust I*, Scene 2, lines 1112-1117.

even came together to re-examine their relationships is quite amazing in light of the tremendous differences to be bridged: between large states and small states, between supporters of a strong central government and federalists, between the very different economic interests of the northern and the southern states, between advocates of slavery and abolitionists, and so on.⁷ During the Constitutional Convention, these and countless other issues were considered through long, arduous hours of discussion. Meeting daily over several months in the extreme heat and humidity of midsummer Philadelphia,⁸ the danger of dissolution was great—which would have led to the breaking apart of the colonies, or at best, a weak set of ineffectual agreements.⁹

What, then, were the forces that enabled these colonies to unite in a way that transcended mere military, political, economic, and religious interests in order to form a union so strong that it has survived over centuries that have seen the demise of countless other governments? How was the creation of the colonies-unifying Constitution of the United States of America possible?¹⁰

During the four months of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, issues were discussed for days and weeks with the goal of reaching unanimity. At a certain point, groups were then mandated to draft plans and propositions. These were then opened up again for reconsideration. Delegates were encouraged to express their sentiments openly. Opposition was not considered a hindrance, but willingly received and considered. In this way, those who harbored reservations were not excluded from further developments and felt that their contributions would be welcomed as the process extended into the future.¹¹

Jacob Needleman, widely acclaimed author and Professor of Philosophy at San Francisco State University, describes the true magic of this process as follows:

What enabled the Constitution as we know it to come into existence? Is not the answer to this question to be found in the nearly superhuman struggle of individuals to listen

to each other? If we are to discern a spiritual resonance in the founding of America, will it not be seen mainly in the effort of individuals to open their minds to each other when almost everything is pulling them into isolation? ... This group was not a collection of spiritual aspirants. Nevertheless, we can take this “miracle” of the formation of the Constitution as a great external sign of a process that can take place when individuals come together to seek understanding and right action [...]. There must lie within the process of its formation lessons that we shall need to learn as the modern era spills into the new millennium. *The art of the future is the group.* The intelligence and benevolence we need can only come from the group, from associations of men and women seeking to struggle against the impulses of illusion, egoism and fear...[.]¹²

This kind of process took place during that blistering Philadelphia summer—the process of a group of ordinary human beings *listening* to each other, not as people usually listen, but as people *can* listen: from a source deeper in themselves which opens them not only to the thoughts and views of their neighbor, but to something wiser and finer in themselves and, perhaps, in the universe itself. The Constitutional Convention is our specifically American symbol of the *art and power of the community*. It is the community which can bring what no individual can bring, what every individual desires, and what, today, we all despair of finding: moral vision and moral power.^{13,14}

12 Needleman, *The American Soul*, p. 66.

13 *Ibid.* p. 70.

14 It would also be possible to look even further back in “American history,” to a time long before the arrival of the Europeans, in search of roots for the potential to develop community that lives in North America. One thinks, in particular, of the laws and customs of the Native American Iroquois League that represented a radical departure from the idea of monarchy existing at the time of its formation in the year 1451. This confederacy of five northeast Native American nations is considered to have had a significant influence on the forming of the American Constitution. Benjamin Franklin, for example, was very familiar with the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) traditions. As Needleman (p. 196) describes, in the view of these peoples, to live at peace within a country or between nations requires an “intelligence of the heart.” This, in turn, requires an effort of individuals working together, who are able to respect each other’s fragment of truth “until an objective, all-inclusive truth descends into the community from above—from the ‘Great Spirit.’” It is also known, for example, that the custom of “sleeping on an issue” comes directly from the Iroquois Grand Council, which made no important decisions on the same day in which a proposal was brought to discussion. To “bury the hatchet” after a conflict is also a common American expression that originates from the founding of the Iroquois Confederation, when the member nations stood before a great pit under the “Great Tree of Peace” and cast their weapons of war into it. See Bruce Johansen, *The Iroquois* (New York, 2010); Jacob Needleman, *The American Soul*; Luigi Morelli, *Hidden America* (Victoria, Canada, 2002).

7 It was the issue of slavery, in particular, that was not resolved and would come back to haunt the new nation in the future.

8 The convention met from May 27 to September 17, 1887.

9 Luigi Morelli, *Legends and Stories for a Compassionate America* (Bloomington, 2014), p. 52; Luigi Morelli, *Visions for a Compassionate America* (Bloomington 2015), pp. 44-45; Jacob Needleman, *The American Soul* (New York, 2003), pp. 62, 65.

10 Needleman, *The American Soul*, p. 65.

11 Morelli, *Legends and Stories for a Compassionate America*, pp. 53-4.

Freed From the Fetters of Tradition

If we look at the continuing development of that young nation, we find countless souls streaming to America in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.¹⁵ Writer Dorothy Thompson gives us this description of what a typical American might look like: “An American is a fellow whose grandfather was a German ‘forty-eighter,’ who settled in Wisconsin and married a Swede, whose mother’s father married an Englishwoman, whose son met a girl at college, whose mother was an Australian and whose father was a Hungarian Jew, and their son in the 20th century right now is six feet tall, goes to a state college, plays football, can’t speak a word of any known language except American and is doubtful whether he ever had a grandfather.”¹⁶ Such a heterogeneous mix led to an openness toward many different ways of life. There was no “one right way” to do many things in such a cultural mosaic.

We find a tremendous force of will at work in this new land: the will to religious freedom, to economic independence, to exploration of the unknown—all of this freed from the fetters of tradition. Informing these years that “birthed a new nation” was the kind of optimistic attitude that is normally found only in young people. “Anything is possible if you put your heart into it” is an expression many Americans grow up with.¹⁷ Pragmatic experimentation and improvisation were frequently the way to success in the new world. This is evident even today in the uncomplicated openness often viewed as typical of the “American personality.”

The Dutch psychiatrist and anthroposophist, F.W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven, observed the following after several extensive journeys across America: “Every visitor to the United States is immediately struck by the warm, friendly humor which, at least on the surface, prevails everywhere ... One quickly notices, however, that ... the many friendly words do not possess the same depth of meaning to which the European is accustomed. They are sooner to be regarded as an expression of the cheerful, optimistic and, above all, magnanimous way of life ... In travelling throughout the country as a lecturer, one experiences this magnanimity of spirit to a very high degree in one’s audiences. There

is no European country in which I have found such a warm attitude and accommodating spirit as in America, whether it be by students, intellectuals or artists.”¹⁸

I had a very similar experience upon returning to the United States after living in Europe for seventeen years. This generally positive picture of the “American soul” is not the whole story, of course.¹⁹ But such predispositions, even when taken as broad generalizations, are of significance when it comes to working together collegially in a Waldorf school.

Following on America’s first century of “rugged individualism” came the gradual development of modern capitalism. By the early 20th century many small enterprises had been consolidated into large national corporations where the dominant form of organization became the so-called administrative pyramid—a clearly organized form of top-down management.²⁰ Mergers then led to a small number of dominant firms in many industries, to conglomerates and to multinational corporations. The “art and power of community” was largely forgotten in this world of intensely competitive capitalism.

Forgotten, but not completely gone! In the concluding decades of the 20th century, corporate ways of managing and governing America’s organizations began to break down. The unprecedented challenges facing dominant organizations like General Motors and IBM revealed that their governance forms were not well suited to the increasingly turbulent, “permanent white-water” of the rising 21st century.²¹

"Dia-logos" and "Metanoia"

Whereas the growth of corporate America was built around strong, decisive managers, who were “in control” of their areas of responsibility, management experts now began to emphasize the importance of collaboration within organizations. One key player in bringing about this significant new perspective was Peter Senge at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Organizational Learning Center. As Senge and others observed, traditional ways of managing and governing organizations in the U.S. were breaking down. This led to a new openness for research into the value

15 The United States had a population of 3 million in 1782, grew to 6 million by 1804, reached 12 million by 1828, and 50 million by 1880. In the mid-20th century, the U.S. population was 150 million.
http://npg.org/facts/us_historical_pops.htm.

16 Cited in F.W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven, *America and Americanism* (Spring Valley, 1986), p. 8.

17 Unmentioned in this description is the ancient spirituality and interwovenness with nature that lived in the Native Americans who had populated the continent for centuries before the colonies formed. Also unmentioned is the enslavement of countless African Americans until mid-19th century and their continued struggle for equality.

18 Zeylmans van Emmichoven, *America and Americanism*, pp. 25-6.

19 Many less positive aspects could be added, such as the strong emphasis on “self-interest” in the economic realm, where the ideal of “fraternity,” as found in Steiner’s idea of the threefold social organism, lies far beyond the horizon of most Americans.

20 Richard Edwards, Michael Reich et al, *The Capitalist System* (Englewood Cliffs, 1978), pp. 120-125.

21 Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, 1995), p. xii.

of collaborative learning. The pivotal insight that Senge and colleagues reached centered on the significance of dialogue—in contrast to conventional leader-led discussion and analysis-based planning. Senge used the term dialogue in reference to its Greek roots “dia-logos,” which brings to expression the free flow of meaning through a group. This involves the capacity to suspend assumptions within the group and to begin “thinking together,” which can lead to insights not attainable by individuals on their own. At MIT they referred to processes taking place in this way as “Metanoia” (Greek: meta—above, beyond; nous—mind), as a fundamental “shift of mind.” This shift refers to a form of learning that is open to a deeper level of meaning than is found in conventional decision-making.²² Very significant in the further evolution of this approach was the decision of Claus Otto Scharmer to leave Germany’s Witten/Herdecke University and move to America to join the team at MIT. What enticed Scharmer to America and MIT was the *action research orientation* of Senge and others at MIT.²³

In his books *Theory U* and *Leading from the Emerging Future* (co-authored with Katrin Kaufer—also from Witten/Herdecke),²⁴ Scharmer points to another level of leadership that involves “learning from the future as it emerges,” which Scharmer also termed “presencing.” As a student of Rudolf Steiner’s work (and also a Waldorf school graduate, whose parents were biodynamic farmers), Scharmer was able to formulate and develop in manifold ways what could be called an exoteric version of the theme with which Rudolf Steiner opens the *Study of Man*. Rudolf Steiner tells the teachers-to-be in his opening address that they must learn to lead and develop the Waldorf school through an openness to the impulses that stream to us from the spirit of our time, impulses that seek to emerge in a culture deeply entangled in impulses stemming from the past. What Senge, Scharmer, Kaufer, and others describe as “true dialogue,” “metanoia,” and “presencing” are modes of collegial working that speak, I think, to a nascent potential in the American soul that seeks—to use again the words of Goethe—“to strongly rise from the gloom” of conventional education and open itself to the spirit of an emerging future.

22 *Ibid.* pp. 10-14.

23 The attraction was so strong for Scharmer that he was willing to take on a postdoctoral project for which he would receive no funding (hiring freeze at MIT!). But his heart was in it, so after moving to Boston, he worked on the MIT project during the day and completed his dissertation for Witten/Herdecke in the evening—all the while “living happily on maxed out credit cards.” C. Otto Scharmer, *Theory U* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), pp. 55, 408.

24 Scharmer, *Theory U*; C. Otto Scharmer & Katrin Kaufer, *Leading from the Emerging Future* (San Francisco, 2013).

Many other American researchers have since shed light on the significance of collaboration for modern organizations.²⁵ MIT’s Michael Schrage, for example, sees collaboration as “shared creation,” where individuals with complementary capacities reach a common understanding that none could have reached by themselves. The mix of questions, insights, comments and ideas are the critical components that lead to new insights. The necessary basis for this is mutual respect, tolerance and trust that each participant has something to contribute in the right context, which allows for successful collaborators to look beyond the oddities and irritating quirks of their colleagues. The focus is on each other’s strengths. To be successful, multiple perspectives are needed—a repertoire of different “languages.”²⁶

Jamming

In my experience, such ways of working are well-suited to the kind of openness in Americans that Zeylman van Emmichoven observed. One manifestation of this can be seen in the dynamic of a particularly American genre of music: jazz. In the words of jazz musician (and Waldorf teacher) Tom Dews: “What distinguishes jazz and bluegrass from other folk/popular music of the world? In both jazz and bluegrass there is a strange and fragile democracy at work among the members of the ensemble playing together. Each member supports the others, careful to complement but also dedicated to leading innovatively when soloing. A subtle communication must be operative between players; the “conductor” is the spirit among them. The social and musical achievement manifests in sound, so if the sounds are good, we say the music is ‘moving.’ As with all good music, the right balance of melody, harmony and rhythm is present...”²⁷

That the qualities of interaction living among jazz musicians has not gone unnoticed among students of organizational development is evidenced by Professor John Kao, head of the Managing Innovation Program at Stanford University. Kao has written extensively about the similarities between the interaction found among jazz musicians and the kind of dynamic needed for creative collaboration in organizations. In Kao’s words: “When I get together with other musicians for a jam session, the group starts with a theme, plays with it, and passes it around. Suddenly the music lifts off, flies. We all fly with it. This is not formless self-indulgence or organizational anarchy. The music follows an elegant

25 A survey of some of these collaboration-emphasizing perspectives can be found in Michael Holdrege, *From Creative Ideas to Innovative Practices* (Saarbrücken, 2010), pp. 66-98.

26 Michael Schrage, *No More Teams* (New York, 1995), pp. 26-58.

27 Tom Dews, “Music and Manners: The American Experience” in John Wulsin, Jr., *The Riddle of America* (Fair Oaks, 2001), p. 89.

grammar, a set of conventions that guide and challenge our imagination. It is an explosion of inspiration within the art's given universe. No matter how high we fly, we always return with something new, something we've never heard before... Suddenly, without even realizing it, the whim has become a distinct idea; the riff becomes a tune." "That's jamming!"²⁸

New Encounters: New Awakenings

Now clearly, many aspects of a Waldorf school cannot be "managed" in jazz-like fashion. Even granting the fact that we are not speaking primarily about administrative activities here, it may sound very "Luciferic" to imagine jazz-like improvisation in a college meeting—very creative and fun, but not very earth-bound or practical. And yet, to my mind, the kind of interaction found in jazz brings to expression something that Rudolf Steiner speaks of as a new kind of awakening that has become "an absolutely basic need since the beginning of the 20th century... In ordinary waking life one awakens only in meeting another's sense-perceptible aspects. But a person who has become an independent, distinct individual in the age of consciousness wants to wake up in the encounter with the soul and spirit of his fellowman... Man must become more to his fellow man: he must become his awakener... In earlier ages, souls were younger and had not formed so many karmic ties. Now it has become necessary to be awakened not just by nature but by the human beings with whom we are karmically connected and whom we want to seek."²⁹

Rudolf Steiner goes on to describe how:

[T]here is a different understanding of things among people who share a common idealistic life based on mutual communication of an anthroposophical content, whether by reading aloud or in some other way. Through experiencing the supersensible together, one human soul is awakened most intensively in the encounter with another human soul. It wakes the soul to higher insight, and this frame of mind creates a situation that causes a real communal being to descend in a group of people gathered for the purpose of mutual communication and experiencing anthroposophical ideas. Just as the genius of a language lives in that language and spreads its wings over those who speak it, so do those who experience anthroposophical ideas together

in the right, idealistic frame of mind live in the shelter of the wings of a higher being.³⁰

It is interesting to note that—one week after the conclusion of the *Foundations of Human Experience*, on the 13th of September 1919—Rudolf Steiner made a very significant observation about the unique kind of community that is possible in the Anglo-American world:

The farther West we go[,] the more we find that spirit has been jettisoned out of the language itself, out of the sounds, the tone, even the grammar. Rejection of the spiritual/soul element from the Anglo-American idiom will lead to the world mission of the Anglo-American peoples. They will have to learn—though quite instinctively alongside their acquisition of world domination—as they listen to other people speaking, to hear not only the sound but to interpret the gesture of the language, to hear more than the mere physical sound, to hear something that passes from one human being to another, but reaches beyond the spoken word. This is something that works from etheric body to etheric body. This is the secret of western languages; the physical sound is losing in significance and the spiritual part of it is gaining in significance. It is the task in the West to let the spirit filtrate into language, and not only to hear physically, but to hear intuitively more than goes into the sound.³¹

We Must Become Dancers!

This does not take place without effort and inner activity, and yet, as many of us know, the productive, energizing study of anthroposophy can ebb and flow in Waldorf faculties. In fact, even in the presence of Rudolf Steiner, the desired liveliness of soul was not always at hand. As Ernst Lehrs tells us, at one point in the first years of the school in Stuttgart, Rudolf Steiner complained to the faculty that they appeared to him as if they were glued to their seats. Steiner went on to say that, yes, the ability to sit firmly was an important one, but it was not enough—they needed to be able to stand up, too! And then—with emphatic gestures—he beseeched them: "You must become dancers, my dear friends, dancers!"³²

A wonderful image for the kind of moving dynamic needed in true collaboration can be found in Matthias

28 John Kao, *Jamming: The Art and Discipline of Business Creativity* (New York, 1996), pp. XVIII-XVIX; John Kao, *Innovation Nation* (New York 2007), pp. 132-133.

29 Rudolf Steiner, *Awakening to Community* (GA 257) (Spring Valley, 1974), pp. 154-155.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

31 Rudolf Steiner, *Guardian Angels, lecture 4* (Forest Row, 2000), p.77.

32 Ernst Lehrs, *Gelebte Erwartung* (Stuttgart, 1979), p. 346. Translation: M. Holdrege.

Karutz's book, *Forming School Communities*.³³ Karutz argues convincingly that, in contrast to the traditional administrative pyramid that stands firmly on the ground, unshakable by virtue of its wide base (Δ), living collegial working requires reversing this resting, static form. This means turning it upside down like a dancing top (∇) that only remains upright through the spin-creating movement produced by our consciousness. When our active consciousness fades, the top tumbles – and with it the possibility of realizing the College Imagination.

Two Resources for Deepening Collegial Working in Waldorf Schools

I would like to conclude this essay by pointing to two valuable resources for Waldorf schools that recognize the deep significance of the College Imagination for the future of our movement. I emphasize such resources because, as many of us know, it is one thing to recognize “what could be possible” for a school; it is quite another thing to form the serious resolve “to make it possible!” I think the future of Waldorf education in America (and most other places, too) will depend greatly on Waldorf faculties developing the capacity to dialogue in a new way, in such a way that they become sensitive to “an emerging future” that the hierarchies can awaken us to. This can only happen, of course, if we are able to form, again and again, a collegial chalice that is receptive to “the drops of light” that can come from these higher beings.

Florian Osswald: Working with the Night

In Lecture One of the *Foundations of Human Experience*, Rudolf Steiner describes how children do not yet know how to carry their daytime, waking experiences into the night, into sleep. A similar observation could probably be made of many teachers when it comes to collegial working. If this is so, the critical question becomes: How can we, as Waldorf teachers, become more receptive to the “counseling” of higher beings with whom we interact in sleep?

In several lectures given to Waldorf teachers in North America, Florian Osswald offered valuable advice on how we can work more effectively with the night. These lectures, which have also been published in recent issues of the *Pedagogical Section Journal*,³⁴ begin with an exercise done each day, soon after awakening, that involves a brief review of that morning, the night, and the preceding evening. This exercise provides the foundation for a growing awareness of the “threshold of consciousness” that we cross when we fall asleep

and wake up—a threshold that we normally pay little attention to. Following on this exercise, Osswald gives numerous suggestions for heightening our sensitivity to the significance of the night in human interactions. Whereas modern communication theory focuses on the “day aspect” of our conversations, Osswald points out that “the day cannot exist without the night. The night is the hidden subconscious part of ourselves. Communication—just as life—is rooted in both sides. Only if we become aware of both, if we create a complete entity, can we perceive the actual shape of a conversation and a rhythmic-polar process becomes visible.” He goes on to illuminate how those who regularly practice the exercise mentioned above “will find an intimate connection between the gestures of speaking and listening and the gestures of falling asleep and waking up.” Real learning, he emphasizes, takes place at night, for it is in sleep—together with our angels—that we prepare for the next day. It is through the strengthening of our night side that we evolve our capacity for the kind of true dialogue that provides ever-new leadership impulses for our institutions.³⁵ In this way we learn to create, again and again, “the New We”³⁶ that is open to insights from “an emerging future.”

Marjorie Spock: “Group Moral Artistry”

Although largely unfamiliar to recent generations of Waldorf teachers, the impulse for an “awakening to community” has deep roots in the work of a number of early American Anthroposophists. The striving of one individual in particular, Marjorie Spock, has resulted in the second important resource for deepening collegial collaboration that I want to recommend here. The many fascinating details of Marjorie Spock's life (1904-2008) as a Eurythmist, Waldorf teacher, and Biodynamic farmer³⁷ cannot be explored here.³⁸ Important in this context is her painful awakening to the need for a deeper understanding of esoteric group-work: “When I joined the society, I felt it was the greatest day of my

35 See also Rudolf Steiner's fascinating description of the way in which Goethe's ability to create the right connection between sleeping and waking—and thus to interact with the third hierarchy at a deeper level—changed through his Italian Journey, with enormous consequences for his creative capacities for the rest of his life. Rudolf Steiner, *The Driving Force of Spiritual Powers in World History (GA 222)* (Great Britain, 1972), pp. 18-22.

36 Florian Osswald, “Courage Initiative and the New We”, in *Pedagogical Section Journal*, Number 57.

37 Spock played a central role in the genesis of Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, which is often seen as responsible for initiating the environmentalist movement in America.

38 In the words of Henry Barnes: “Marjorie Spock's life encompasses the history of Anthroposophy in this country from her meetings and study with Rudolf Steiner and others in Dornach to the first years in the twenty-first century when in her late nineties, she may still be found living on her farm on the Maine coast, where eurythmists, scientists, teachers, farmers, anthroposophists, friends, and neighbors come to share in her spirited, intelligent, and immensely articulate presence.” Henry Barnes, *Into the Heart's Land: A Century of Rudolf Steiner's Work in North America* (Great Barrington, MA, 2005), p. 112.

33 Matthias Karutz, *Forming School Communities* (Fair Oaks, 2001), pp. 52-53.

34 Florian Osswald, “Given the Night” (Parts I-IV), in *Pedagogical Section Journal*, Numbers 58, 59, 60 & 62.

life, because I felt that I was becoming part of a living organism that was the very heart and purpose of the earth... And after Rudolf Steiner's death, I really felt we could have united in one jump, and together as a unity assumed Rudolf Steiner's role in the world. What happened instead was that we did not hold together as a society, and conflict was everywhere. This became the overriding question in my life, and it became a painful wound that would not let me find peace."³⁹

As the years passed, Spock began to raise her concerns about the lost opportunities caused by the ongoing conflicts within the Anthroposophical Society. She suggested that the society begin an internal study of methods that further the kind of "awakening to community" that Rudolf Steiner envisioned for active Anthroposophists. Over many years, Marjorie Spock and others formed a group that researched ways of working that could raise group interaction to a new level and lead to what they called "group moral artistry." One example of their findings (more of which cannot be explored here) was based on enhanced listening. "Where esoterics widens to include joint efforts of communities, the ear's cultivation as an esoteric tool becomes doubly vital in that it forms the basis for a new art of listening... Many ways can be found to bring about this development. Among them is the practice of eurythmy (of which Rudolf Steiner indicated that it has just this social mission). For to make speech visible the eurythmist must learn to live back into the spiritual world of meaning in which the poet's thought lived before it was uttered. The eurythmist listens not alone to words, but to the spirit which has shaped them. And this is an activity across the threshold in which every listener must engage if he is to understand another."⁴⁰

Marjorie Spock was active in this type of research for many years and eventually published two small volumes on "group moral artistry" titled *Reflections on Community Building* and *The Art of Goethean Conversation*⁴¹ that describe what she and her colleagues came to. These small booklets circulated widely at the time and were taken up with enthusiasm by young people, in particular. They contain many kernels of wisdom regarding the nature and necessity of esoteric group working in the context of anthroposophy.

It is time that we rediscover the work of individuals, like Marjorie Spock, whose striving helped shape the first century of Waldorf education and anthroposophy in America, and whose insights into the nature of esoteric group working are needed to support the continued evolution and renewal of Waldorf education as it moves into its second century. The key to such renewal was given by Rudolf Steiner in the *College Imagination*, but the growth of capacities necessary to bring that Imagination to fruition rests in our hands. Words spoken by Benedictus in Scene 10 of Rudolf Steiner's *Guardian of the Threshold*—and which are cited by Marjorie Spock at the conclusion of her booklet, *Reflections on Community Building*—describe the task ahead:

My pupils have thrown open, each, their own souls
Unto the spirit light, and in such ways
As fit their individual destinies.
What they have conquered for themselves
Each one shall render fruitful for the others.
This they can only do if now their forces,
Here at this sacred place,
In harmony of measure and of number,
Form willingly a higher unity.
This unity alone can waken to true life
What singly must remain a mere existing.
They stand here at the threshold of this temple.
Their souls shall join themselves, one to another,
And sound in unison according to the rules
Recorded in the book of cosmic destiny; –
That harmony of spirits may accomplish
What each alone could never bring about.
They'll carry new impulses to the old
Which here rules worthily since earliest times.⁴²

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39 *Ibid.*, p. 128.

40 Marjorie Spock, *Reflections on Community Building* (Spring Valley, 1983), pp. 15-16.

41 Marjorie Spock, *Reflections on Community Building* (Spring Valley, 1983); Marjorie Spock, *The Art of Goethean Conversation* (Spring Valley, 1983). The second volume took its name from Goethe's famous lines in *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*: "What is more precious than light? Conversation!"

42 Cited in *Reflections on Community Building*, p. 33.



Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Freedom

Fred Amrine

After all, what would be the value of the passion for knowledge if it resulted only in a certain amount of knowledgeableness and not, in one way or another and to the extent possible, in the knower's straying afield of himself? There are times in life when the question of knowing whether one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all.

—Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, read by Gilles Deleuze at Michel Foucault's funeral

Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* appeared in 1894, exactly 100 years after the two revolutionary works that chiefly influenced it: Schiller's *Aesthetic Education of Man* and Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*. Another century later, in 1994, two equally revolutionary philosophical works by the great French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) first became available in English: *Difference and Repetition* and *What is Philosophy?*¹ This symmetry is already compelling, but it extends further: in each instance, philosophical breakthroughs were achieved in response to a failed revolution.

In the case of Fichte and Schiller, it was, of course, the failure of the French Revolution, which became abundantly clear in the Reign of Terror of 1793. Both Fichte and Schiller argue that the failure of the Revolution was ultimately a failure of imagination in the broadest sense, and, in response, both mount radically new philosophies in which the creative imagination stands as the central faculty. In the case of Steiner, it was the failure of Nietzsche's revolution in philosophy. In the case of Deleuze, it was the failure of the French "revolution" of May 1968, in which students took to the streets, rallying under the motto "*L'imagination au pouvoir!*"— *All power to the imagination! But this*

*event, this irruption of pure becoming,*² as Deleuze would call it, also failed to transform thinking and thus had no hope of succeeding.

Like so many of his contemporaries, Deleuze was shaken by the events of 1968, but unlike most others', his response was, I believe, genuinely transformative: a radical epistemology that crosses the threshold into a direct experience of the living force that both Steiner and his predecessors called 'Imagination'.

I share Yeshayahu Ben-Aharon's admiration for this "most significant French thinker of the 20th century," and I am inspired to respond to his call for engagement by imagining a sort of virtual dialogue between Steiner and Deleuze.³ Like Steiner, Deleuze is nearly impossible to paraphrase; like Steiner's, his writings are prolific, challenging, imaginative, and highly original. But even if it cannot do him justice, I hope that this brief essay will at least convey my own sense of excited discovery, and that it will encourage others to engage Deleuze.

Knowing Freedom

Deleuze rejects logic's "infantile idea of philosophy" (*What is Philosophy?* 22): as Wittgenstein had argued before him, everything important in philosophy cannot be "said" – cannot be captured in propositional form; rather, it can only be "shown" to the imagination. Steiner is equally emphatic in *The Philosophy of Freedom*: "Words cannot indicate what a concept is; they can only indicate the presence of a concept." The living concept itself must be experienced by what Deleuze calls a "transcendental empiricism." In a brilliant metaphor, Deleuze compares propositional thought-structures to the devices of Baroque emblems, which represent only an abstract schema of the living event that is "shown" in the rich and dynamic iconography of the accompanying image.⁴

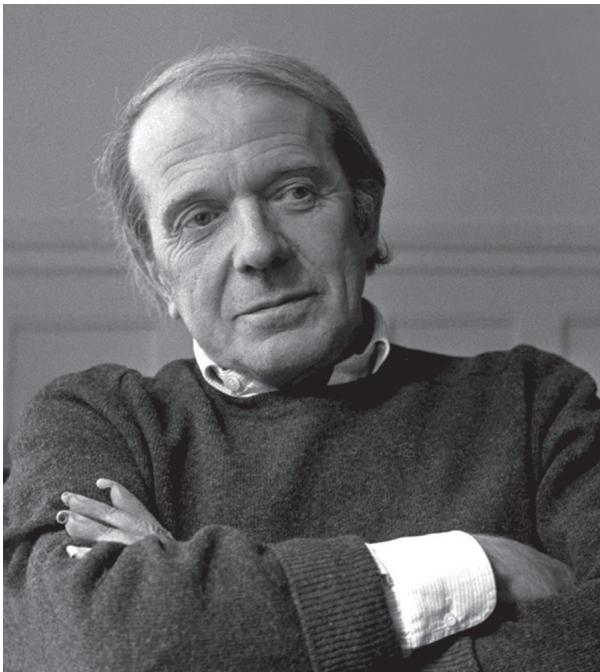
1 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), henceforth cited as *DR*, and Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994).

2 Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990), pp. 144- 5, 153, 171. Henceforth cited as *N*.

3 See Yeshayahu Ben-Aharon, "Anthroposophy & Contemporary Philosophy in Dialogue: Observations on the Spiritualization of Thinking," *being human*, Fall 2011, 19-34.

4 *N* 160, 201. This thought was first presented in Deleuze's late masterpiece *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

Paradoxically, abstract thought is body-bound. Deleuze intuitively what Steiner revealed in the opening lectures of his "French Course": the physical body can only *reflect* thinking as *Abbild* or deadened image.⁵ And today's consumer capitalism regulates desire—and thereby manages the human being in society—by feeding it sensory pleasure. For Steiner and Deleuze both, the first step toward freedom is to reorient and intensify sense-bound thinking and desire. They must be turned away from the body, "deterritorialized" (as Deleuze and Guattari famously put it) and metamorphosed into free, intransitive energies that can be "reterritorialized" or brought to bear on new objects. "One's always writing to bring something to life; to free life from where it's trapped, to trace lines of flight" (N 141). When thinking is mobilized and accelerated in this way, it can achieve escape velocity, and new pathways, new "lines of flight" can open up, raying out towards the macrocosmic periphery where thinking flows freely with infinite speed.



Gilles Deleuze

Deleuze's achievement of a body-free thinking is nowhere more evident than in his last published essay, "Immanence: A Life."⁶ Here Deleuze's liberated and sublimated desire achieves a kind of ecstasy: his thinking finds a footing not only outside the body, but entirely outside the lower self. Deleuze is the Schwenk⁷

of thinking and desire. He leads us into etheric and astral streams of pure becoming that have yet to suffer the division of consciousness into subject and object. Thinking, desire, and their objects unfold as immediate, inseparable presence: "We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else" (IAL 27).

Thinking becomes an *encounter* with something substantial. In lecture 3 of the "French Course," Steiner describes this experience of greater "density" in one's thinking as a clear sign of progress in meditative work. *Living thinking becomes a direct experience of the life forces*: "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of fundamental *encounter* ... its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed" (DR 139). Deleuze seems to have discovered the same *field of pure activity* that Spinoza termed *natura naturans*, and Steiner described as "living working" (*Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*), "an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is ceaselessly posed in a life" (IAL 27).

Although he does not use the term, there are passages in which Deleuze is clearly describing a macrocosmic experience that is sense-free, body-free, and even "beyond subject and object." Deleuze has found the modern "analogue" of the ancient Greeks' experience of thinking with the etheric body that Steiner calls for in GA 215 (*Philosophy, Cosmology, Religion*). Steiner insists that this new experience of the etheric must be fully conscious, like mathematics, and Deleuze has done just this, reverting over and over to images from higher, "anexact" mathematics such as projective geometry and topology, and describing an "intensive" thinking of pure quality. Although it transcends Greek thought in its clarity, the pure activity Deleuze uncovers arrives with the mythic power of Poseidon's storms:⁸

Something "passes" between the borders, events explode, phenomena flash, like thunder and lightning. Spatio-temporal dynamisms fill the system, expressing simultaneously the resonance of the coupled series and the amplitude of the forced movement which exceeds them... a pure spatio-temporal dynamism... experienced only at the borders of the livable. (DR 118)

Foucault felt the same power: "A bolt of lightning has struck, that will bear Deleuze's name. A new kind of thinking is possible; thinking is possible anew. Here it is, in Deleuze's texts, leaping, dancing before us, among

5 See Steiner, *Philosophy, Cosmology, Religion* (GA 215), lectures 1 and 2 (6 & 7 Sept., 1922).

6 Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life," in his *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), henceforth cited as IAL.

7 Editor's Note: Theodore Schwenk, author of *Sensitive Chaos*, pioneering water and flow researcher.

8 Cf. Steiner, GA 129, *Wonders of the World...*, lecture 3, 20 Aug., 1911.

us" (quoted in *N 88*). *Deleuze discovers the young will—the "embryonic" will⁹*—that is behind the "old man" of passive thought. "You write with a view to an unborn people that doesn't yet have a language" (*N 143*).

Deleuze's thinking reveals itself as an embryology of the higher self. No longer "arborescent," no longer rooted in the physical, sense-free thinking ramifies endlessly into a rhizome that again recalls Steiner's description of the newly mobile etheric body in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*: "...these currents branch out and ramify in the most delicate manner and become, as it were, a kind of web which then encompasses the entire etheric body as though with a network." Previously, the etheric was an undifferentiated "plane of consistency" (Deleuze) or "universal ocean of life" (Steiner), but now living thinking differentiates this plane locally, calling forth thought-organs (Steiner); a pliable, ever-folding line mapping incarnating archetypes or "singularities" (Deleuze); a membrane that becomes sensitive to the macrocosmic currents passing through it; a new "center" in the region of the heart from which etheric currents run forth (Steiner). "Things" dissolve into processes, unfolding "events." (Deleuze: "I don't believe in things" [*N 160*].) Like Steiner, Deleuze describes a realm in which one can watch time metamorphose into space: "This indefinite life does not itself have moments ... it doesn't just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness" (*IAL 29*).

As consciousness expands out from the single, isolated point of the Cartesian *cogito*, it moves inexorably toward its polar opposite: the projective plane at infinity, thinking as a single, organic whole that is simultaneously infinite and indivisible, hence a "plane of consistency." Expanding consciousness likewise bursts the illusory containers of the body and the soul, revealing the peripheral forces streaming in from the macrocosm to form them. Steiner begins the twelve lectures comprising *A Psychology of Body, Soul & Spirit* (GA 115) with just such a macrocosmic picture of the human body, followed by an intimate phenomenology of the inner life that traces faculties such as sympathy and antipathy, feeling, representation, and memory back to their common source in an intransitive desire that flows from a macrocosmic spiritual will.

Deleuze praises psychoanalysis for having revealed this desire at the base of the soul, and Freud even more so for having discovered that the energies of the libido can be "deterritorialized," which is to say, transferred,

metamorphosed, and sublimated. But he laments "the other aspect, of personifying these apparatuses (as Super-ego, Ego, and Id), a theatrical *mise-en-scène* that substitutes merely representative tokens for the true productive forces of the unconscious, crippling all desiring production thereby" (*N 16*). Hence, Deleuze and his co-author Félix Guattari seek to liberate and transform this desire, to help it escape from the imagined, neo-Freudian "container" of the body and become a "body without organs."¹⁰ This notoriously enigmatic "BwO" reveals its real profundity only against the background of Steiner's macrocosmic account of our higher human nature. One finds even what sounds like intimations of karma in Deleuze's late writings, e.g.: "A wound is incarnated or actualized in a state of things or a life; but it is itself a pure virtuality on the plane of immanence that leads us into a life. My wound existed before me..." (*IAL 31*).



Rudolf Steiner

Actualizing Freedom

Ben-Aharon's book, *The Event in Science, History, Philosophy & Art*, includes an excellent discussion of the potentials for social transformation that are opened up in Deleuze's enlivened thinking, waiting to be actualized. My own, briefer discussion seeks only to situate this aspect of Deleuze's work relative to Schiller's and Steiner's. Deleuze was personally

9 Steiner, GA 215, lecture 4, 9 Sept., 1922.

10 See esp. Chapter 6 of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

engaged in many causes, including the rights of prisoners, gays, and Palestinians. But his writings are those of the “pure metaphysician” he claimed to be: like Schiller and Steiner, Deleuze says little about specific ethical consequences or social programs. And it must be said in defense of all three that this stance is entirely self-consistent: from the perspective of radical freedom, it is impossible to *prescribe* ethical actions to others, or even to oneself. Instead, the ethical individual expands, refines, and transforms her own cognitive faculties, so as to become a vessel for spiritual intuitions, an artist able to shape and embody entirely new social forms.

The first step toward actualizing freedom is to understand the pathologies of dead thought, of thinking as mere representation of extant structures. Such “repetitions” (as Deleuze calls them) remain impotent: living *thinking* can conceive abstract thought, but there is no way that thought as structure, on its own, can give birth to the spiritual activity of *thinking*. The “tracings” of repetitive thought are necessarily shot through with presupposed interests: as Schiller wrote of the French Revolution, no genuinely radical politics has arisen or ever can arise out of such untransformed thought. “Recognition” – thought as mere representation – “is a sign of the celebration of monstrous nuptials, in which thought ‘rediscovers’ the State, rediscovers ‘the Church’ and rediscovers all the current values that it subtly presented in the pure form of an eternally blessed unspecified eternal object” (DR 136).

Instead, we must build a *rhizome*, an open field of interconnected energies:

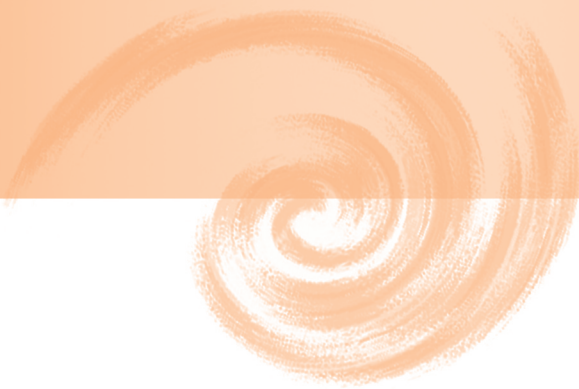
The rhizome is altogether different, a *map* and *not a tracing*... The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency... The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modifications. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed

as a political action or as a meditation.
(*A Thousand Plateaus* 12)

Via this thinking that is *anexact* yet rigorous, we leave the “royal road” of extension, learn to live off the Cartesian grid, experiment with non-metric “nomad sciences.” New possibilities open up before us within an intensive field of pure qualities. As in Schiller, as in Steiner, the philosopher becomes the cognitive artist who *creates* concepts, and the cognitive artist inspires in turn the ethical and the social artist. The philosopher sings; the living concept is her “unvoiced song.”¹¹

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11 N 163. Deleuze is himself a witness to this powerful experience of real Inspiration: “Take any set of singularities leading from one [to] another, and you have a concept directly related to an event: a lied. A song rises, approaches, or fades away. That’s what it’s like on the plane of immanence: multiplicities fill it, singularities connect with one another, processes or becomings unfold, intensities rise and fall” (N 146-7).



The Image Problem Mystery and Debate

Arthur Auer

Mental Picturing or Mental Imaging?

In Lecture II of his seminal 1919 course for the first twelve Waldorf teachers, Rudolf Steiner's guidance was clear: We must help children develop *Vorstellen*, as well as feeling and willing. Steiner characterizes *Vorstellen* as “thought activity” in which there is “movement of mental images” (*Bewegung von Bildern*), an “imaging-activity” (*Bildtätigkeit*).¹ (In a German psychology dictionary, *Vorstellen* is described as: “making an image of something in thoughts (*sich in Gedanken ein Bild von etwas machen*)”).

As a result of Steiner's recommendation, there is in Waldorf schools great emphasis on the development of thinking with mental *imag-ery*, mental “picturing” and *imag-ination* and this applies to children and teachers alike. But what about the significant number of children and teachers who mentally “picture” or visually imagine very little or nothing at all in their “mind's eye”? How do they become imaginative learners and teachers? And what exactly are “mental images” and “mental imaging” anyway? What is the difference between a mental image and a mental picture? This article explores aspects of these questions from the points of view of psychology and neuroscience.

The Multisensory Nature of Mental Images

Noted English Waldorf educator, Cecil Harwood, admits in his notes on translation of Steiner's *Study of Man* that although Steiner “does rather stress the **pictorial** nature of *Vorstellung* [the image produced by the activity of mental image-making or *Vorstellen*]... *Vorstellung* **does not intrinsically contain the suggestion of picture** [and Harwood, in revising the translation] toyed with the idea of rendering it as ‘mental evocation’ or even inventing the word ‘mentalisation’.”²

Indeed, elsewhere, in other lectures cycles, Steiner does refer to *images* from other sense experiences; for example, “mental images (*Vorstellungen*) fill themselves with a content derived from percepts conveyed by our eyes and ears and so on...”³ This multisensory

aspect of mental images becomes important for Waldorf education since its founder stresses the vital importance of 12 senses and of different ways of learning – visual, auditory, kinesthetic, linguistic, etc.

Consideration of the multisensory nature of images begins to address the question of the significant number of children and teachers who, to a significant degree, cannot conjure up visual images in the so-called “mind's eye.” They become ‘imaginative’ learners and teachers because *Vorstellen*, mental imaging, does not have to be only mentally-*visually* accessible to waking consciousness. There are other ways to *vorstellen*, to re-*present* things mentally. The mind is an amazingly versatile configurer of different types of “images”: sound-images in the mind's ear, taste-images in the mind's tongue, smell-images in the mind's nose, and kinesthetic-tactile images in the mind's hand. For those who are visual-mental-image-blind, the hands, for example, can compensate and make images appear externally in matter for the outer eyes to see rather than the inner “mind's eye.” They are used to show and make seen. The art of making shapes makes visible that which is inwardly invisible.

Many researchers today point to the rich multisensory nature of mental images. For example, a leading neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio, characterizes images as

mental patterns with a structure built with the tokens of each of the sensory modalities—visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and somatosensory. ... [The latter] includes varied forms of sense: touch, muscular, temperature, pain, visceral, and vestibular. The word image does not refer to ‘visual’ image alone and there is nothing static about images either... The process we come to know as mind ... is a continuous flow of images... **Thought is an acceptable word to denote such a flow of images.**⁴

1 Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man: General Education Course* (Forest Row, UK: The Rudolf Steiner Press, 1966).

2 C. Harwood Note, “A Note on the Revised Translation”, *Study of Man* (Forest Row, UK: The Rudolf Steiner Press, 1966), p. 7. Emphasis added.

3 Rudolf Steiner, *A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit: Anthroposophy, Psychosophy, and Pneumatosophy* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1999),

p. 196.

4 Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1999), p. 318. Emphasis added.

Damasio's designation of *thought* as a "flow of images," I would argue, correlates with Steiner's *Vorstellen* as a "movement of images."

In a major and comprehensive study entitled *The Case for Mental Imagery* (2006), Harvard University Professor Emeritus (Psychology), and leading neuroscience researcher, Stephen Kosslyn, also describes how mental imagery is not limited to the "visual modality ... and the experience of 'seeing with the mind's eye,'" but also includes "auditory imagery ... accompanied by the experience of '**hearing with the mind's ear**,' tactile images ... accompanied by the experience of '**feeling with the mind's skin**,' and so on... The modality-specific representations that underlie mental imagery are relatively prolonged and can be called up voluntarily."⁵

Another neuropsychologist, Ian Robertson, who documents the prevalence of visual mental- image-blindness, emphasizes that "imagery is not just about vision" but also "consists of mental ... sounds, smells, tastes, touch and other bodily sensations that we can recreate with incredible vividness."⁶ He discusses "kinesthetic imagery," used by athletes, and "complex mind-body state imagery" that can influence a person's wellbeing.⁷ Robertson deems all mental images both concrete and abstract "mind sculptures," and he provides exercises to test and develop stronger inner imaging. Another recent study, to round up this sample of the many relevant studies and publications on mental imagery, is a rich collection of empirical and theoretical studies called *Multisensory Imagery*.⁸

These examples remind us that there are sound-music imagers with mind's ears, hands-on-kinesthetic imagers with mind's hands, taste imagers (such as wine experts) with mind's tongues, etc. And there are all kinds of complex "combiners," not to mention synesthetes such as Kandinsky who have color-sound imagery! In fact, while one modality may seem predominant in people, most of us are "combiners" of senses and sense-images without always being conscious of it. Steiner points out that in our complex mental life, we synthesize information from multiple senses in our discernment or judgment (*Urteil*) of reality: "The world you experience comes to you in twelve different ways and you reunite things through your judging (*Urteilen*)... Because we have twelve senses, we have a large number of

combined relationships between the [twelve] senses."⁹ With twelve senses, we create a variety of mental image-formations and their combinations.

The Debate on the Elusive Nature of Mental Images: Some History

Researchers of mental images and mental imagery have been investigating these images' multisided and elusive nature for decades. Moreover, what mental images and imagery actually are has been questioned for centuries and has in recent decades sparked in psychology a so-called 'imagery debate'. Stephen Kosslyn summarizes the challenge of investigating this phenomenon:

Mental images are fleeting, ethereal entities; how should we conceptualize them in a way that explains not only how they represent information about the world but also how 'mental' images relate to the physical brain itself? This issue has plagued theorists at least since the time of Plato, who in his *Theatetus* likened **images to patterns etched on a block of wax** (individual differences in imagery were explained by differences in the hardness and purity of the wax).¹⁰

And Aristotle, the great philosopher and Plato's one-time pupil, held that "the soul never thinks without a mental image [*phantasma*]" (*On the Soul*, 431a 15-20).

Here are a few more historical examples from the long and fascinating quest to solve "the image problem" and its related debate:

1880: The First Mental Imaging Study

A pioneer, who set the stage for modern imaging research, was the Victorian Renaissance Man, Sir Francis Galton. He began questioning his friends in the Royal Society of London about their "faculty of visualizing" and "to [his] astonishment"

found that the great majority of the men of science ... **protested that mental imagery was unknown to them.** ... On the other hand, when [he] spoke to persons ... in general society, [he] found [that] many men and yet a larger number of women, and many boys and girls, declared that they habitually saw mental imagery... perfectly distinct to them and full of color... Many persons, especially

5 Stephen M. Kosslyn, William L. Thompson, and Giorgio Ganis, *The Case for Mental Imagery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 4. Emphasis added.

6 Ian Robertson, *Opening the Mind's Eye* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), p. 3.

7 Robertson, *Opening the Mind's Eye*, p. 59.

8 Simon Lacey and Rebecca Lawson (eds.), *Multisensory Imagery* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2013).

9 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1996), Lecture 8, pp. 144-45.

10 Kosslyn, *The Case for Mental Imagery*, pp. 8-9. Emphasis added.

women and intelligent children, take pleasure in introspection.¹¹

Galton intensified his inquiry, introduced the use of the questionnaire and investigated the ‘vividness’ or ‘deficiency’ of people’s imagery, specifically its degree of brightness, sharpness and coloring. In his ground-breaking study, the ‘Statistics of Mental Imagery’, first published in the journal *Mind*, in 1880, Galton concluded that

[A]n over-readiness to perceive clear mental pictures is antagonistic to the acquirement of habits of highly generalized and abstract thought, and that if the faculty ... was ever possessed by men who think hard, it is very **apt to be lost by disuse**. ... However, ... the missing faculty seems **to be replaced so serviceably by other modes of conception ... chiefly... connected with the motor sense...** Men, who declare themselves entirely deficient in the power of seeing mental pictures, can nevertheless give life-like descriptions of what they have seen and can otherwise express themselves as if they were gifted with vivid visual imagination. They can also become painters of the rank of Royal Academicians.¹²

1978: Visualizers and Verbalizers

A century later, Robert Sommer, Professor of Psychology at UC Davis, characterized the dichotomy between visual thinkers and intellectual word thinkers:

People who think in pictures often doubt that others do not. **People who lack imagery ... are skeptical that anyone has it. Visualizers and verbalizers inhabit different worlds.** A good imager, whose memory is a vivid multisensory collage, can raise his blood pressure by imagining that he is running an exciting race or dilate the pupils of his eyes by imagining himself at the trail’s end at dusk. The verbalizer can recall such scenes but only as nonsensory husks. No internal image can make his pulse race or his nostrils flare.¹³

Vivid mental imagers often cannot watch scary movies without risking insomnia and are much more vulnerable to strong, trauma-generating experiences.

1981/2005: Picture Thinker Minority

Child development researcher Linda Silverman, who coined the term ‘*visual/spatial learner*’ in 1981, found that 45% of people use both visual/spatial thinking and thinking in words. But while 30% strongly use visual/spatial thinking, only 25% think only in words. Of the 30% even a smaller percentage are true ‘picture thinkers’ who use this mode of thinking to the exclusion of the others.¹⁴

2002: Opening the Mind’s Eye

Neuroscientist and former Director of the Institute of Neuroscience at Trinity College, Dublin, Ian Robertson, calls attention to the dimming of mental imagery in our highly intellectualized, word-based culture:

Western societies have largely lost the ability to think in images rather than words. ... [M]odern neuroscience backs [this up] ... [I]t is the nature of words that they tend to transform experiences into a rather bloodless code that can starve our brains of the rich images that wordless imagining can evoke. [W]ords trigger images as well as other word-thoughts. Yet most of us, most of the time ... don’t think in images enough ... Language is the great achievement of evolution — an essential ingredient in what makes human beings unique on the planet. But there are costs to the way we have grown dependent on the spoken and written word.

Imagery consists of the mental **sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and other bodily sensations** that we can re-create with incredible vividness in that private, infinite universe within our skulls. The human brain is the most complex object in the known universe and it has the most incredible abilities, some which — like imagery — are underused.

Imagery is important, but in Western culture, language is king. In school we steadily wrap our children’s brains in the ‘cool web of language.’ It would be terrible if we didn’t, but there is a cost to everything. By neglecting imagery we risk the withering of whole set of quite remarkable mental capacities ... Children

11 Francis Galton, “Statistics of Mental Imagery”, first published in *Mind*, 5, 301-318 (1880). Emphasis added.

12 Galton, “Statistics of Mental Imagery”. Emphasis added

13 Robert Sommer, *The Mind’s Eye: Imagery in Everyday Life* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1978), pp.1-2. Emphasis added. Sommer refers to individuals as being ‘visile’, ‘audile’, and even ‘motile’ imaginers, “better suited to ... mentally performing a complicated dance step” (*The Mind’s Eye*, 1-2).

14 Linda Silverman, *Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner* (Denver: Deleon Publishing, 2005).

think mostly in images before word-dominated school clouds their mind's eye.¹⁵

Robertson goes on to describe what this one-sided intellectual emphasis means for adulthood and how art tries to be a cultural corrective:

Most of the time we [as adults] see, hear, feel, taste, and smell what our brains expect rather than the sensations themselves. Much modern art tries to shock or surprise us out of these image-clouding mental habits into seeing more purely with the mind's eye, uncluttered by well-worn categories and labels. (p. 4)

The older we get, [it becomes] harder and harder to have an experience that's completely new ... When you classify experiences like this, you begin to experience the class and not the event. In other words, your conscious experience becomes once removed from the immediate sensation. (p. 12)

The brain's predilection for prediction and categorization is not confined to the visual sense. It also anticipates what we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell ... For much of our lives, we taste memories — what we expect — not the raw, fresh complexity of the sensations on our tongues... (p. 18)

But the outside world can hijack our attention... It is ... [at] rare moments that we are **closest to the unfettered, uncategorized seeing that we attribute to young children and to savants.** (p. 19, emphasis added)

2006: Depictive or Descriptive

Cognitive neuroscientist and Harvard Professor Emeritus of psychology, Stephen Kosslyn, has been in the forefront of the debate since the 1970's, when the validity of imagery as a fundamental part of cognition was significantly brought into question again. (It had been attacked previously as worthless by behaviorist psychology because there is no visible evidence of images in the brain.) In 2006, Kosslyn collaborated with several colleagues to issue *The Case for Mental*

Imagery. With the aid of MRI and PET scanning, he and his colleagues revealed that Plato's mythical 'seal' is indeed making marks in our neural tissue 'wax.' In Kosslyn's and his colleagues' judgment, recent discoveries have 'resolved' the imagery issue: There is now convincing neuroscientific mapping evidence (brain scans) for depictive mental imaging activity in the visual cortex. Visual images are essentially spatial and are topographically mapped out physically on the cortex. Neurons interconnect to represent lines and surfaces. The fact that this activity has been found to occur in the

same area that processes our visual perception of the outer world, Kosslyn claims, establishes that internal visual imagery is closely connected with visual perception and recognition.

Kosslyn and his colleagues, however, have yet to account for and 'resolve' the mystery of how perceptions inscribe and map themselves in patterned neural formations and how these physical

instruments lead to images in the mind. Furthermore, his 2006 study focuses primarily on a comparison of the two main modes of mentally 'representing' the world, the 'depictive' and the 'descriptive' (which are comparable to Sommer's 'visualizer' and 'verbalizer' described above):

(1) The 'depictive' mental imaging mode has traditionally been investigated from Plato to William James by using introspection. (Rudolf Steiner is part of that tradition; he represents his *Philosophy of Freedom* as the "Results of Introspective (*Seelische*) Observation according to Natural Scientific Methods."¹⁶)

(2) The 'descriptive' mode uses symbolic language, that is, thinking in words and other symbols.

Significantly, Kosslyn disagrees with the latter view that mental processing is solely language-like and symbolic:

Many computer scientists—perhaps because of their familiarity with list processing languages such as LISP—have the strong intuition that language-like formats are sufficient for representing all knowledge.

(*The Case for Mental Imagery*, p. 20)

15 Ian Robertson, *Opening the Mind's Eye*, pp. 2-3. Emphasis added.

16 This is the original subtitle of Steiner's 1894 classic, *The Philosophy of Freedom*: "*Seelische Beobachtungsergebnisse nach naturwissenschaftlicher Methode.*"

Squarely within this emerging new computer science-inspired perspective, Zenon Pylyshyn (1973) argued that “the picture metaphor underlying recent theoretical discussions [of visual mental imagery] is seriously misleading—especially as it suggests that an image is an entity to be perceived”. (p. 1) Moreover, he claimed that “an adequate characterization of ‘what we know’ requires that we posit abstract mental structures to which we do not have conscious access and which are essentially conceptual and propositional [descriptive] rather than sensory or pictorial, in nature. Such representations are more accurately referred to as descriptions than as images in the usual sense.” (p. 6)

Many years later, in spite of recent and remarkable neuroscientific mapping data, Pylyshyn, a Canadian cognitive scientist who initially played a major role in sparking the ‘imagery debate’ in 1973, still holds his position and assertion that current neuroscientific data cannot resolve the debate. (It would be interesting to know whether Pylyshyn can visualize mental images or is he ‘image-blind’ and/or completely a ‘verbalizer’? And is Kosslyn a vivid visualizer?) Kosslyn remains firm in his objection to Pylyshyn’s one dimensional view of the human mind. Brain scanning, he says, reveals that mental imagery is a physiological and psychological reality and that there are multiple systems of mental representation—depictive, descriptive (language), motoric, procedural, etc.—and that the versatile human being uses combinations of them.

2007: Mentalese

Evolutionary Psychologist and renown Harvard Professor, Steven Pinker, presented his position on mind and language in a series of popular books: *The Stuff of Thought* (2007), *How the Mind Works* (1996) and *The Language Instinct* (1994). Pinker holds that our minds work at an even deeper level than that of imagery or the language-like and symbolic. He comes up with his own term, “mentalese,” for the mysterious silent medium of the brain that is the real ground substance of our thought and of the mind’s activity. We can clothe “mentalese” activity in words, but words do not determine the meaning of thought at its root. Thinking, Pinker points out, does not depend on language and words.

Speculating about mentalese sounds interestingly like Harwood’s previously cited attempt to find new terminology in such expressions as “mentalisations.” At any rate, Pinker, joining Noam Chomsky as another genius of linguistic and cognitive theory, set off another interesting offshoot of the imagery debate.

2010: Mind’s Eye Blindness

Physician and Professor of Neurology, the late Oliver Sacks, appreciated and built on Kosslyn’s pioneering and decades-long research. Sacks stated that it

revolutionized the study of imagery. ... Where [the philosopher Ludwig] Wittgenstein writes of ‘saying’ and ‘showing,’ Kosslyn speaks of ‘descriptive’ and ‘depictive’ modes of representation. These modes are available to the normal brain, and they are complementary, so that one may sometimes use one mode or the other.¹⁷

In his book, *The Mind’s Eye*, Sacks is still left with the mystery of how imagery really works in the human mind, even after surveying contemporary research into mental imagery in both the sighted and the blind.

He uncovers an array of differing capacities, processing modes and unaccountable anomalies and contradictions. Furthermore, Sacks adds his own experience and admits that he is one of those who are “blind” when it comes to bringing depictive images to consciousness at will. He poses the question: “What, then, of

people like me ... **who cannot evoke any visual images voluntarily?** One must infer ... that we have visual images that allow visual perception and recognition but are **below the threshold of consciousness.**”¹⁸

Already early in life, around age 14, Sacks became uncomfortably self-conscious of his “deficiency.” He learned that his mother, a surgeon and anatomist, was able to see and mentally move objects “in her mind as clearly and vividly as if she were looking at them.” In comparison, he “felt bewildered, and very stupid. I could hardly see anything with my mind’s eye—at most, faint, evanescent images over which I had no control.”¹⁹ Sacks adds to this account another example of a surgeon, who, like himself, cannot consciously conjure up visual images and yet is capable of designing solar

17 Oliver Sacks, *The Mind’s Eye* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), p. 46.

18 Sacks, *The Mind’s Eye*, p. 231. Emphasis added.

19 Page 221.

panels. This colleague's theory is that "there must be representations or models in the brain that get matched up with what I am seeing and doing. But they are not conscious. I cannot evoke them."²⁰

This recalls Galton's 1880 account of scientists,

who declare themselves entirely deficient in the power of seeing mental pictures, [but] can nevertheless give life-like descriptions of what they have seen and can otherwise express themselves as if they were gifted with vivid visual imagination ... the missing faculty seems to be **replaced so serviceably by other modes of conception ... chiefly ... connected with the motor sense.**²¹

But what might these "other modes of conception" be? Like Pinker, Oliver Sacks thinks that they may lie deeper and more mysteriously than we might think:

When I talk to people, blind or sighted, or when I try to think of my own internal representations, I find myself uncertain whether words, symbols, and images of various types are primary tools of thought or whether there are forms of thought antecedent to all of these, forms of thought essentially amodal. Psychologists have sometimes spoken of 'interlingua' or 'mentalese,' ... the brain's own language. ... Vygotsky ... used to speak of 'thinking in pure meanings.'²²

There is increasing evidence for the extraordinarily rich interconnectedness and interactions of the sensory areas of the brain, and the difficulty, therefore, of saying that any thing is purely visual or purely auditory, or purely anything.²³

Sacks describes particularly revealing case studies of the congenitally blind who "have rich and varied perceptual experiences, mediated by language and **imagery of a nonvisual sort.** Thus they may have a 'mind's ear' or a 'mind's nose.'" And how, he asks, does one account for the fact that "Helen Keller's writing ... startles one with

its brilliantly visual quality?"²⁴ Sacks leaves the reader with this riddle.

A New Conception of Imagining

Recent imagery-research and debate and the mystery characterized by Sacks and others indicate that we are perhaps approaching a new threshold, a new *consciousness of consciousness*. Such a situation calls for a new paradigm of cognition and for new perceptions and concepts for the workings of the mind. Some of the speculations and expressions cited above about "thinking in pure meanings" (Vygotsky), "mentalizations" (Harwood), the mind's hidden "mentalese" (Pinker) and the hidden "modes of conception connected chiefly with the motor sense" (Galton) have been attempts to reach out for new ways to understand and describe the complex and elusive nature of our mental processes and mental image-making. Vygotsky's

expression, *thinking in pure meanings*, reminds one of what Rudolf Steiner calls "pure thinking." For Steiner, thinking and its many modalities (imaginal, logical, abstract, symbolic, etc.) range from being heavily brain-filtered and sense-bound to liberated, 'pure sense-free' capacities of cognition that lift away from a limiting neural apparatus. From his own direct observations and time-tested experience, Steiner held that the key to the next step in the evolution of consciousness lies in finding and exercising new ways of creating mental images and *imag*-ination. For him, our age since the Renaissance is one

of the (self) consciousness soul (*Bewusstseinsseele*). In the future, Steiner predicted, this stage of the human soul will metamorphose into the "imagination soul" (*Imaginationsseele*). Steiner planted seeds in our times toward that evolution by creating Waldorf education.

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²⁰ Page 222. Emphasis added.

²¹ Galton, "Statistics of Mental Imagery." Emphasis added.

²² Sacks, *The Mind's Eye*, p. 231. Emphasis added.

²³ P. 238.

²⁴ P. 239. Emphasis added.

David Gable

Perceiving Pitch

"But I'm tone-deaf!" How often have we heard this protestation from individuals—children and adults alike—who experience challenges with group singing? Perhaps they have arrived at this conclusion themselves, or perhaps (and more likely), they have been told by someone else that they are tone-deaf. In my experience, however, true tone deafness is a much rarer phenomenon than most people believe. There are, to be sure, varying degrees of pitch sensitivity, some people experiencing more difficulty with tonal differentiation than others, but, in all my years of working with and teaching music, I have encountered only one individual whom I might categorize as "tone-deaf." In most cases, it is more a matter of belief. A person who believes him- or herself to be tone-deaf will give up on any attempt to discern pitch. It is a classic self-fulfilling prophecy.

It can be difficult to break through this kind of mistaken belief, particularly when a third party, perhaps a teacher or parent, or perhaps even a hearing specialist, has made the diagnosis. There are, however, some simple activities that can help dissuade a person from the notion of tone deafness.

Take a large glass jug or bottle. An old-fashioned milk bottle or cider jug will do quite nicely. Place it beneath a faucet. Then tell the person professing to be tone-deaf to close his or her eyes and put a hand on the faucet handle. Instruct the person to turn the water off just before the jug overflows. Then turn the water on. The gurgling sound of water pouring into the jug will remain quite steady for a while. Then, as the water level reaches the narrower neck of the jug, the pitch will rapidly go up. The effect is quite dramatic.

Most people are able to do this, if not on the first try, then certainly on the second or third. For some, the revelation that they are not tone-deaf is so profound that they may want to do the activity over and over again. The discovery opens a door into a whole new experience of tone.

There are other activities that can help break down the misperception of tone deafness. You may have observed that when cupped hands are clapped together, the resulting tone is deeper and more resonant than

when flat hands are clapped. Clapping cupped hands at waist level, then gradually raising and flattening the hands so that the pitch rises as the hands move upward, can visually reinforce auditory perception. Lowering the hands while gradually returning them to a cupped shape completes the exercise, which can be repeated several times in a row in a very short period of time. This activity, by the way, is also an excellent tool for associating pitch with a position on the staff. Higher, brighter tones are positioned higher on the staff than the deeper tones.

In a similar way, sliding the voice from low to high and back again, especially when reinforced by the raising and lowering of hands, can not only help break through the misperception of tone deafness, but also help a singer identify how different tones feel in the larynx. When I have a student who is struggling to match pitch, I have him or her simply hum a tone at a comfortable pitch. Then, following the movement of my hand, the student slides his or her voice up or down until the correct pitch is attained. Reiterating the correct pitch and sensing how it feels, as opposed to how it sounds, goes a long way toward the goal of singing in tune.

Another exercise, particularly helpful for those who either have difficulty controlling vocal pitch or are shy about singing, is to match tones with musical instruments. In the classroom this is likely to be the recorder, but any pitched instrument can be used. The teacher plays a simple note pattern from a position where the student cannot see the fingering, and the student tries to replicate the pattern. Initially I like to begin with G (the "top hand" note) and use exclusively the notes G, A, and B in different groupings, but as the student becomes more adept and develops more confidence, I extend to other tones and longer patterns. As with the aforementioned exercises, students are often surprised by their ability to duplicate note patterns.

Of course, playing the tune on an instrument while children sing is an old standby method of helping them sing in tune. I have found that the ideal instrument for this purpose is the violin, both because its lower to middle range completely encompasses the children's comfortable singing range, and also because its string timbre is very like the sound of the human voice. For me—being

a performing violinist in my other life—this has been a good tool, but that is not the case for most classroom teachers. The recorder is often the instrument of choice, and most children can readily sing in tune an octave below a soprano recorder (the pitch of which is an octave higher than written). However, children who experience challenges with pitch differentiation frequently mistake timbre (tone color) for pitch, and when asked to sing with a soprano recorder, they may force their voices unnaturally high in a futile attempt to imitate the brightness of the instrument. The child's natural register is mostly encompassed by the alto recorder and entirely by the tenor, but many teachers hesitate to use these instruments with younger children out of concern that they may be too incarnating. I do not believe this needs to be a cause of worry. The tones of alto and tenor recorders, while deeper than those of the brilliant soprano, are mellow and soothing, and as mentioned earlier, they are in the correct octave for young singers. Also, were we to attempt to shield children from low timbres, we would have to recommend that fathers not speak to or sing with their children, that children never hear the sound of a cello, never put their ear to the side of a purring cat.

I would like to say more on the idea of feeling, rather than hearing pitch when singing. Although my background is as a performing musician, I do not have what is often referred to as “perfect pitch,” that is, the ability to identify random pitches or sing a specific pitch without any frame of reference. Yet, when I sing with my classes, I am consistently able to begin a song on the same pitch without needing to refer to a recorder, pitch pipe, or chime. This is because after I have sung the song enough times, it is my body, rather than my ear, that recognizes how it feels to sing the correct pitch. You might compare it to being able to write your name with your eyes closed. It is the kinesthetic memory, not the ear, which identifies the tone. I have found that this is true of children as well. In fact, it was my observations of children singing that led me to this discovery in the first place. To cite a specific example, I was once rehearsing my middle school chorus when I inadvertently gave them an E rather than the D to which they were accustomed as a preparatory pitch. To my amazement, nearly the entire group began singing in the usual key. They were singing “by feel” rather than by ear.

Of course, I do not necessarily recommend beginning songs without a pitch reference. Rather, this observation actually serves to underscore the importance of always singing a song starting on the same pitch if we are to develop a good sense of pitch in our students. If

using an instrument or pitch pipe allows the teacher to accomplish this, by all means it should be used.

Rhythm

Another common truism among struggling musicians is, “I’m not good at music because I’m not good at math. I can’t count.” While there is no doubt that developing one’s sense of rhythm can greatly benefit one’s mathematical acuity (I, myself, am a good example, having survived fourth grade arithmetic by translating multiplication tables and fractions into rhythmic patterns), there is absolutely no reason to believe that being mathematically challenged must necessarily impede one’s musicality. While mathematics can be reduced to purely abstract concepts, rhythm must be understood not in the head, but rather with the body. For this reason, children’s initial experiences of rhythm should be through musical and motor activity rather than notation.

In lecture 6 of *The Inner Nature of Music and the Experience of Tone*,¹ Rudolf Steiner indicates that only after about the age of 10 should children’s attention be drawn to the rhythmic element in music. By this I do not believe that he means we should use arrhythmic music prior to age 10, but rather that we should not turn rhythm into an intellectual exercise. A child’s whole being is inherently rhythmic. From the faster rhythms of circulation and respiration to the broader rhythms of waking and sleeping, we all live steeped in rhythm. Before age 10, however, we want the child to experience both these biorhythms and musical rhythms as part of an organic process rather than as abstractions.

Rhythm is the musical expression of the will, and the best way to develop rhythmic sensitivity in children is through activity of the will. Jumping rope, skipping, swinging, and other rhythmic gross motor activities (the standard fare of Waldorf elementary students) gives children an inner understanding of rhythm upon which a cognitive understanding can later be built. These or similar activities, rather than any attempt to teach rhythmic understanding by way of musical notation, is the best approach to take when helping a child with an undeveloped sense of rhythm.

From large bodily movements, one progresses to smaller, more detailed rhythmic activities. Walking with a rhythmic step and clapping the hands in sync with the feet is a good next step. Clapping the hands twice to every step, then in alternation with the steps, can follow.

1 Rudolf Steiner, *The Inner Nature of Music and the Experience of Tone* (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1983). This book is also available online at the Rudolf Steiner Archive: https://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA283/English/AP1983/InNaMu_index.html

Simple duple meters and rhythms (un-syncopated quarter and eighth notes in two-four or four-four time) are the best for remedial purposes, as they reflect the body's rhythms in a way that triple meter (three-four time) and triplet rhythms do not. These fundamental rhythms can progress toward more varied rhythmic patterns clapped in time with the steady stepping of the feet. I find it best to have the feet provide the continuous pulse, and have the hands create the rhythmic patterns that are overlaid upon that pulse.

Only when the child has developed an inner sense of rhythm does it become productive to deal with rhythmic notation.

Reading Music

There are two main elements to reading music, and these are the two musical elements discussed above: pitch and rhythm. While these are sometimes lumped together in the general category of reading music, they are conceptually quite different and involve different thought processes.

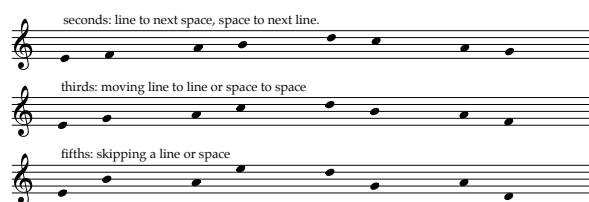
The musical staff is essentially a graph. High notes are positioned higher, low notes lower. Notes that are too high or low to be written within the five lines of the staff are written with extra lines called ledger lines. (I like to compare these to an extension ladder when teaching children about pitch notation.) This means that every pitch has a characteristic visual appearance when written on the staff. Just as one can look at a thermometer and see whether the temperature is hot, cold, or moderate, one can glance at a staff and see whether the pitch is higher, lower, or in the middle.

The earliest examples of written music in the West do not have staves. Symbols called neumes were used to show the general shape of a melody rather than its specific pitches. During the 10th century, a musician known as Guido of Arezzo devised a system using four lines that allowed for the representation of specific pitches. Since then, staves of four, five, and six lines have been used; the five-line staff is the standard today, though Gregorian chant is still often written on a staff of four lines, and the general idea of note position following the shape of the melody has persisted. Keeping this in mind is very helpful in learning to read notes.

A proficient sight-reader does not think the names of the notes when singing or playing. Rather, he or she follows the shape of the line. Each interval, in addition to having a characteristic sound, also has a characteristic appearance. A second (step or half step) moves from a line to the next space or from a space to the next

line. A third moves from space to space or line to line. A fifth skips a line or space. Learning to recognize the visual appearance of notes on the staff and of intervals between notes is much more important than learning the names of notes. This is not to say that learning note names is not useful. It is, but mostly for the purpose of enabling us to communicate with each other about the music.

Characteristic appearance of intervals



I have found that the best method for teaching students to read pitch is to have them learn a tune initially by demonstration, then follow the music with the eyes while playing or singing. The hands and larynx do not recognize pitches by name, but by feel. Hands “think” spatially. To the hands of a person playing a soprano recorder, a note on the second line (G) does not indicate a pitch so much as a setting of the fingers of the left hand. For a violinist, the same note indicates a place to be stopped on the D string. To a singer, it indicates a tone that feels a particular way when sung. Unfortunately, the most common way of teaching pitch notation is to focus on learning the names of notes rather than building a connection between the eye and the hand or larynx.

Rhythm notation, by contrast, is a more symbolic way of writing. There is no particular reason why a round shape with no stem should indicate four beats, no particular reason why a dot placed after a note should indicate extending the note's value by half. It is simply a matter of convention. There is a measure of logic, of course, to the addition of flags or beams when indicating increasingly short beat subdivisions, but even this is convention. We could just as well draw horizontal lines on the staff to indicate note duration. The conventional method, however, has the advantage of being very systematic. If one is able to comprehend divisions and proportions, one is able to comprehend rhythm notation. Observing that beams group notes into beats is key to mastering the reading of rhythms.

Beams grouping notes by beat



Although rhythm notation is independent of spatial proportions (imagine how inconvenient it would be if it were necessary for every whole note to take as much horizontal space as sixteen sixteenth notes!), I find that positioning notes relative to their durations is extremely helpful for students learning to read rhythm. When I write a rhythmic pattern for reading practice, I make sure that one quarter note occupies approximately the same horizontal space as two eighth notes or four sixteenth notes.

Proportional positioning of rhythmic values facilitates reading



A question that often comes up asks: When is the best time to teach reading music? My response is that there is no single time. Reading music requires multiple thought processes, and some elements of notation are more readily grasped by children at an earlier age than are others.

As noted above, our method of notating rhythm has no direct relationship to the length of notes. It is a fairly abstract notion. It is also, as is rhythm itself, an exercise in proportions. For these reasons, I feel it is most appropriate to introduce rhythm notation in fourth grade, the year in which fractions are introduced. There need be no concern that students might be confused if notation is presented prior to fractions. In fact, since beat subdivisions are customarily beamed together in one-beat groupings, music notation provides a visual aid to the understanding of equivalent fractions. Two eighth notes are equivalent to a quarter note, and so forth. The fact that we refer to them with fraction-like names is also not a problem. It is very easy to see that eighth notes are so called because eight of them will last the same length of time as a whole note.

One concept that can become confusing is the time or meter signature. Often these are explained as if they were fractions, and “three-four time” is sometimes referred to as “three-quarter time.” This is not correct. A time signature, though it looks like a fraction, does not identify part and whole the way a fraction does, but rather indicates how many beats are in a measure and what type of note is used to express a single beat. Thus, “three-four time” indicates that each measure

has three beats and a quarter note receives one beat. Also, unlike fractions, “three-four” is not the same as “six-eight.” In the former, a measure might include three pairs of eighth notes (or the equivalent), but in the latter there are two beats, each of which may be comprised of three eighth notes.

Grouping of eighth notes and sixteenth notes in three-four and six-eight time



The notation of pitch is basically pictorial, with the rise and fall of note heads indicating the rise and fall of pitch. The staff is easily likened to a ladder, and possible pictorial images abound. Children intuitively recognize that when a teacher’s hands go up and down when the class sings, their voices should follow. The hand clapping activity described earlier is another way in which high and low pitch can readily be connected to staff positions. For that matter, the very fact that we use the words “high” and “low” suggests a natural connection between what we hear and what we see on the staff. Because of these factors, it is quite reasonable to introduce the staff and pitch notation earlier than rhythm notation. I have found that by third grade nearly all students are able to grasp the general idea. I do not, by the way, promote the approach taken in some method books of writing notes without a staff and with the note name written within the note head. As indicated earlier, it is not the letter name of the note that is most important; rather, the essential point is what the note’s position on the staff tells the musician to do with hands or voice.

It is obvious that one cannot introduce pitch notation in isolation. I see no problem, however, with third graders seeing music with rhythmic indications. In response to their questions, I simply reply that the variations in the notes tell us how long they are to sound, and that we will learn more about that later. It is like allowing kindergartners to see words in print without attempting to teach them to read. It becomes a mystery to be revealed at a future date.

Recorders

The effect of instrumental music on children is quite different from the effect of singing. Vocal music tends to exorcise, to lift their consciousness out of their physical bodies and into the astral, the arena of pure feeling. Playing an instrument, while still working in the astral, has a more grounding effect. I believe this is due to the engagement of the limbs and the need (even for string players) to coordinate hands and breathing. Playing a

musical instrument engages and helps integrate the astral and etheric with the physical body. I believe that it is essential for children, especially as they enter the middle school years, to be involved in both singing and playing, if not daily, then at least on a regular basis each week. This is also true for children with sensory-motor challenges and children who join a class “midstream.” These children, though, may need extra support in order to feel successful.

There are five elements of recorder playing that frequently cause difficulty for students. These are the embouchure (mouth position), posture, fingering, breathing, and tonguing. The first thing a teacher must do is identify which of these is creating the problem.

The correct embouchure for the recorder has the tip of the mouthpiece resting on the lower lip. The mouthpiece does not enter the mouth, but many children, especially those with sensory integration difficulties, will insert it deeply. This causes problems with tonguing and breathing, and must be addressed first. I tell students to let the tip of the mouthpiece rest on their lip, then to bring the upper lip to the mouthpiece as though sipping water through a straw. For some children it is necessary to practice finding the correct embouchure. In the early learning stages, I remind children of it every time we play. Once the embouchure is established, other matters may be addressed.

Correct posture is as important to playing the recorder (or any instrument) as it is to performing eurythmy or dance. It is, however, difficult to convey in writing because many details vary according to the size and proportions of the hands, arms, and torso. Therefore, I will not attempt, do so here. That said, there are certain aspects of posture that I have found create difficulties for more than a few students, and these warrant mention. One is the position of the instrument itself. There should be a straight line from earlobe to mouthpiece to bell. Many students look down, as if trying to see their fingers. This creates poor breathing posture. (By the way, reading music lying flat on a desktop also lends to this problem. I strongly encourage the use of music stands.) The solution, however, is not necessarily to address posture directly. If the student is looking down because of fingering uncertainty, the best approach may be to sensitize the fingers so that he or she can play by touch. Have the student hold the instrument in playing position, but not blow into the mouthpiece. Starting with the top index finger and thumb, place the fingers on their respective tone holes and try to feel the entire circumference of the hole. It may help the student to do this with eyes closed. Take the fingers away

to see if the outline of the hole is visible on the pad of the fingertip. If only a crescent is visible, the finger is not completely covering the hole. Proceed in similar fashion down the hand.

After this exercise, have the student play a B (top index finger and thumb). While playing, gently rock the finger so that the hole opens along the edge. Do the same with the thumb. Have the student listen to the way the tone and pitch change. Once the finger is securely covering the entire hole, the tone becomes clear and the pitch is true. As with the silent exercise, proceed down the hand to A, G, low E, and low D.

Many students develop poor fingering habits simply because they are trying too hard. Some, for example, lift the fingers very high. If the fingers are lifted too far from the holes, it is harder to place them accurately and in synchronization with each other. The fingers should stay fairly close to the instrument, being lifted and set gently. Others press the fingers too tightly into the tone holes. White knuckles and deep tone hole impressions on the fingertips are evidence of this problem. Imagining that the instrument is coated in fine gold dust, which will be rubbed off if gripped too tightly, can help a student lighten the fingers satisfactorily. The problem of overworking is exacerbated if the student is moved too soon into larger instruments with wider spacing between tone holes. Before a student takes up alto and tenor, the teacher must ensure that she or he can reach the lowest tone holes without straining.

Breathing, too, is impacted by too much effort. I sometimes see students breathing between all the notes. They quickly become fatigued and even light-headed. It should come as no surprise if they come to dislike playing the recorder. Other students try to breathe too deeply, lifting the shoulders and gasping for air. This actually inhibits deeper breathing, as it constricts the lungs. Proper breathing is done through the mouth, by raising the upper lip from the mouthpiece. Breaths are taken at musically appropriate points in the phrase, not whenever we happen to run out of air. With a little practice, even younger children can learn to breathe easily and deeply enough to take in enough air to play several beats without taking another breath.

Students should be taught to play with full air, but not to over-blow. Over-blowing obviously causes the instrument to shriek most unpleasantly. Under-blowing, though, is just as problematic. It results not only in meager tone, but also in flat and wavering pitch. Sadly, when cautious children play, they under-blow in hopes of not standing out. When they hear the unsatisfying

tone that results, they become even more cautious, and the problem becomes self-perpetuating.

Proper breathing is also assisted by tonguing. In tonguing, we touch the tip of the tongue to the roof of the mouth just behind the teeth. The student should take care that the tongue does not contact the end of the mouthpiece. Proper tonguing stops the air momentarily, preventing the disintegration of tone and flattening of pitch that occurs when the air is stopped from the lungs. The action of the tongue is the same as saying “tah-tah-tah” or “dah-dah-dahd.” I find it is quite helpful to have children sing the tune with the tonguing syllables. This allows them to practice the technique without the distraction of fingerings.

Many students find certain fingerings, like F natural and B flat, to be difficult. This is because they require the lifting of fingers in the middle of the hand while the outer fingers are held down. “Half-hole” fingerings such as C sharp and E flat are also difficult. These challenges result largely from fine motor issues, and some of the best remedies are built into the children’s regular program: knitting and clay modeling, for example. However, some children need more fine motor activity to sufficiently develop the finger independence required to play the recorder.

Have the student sit with arms resting on the top of a desk. The angle of the upper arms should be about the same as when playing the recorder, relaxed and not extending outward. The fingers are relaxed and allowed to curl naturally, not held flat against the top of the desk. I refer to the fingers by number. Thumb is simply “thumb,” but the others are as follows: index fingers are “1,” middle fingers are “2,” ring fingers are “3,” and pinkies are “4.” Have the student gently and rhythmically raise and lower fingers in various groupings. Start with raising each finger independently while the others remain relaxed on the desk top, one hand at a time. Follow this by lifting the same finger on both hands. Then move on to neighboring pairs (T-1; 1-2; 2-3; and 3-4) on single hands and neighboring pairs on both hands. Move them simultaneously and in alternation. Lifting odd-numbered fingers together and even-numbered fingers together is more difficult, and lifting odd and even pairs in alternation is most difficult (for this consider the thumb to be part of the even group, so that the combinations are T-2; 1-3; 2-4). Throughout the exercise, it is vitally important that the hands stay relaxed. If anything begins to hurt or feel strained, stop. This activity, when practiced systematically and rhythmically, helps the student develop the finger independence needed to play the awkward notes successfully.

Patience

As Waldorf teachers, we tend to take pride in our students’ aesthetic accomplishments. Their beautiful artwork adorns classroom walls, their drama and music resound in our assembly halls. It can be frustrating, to say the least, to have a student whose sense of pitch or rhythm mars an otherwise exquisite performance, and we certainly want to help such children develop their musicality more fully. However, our motivation should not be for the quality of the performance, but rather for the benefit that musical activity has for that student. By no means should a student with musical challenges be asked to sit out or be relegated to always playing a drum (though the latter is an excellent fallback option for the student with a broken arm!). Neither should a student be pulled from music classes to receive remediation in academic areas. Nor should children be required to take private music lessons in order to participate in the school’s instrumental music program. Music is an inclusive art. When we make music together, we meet each other on a higher plane. We transcend our day-to-day idiosyncrasies and differences in the pursuit of the art. We learn to listen to each other, to harmonize, and to resolve dissonance. When an individual child does not perform up to the standard of his or her peers, we may seek to help, but not to exclude. We must work patiently for improvement, but not for perfection. If our assembly presentation is less than ideal, it is no crisis. They may not sound like the Vienna Boys’ Choir or the National Youth Orchestra, but that is no matter. It is the engagement, the activity, and the collaboration with peers that are important.

A colleague recently commented on a performance by my middle school orchestra saying, “It may have been a little ragged—any middle school orchestra is—but they were playing their hearts out.” To that I would add this thought: When they play their hearts out, their hearts meet, and when their hearts come back home, they are larger than before.

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Waldorf Misunderstandings on Art

Van James

Veteran Waldorf teacher and former leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum in Switzerland, Christof Wiechert, coined the expression *Waldorf misunderstandings*. He was pointing to practices that have become associated with Steiner-Waldorf education but have little or nothing to do with the underlying principles of the education, to original indications, or to child development. In other words, less than “best practices” that have become habits have sometimes found their way into schools with little or no foundation in Waldorf pedagogy.

I would like to address several of these Waldorf misunderstandings that I have observed over my thirty-five years in the teaching of visual art. They include the banning of black as a color, the drawing of beautifully prepared and finished chalkboard art without the student’s involvement, the introduction of slant-line shaded drawing in the early elementary grades, and the question of formless watercolor paintings in the grade school. None of these practices will severely damage the resilient child but they do present a *misunderstanding* with regard to teaching methods and one’s approach to child development.

The Use of Black

The use of the color black has been a question of great debate among Waldorf teachers and parents of young children for many decades. It is now a matter of practice that a fair number of Waldorf kindergartens and grade schools exclude the color black from the crayons offered to children. Black paint is also avoided in the early grades. Although there is no direct indication that Rudolf Steiner, as initiator of Waldorf education, suggested such a policy, it is worthwhile considering the nature of this color and its absence from many Waldorf classrooms.

Because black—considered by some theorists not to be a color at all but the very absence of light and color—is the most lifeless of the hues, free from color-emotion, it is therefore extremely powerful. Together with red it was the first color used in prehistoric visual art and is still the primary color choice in most indigenous art works. Children often gravitate to it because of its strong character and appearance. Some teachers feel

black is too strong for young children and restrict its use in drawing and painting. There is some justification for this, as the color specialist Faber Birren pointed out. His studies concluded that children will be more inclined to depict inanimate objects—vehicles, machines and buildings—when given the color black. “When the same children were given colored crayons, their fancies were more inspired to attempt human beings, animals and plants.”¹

However, what probably happened in one of the early Waldorf schools was that a particularly sensitive kindergarten teacher noticed a boy in her class who was drawing only with black and so she hid that crayon from the boy the next time he drew. This likely had good results. Word spread throughout the school and other teachers in the grades made the black crayons disappear from their classrooms. Eventually, the ban on black crayons spread to other schools. What was actually a good pedagogical move on the part of this hypothetical kindergarten teacher for a particular situation was misapplied to other situations.

Steiner’s color research led him to state that “Black represents the spiritual image of the lifeless.”² And further: “Black shows itself alien to life, hostile to life... But the spirit flourishes; the spirit can penetrate the blackness and assert itself within it.”³ So, although black is a quality we can feel as devoid of life, it nevertheless allows the individuality to thrive. This is why adolescents and city dwellers often choose this color for their clothing above all others. The approaching “I” of the teenager experiences a sense of freedom within the lifelessness of black, a freedom from the emotive range of spectrum colors, and therefore it is a natural color choice at this age, a color in which the yet-to-be-realized self can shine. It can be a kind of protection. In one of his notebooks, Steiner wrote, “Black = Freedom.”

1 Faber Birren, *Color and Human Response* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1978), p. 66.

2 Rudolf Steiner, *Color* (London: Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, 1935), p. 21.

3 *Ibid.*



Figure 1a-b. Curative educator Joep Eikenboom points out that “Black can indicate that the child perceives areas in his physical body that he needs to work on... A teacher can notice the use of this color and can observe whether the work she is doing with that child is bearing fruit.”

As an “image of the lifeless,” black is related to the inanimate mineral kingdom and the carbon-based element to which the human being belongs. In us, the “dead” element is the solid, mineral nature of our bones and physical skeleton. If a child draws with black it may be an expression of the physical body’s hardening process. Curative educator Joep Eikenboom notes: “Black can indicate that the child perceives areas in his physical body that he needs to work on, which he has not yet penetrated sufficiently... A teacher can notice the use of this color and can observe whether the work she is doing with that child is bearing fruit. After a while the use of the black crayon will disappear. Children will then be able to apply black in the right proportions and in the right place (for instance, a black cat, crow, or chimney).”⁴ The late Audrey McAllen, founder of the

Extra Lesson work in British Waldorf schools, was quite clear that black was an important color to allow children to use. From her many years as hands-on learning support and of special education work, she stressed the need for exposure to all of the colors, including black.⁵

Black is important to the child’s color palette of experience just as the witch in the fairy tale is necessary to the further development of the other characters and the outcome of the entire story. Without the witch no transformation would take place in the story. The lessons to be taught by black as a color are too important to be excluded from use by the child. Although the restricting of black during the first seven year period of the child’s life may be considered an appropriate choice by parents and kindergarten teachers under certain circumstances, the limiting of this and any other color from children after the onset of first grade (and the change of dentition) should be carefully considered by teachers and parents. The black crayon and colored pencil should certainly be a part of the first grader’s drawing kit in order to provide the whole story of color. In painting one may wish to wait for a later stage of development, after the 10th year, before introducing a premixed black to the watercolor medium. But the complete and permanent removal of the color black from the child’s range of available colors would be the real Waldorf misunderstanding.

Chalkboard Drawings

It is in the first grade that the teacher has an opportunity to help guide a further unfolding and refinement of the child’s learning skills, drawing and painting included. One area where this takes place is with the teacher’s chalkboard drawings, seen by the child every day at the front of the classroom. Oral lessons and story telling presented by the teacher are complemented with colorful visual images provided regularly on the classroom blackboard. In this way, what is practiced is an oral and visual teaching that follows an approach described by Rudolf Steiner as musical (audible) and sculptural (pictorial).

Over the past century, another Waldorf misunderstanding has evolved in connection with the class teacher’s practice of retreating into her classroom every Sunday evening and drawing a beautiful, finished picture on the blackboard to awe the students with the next day. Many hours are often spent on these dazzling renderings of fairy tales, legends, historical events and natural phenomena. However, Steiner warned that presenting finished pictures and concepts can act as a “lead

4 Joep Eikenboom, “Qualities of Colors that Appear when Working with Extra Lesson Exercises,” in *Reading Children’s Drawings: The Person, House and Tree Motif* (Fair Oaks, California: Rudolf Steiner College Press, 2004), p. 68.

5 From a personal conversation between the author and Audrey McAllen (1998) at the Rudolf Steiner Institute (Thomas College), Waterville, Maine.

weight” in the soul of a young child. Drawing in front of the students is actually a far more helpful practice and a much greater learning experience for the children.



Figure 2a. Rudolf Steiner suggested: “As much as possible allow the children to see the drawing proceeding from the moment—allow them to see each stroke as it is born.”

This latter approach is what Dr. Steiner suggested in a lecture of 1923:

I have made drawings before your eyes that arose wholly out of each moment. You could see what I meant by every stroke. You could think along with me without any mediation. This is another thing to be included in teaching of children today. As far as possible avoid finished drawings. As much as possible allow the children to see the drawing proceeding from the moment—allow them to see each stroke as it is born. In this way, the child becomes inwardly involved in the work and we encourage them to become inwardly active... What matters is to lead the children to independence.⁶

By observing the gradual development of a drawing before one’s eyes, a stronger level of engagement takes place than is possible when one is just looking at a finished picture. A deeper learning experience occurs by taking part in the unfolding of the image-event. Too finished a picture can bring about the danger of discouraging some children when it comes time for them to draw the awesome picture they see on the blackboard. Practical and simple visual steps performed before the child can be the most helpful way to lead students into drawing or painting a picture, just as a step-by-step

teaching of math, writing, reading or any other subject is taught.

Chalkboard drawings appear to emerge from the mysterious night-like darkness of the blackboard as colorful star-like-pictures shining into the classroom. One might imagine the origins of oral tradition taking place around the magical setting of a campfire, under the dark backdrop of the star-strewn night sky. The imaginative tales, woven in and out of these storied pictures, telling of great deeds that illustrate the original myths, legends and historic tales of humanity are brought into visual-pictorial form on the classroom blackboard. But like any good telling of a story the drawn picture should be experienced by the child as taking place stage-by-stage over time with a beginning, middle, and conclusion so as not to become another Waldorf misunderstanding.

Slant-line Drawing

The diagonal stroke or slant-line drawing technique, often referred to as shaded drawing, was introduced into the first Waldorf high school as a valuable technique for the developing adolescent. However, this approach to drawing has over the years been brought down into the elementary grades for drawing with younger children.

The diagonal stroke drawing is directed from the upper right to the lower left, always in parallel, thin, thick, short and long strokes. It allows a *breathing* through the form and a drawing against the form, and is completely free from boundaries created by linear edges as in contour drawing. The Russian artist Assia Turgeniev, together with Rudolf Steiner, consciously took up this method as a way to express the potentials of the art of black and white drawing and also as an etching technique for colored glass.

Although this technique was brought into the early grades of many Waldorf schools, it was intended as most appropriate for the high school-aged student and not the younger child. Max Wolfhügel, the first specialist art teacher in the first Waldorf school in Germany, said that this drawing technique was “introduced in the main lesson as an exercise for Class 9,” and was used in the high school grades, “following Rudolf Steiner’s indication on the diagonal direction of the strokes.”⁷

Steiner said of this technique: “The stroke should not follow the contours of the form; [the stroke] must have little to do with it... You must learn to shade quite independently of the form... otherwise they become

6 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture given June 22, 1922, cited in Rinder, *Knowledge of Higher Worlds: Rudolf Steiner’s Blackboard Drawings* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), p. 23.

7 Max Wolfhügel, *Erziehungskunst*, May/June, 1952. Cited in Michael Martin, *Educating Through Arts and Craft: An Integrated Approach to Craft Work in Steiner Waldorf Schools* (Steiner Waldorf Education, 1999), p. 142.

[contour] lines. And in art the line is an untruth. You may, of course, use the line for constructing a drawing, but no more than an architect uses a scaffolding to build a house. When the house is finished the scaffolding is taken away. In the same way the line should only be your starting point, and when the drawing is finished every trace of outline must have disappeared.”⁸ This is not an easy directive for trained artists to follow, let alone for high school students. To dismiss the spontaneous gesture of contour drawing defies the way we think about our hard-edged reality; it challenges our way of separating ourselves from a direct experience of the actual phenomena. But the line, having only length and no width, is only a concept, not a physical reality. Because of this it is an age-appropriate drawing technique and learning experience for the adolescent.



Figure 3a-b. Here are examples of slant-line, shaded drawings by a 9th grader (portrait) and an 11th grader (landscape).

The artist Assia Turgeniev addressed the contrast of working with black-and-white shaded drawing: “If anyone tries to feel this duality in himself, and to analyse it, he becomes aware that the left half of his body is more related to the expanding forces, and the right half to the forces of contracting. The inner gesture which sets up a relationship to these two forces—the gesture of a living, mobile equipoise—reveals in man himself the diagonal direction from the top left-hand to the bottom right-hand side.”⁹ Thus, according to Turgeniev, we place this stroke outside of us in a mirrored diagonal direction that our own organization resonates with. In its counter action the slant-line stroke acts as an incarnating activity, a powerful method of drawing appropriate to the post-puberty adolescent.

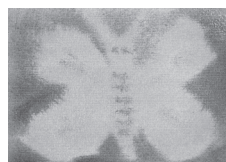
Here again, a careful consideration of when to introduce the various drawing techniques (contour outline drawing, pointillism, crosshatching and the diagonal stroke drawing) can prevent us from engaging in a Waldorf misunderstanding.

Painting in the Early Grades

Something that I have observed in many Waldorf schools is the lack of form in wet-on-wet watercolor paintings in the first three grades. The overly wet and formless kindergarten-like use of color should easily move to greater articulation of shape in first grade. Proper instruction in blotting wetted paper and wiping the dipped brush on the edge of the paint jar to get excess fluid out of bristles are essential factors for this. But the introduction of elementary figurative pictures is also important.

“Right from the start,” says Steiner, “we give our young pupils the opportunity of working artistically with colors, not only with dry crayons but also with watercolors. In this simple way, we give the child something from which the forms of the letters can be developed.”¹⁰ This description is pretty clear that first grade painting should be the starting point for pictures that will take on distinct forms. “When introducing writing to the children we must communicate in the form of pictures. This is possible, however, only when we do not begin by introducing the alphabet directly, or reading as a subject, but when we start with painting. As teachers, we ourselves must be able to live in a world of imagery... First a form of drawing with paint (leading the child from color experience to form), out of which writing is evolved. Only then do we introduce reading... One finds that between the second dentition and puberty one has to approach all teaching pictorially and imaginatively, and this is certainly possible.”¹¹

For instance, perhaps we tell a story about a *big, beautifully bright butterfly* (step 1). Guided by their teacher, the children then bring color to their pages (step 2), painting simple growing and changing forms that ultimately arrive at a big, beautifully bright butterfly shape, the wings of which suggest the letter B (fig. 4a-b). The butterfly is then drawn with crayon into a lesson book (step 3) and the letter B is written (step 4) alongside the picture as part of the story. Eventually, the children write-out the little story (step 5) and read their own writing aloud (step 6) to complete a cycle that goes from oral story to painting, drawing, writing, reading, and retelling of the story.



8 Rudolf Steiner, cited in Anna Turgeniev, *The Goetheanum Windows* (London: Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, 1938), p. 10.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

10 Rudolf Steiner, *What is Waldorf Education?* (New York: SteinerBooks, 2003), p. 75.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 111.



Fig. 4a-b. Painting the letters of the alphabet in first grade can start from a brief story that is then painted, then drawn. From the picture a letter is abstracted out and written down in story form and then read by the child.

Rudolf Steiner gave several letter-pictures as examples of this process, including: B for bear, F for fish, and M for mouth. However, he encouraged teachers to make up their own picture-to-letter figures, saying they needn't be anthropologically factual but should be original in order to be fully alive and connect directly to the children. "Don't rely on what other people have done in the past. Set your own free but controlled imagination to work, and have faith in what you find out for yourself..."¹² Further: "It will always give you joy, albeit a quiet joy, to transfer to a letter the shape you have yourself made out of some animal or plant. And this joy that you yourself have will live in what you make out of your pupil."¹³ We should not underestimate the powerful effect that the teacher's own pictorial imagination and originality can have on the student.

The point here is that the painting of plants and animals, even if quite simple in shape, is clearly indicated for use in the early grades. Yet many teachers continue to direct their children to remain in formless, swimming colors. I have encountered Waldorf teacher training professionals who have told their student teachers to just skip the painting of letter-pictures and other forms in painting and continue formless pictures throughout the first three grades. So Waldorf misunderstandings can be on various levels, from parents' misunderstandings, to teachers' misunderstandings, to even teacher trainer misunderstandings.

Abstract concepts and symbols such as numbers and letters are best brought to the child first by way of practical, concrete learning and an artistic, creative process. This is because one can best reach the child

by educating through the will and feeling life, which in turn informs a naturally developing thinking process. In early childhood, thinking is virtually untouched by means of a direct approach to the intellect by way of rote learning and memorization. Only by instructing the will, engaging the limbs by way of rhythmic activity, and activating the feeling life, by way of enthusiasm and pictorial imagination, can one stimulate the child to awaken his or her own thinking. "We shall allow writing to arise gradually out of painting and drawing. Step by step the forms of writing will arise out of the forms of our drawings, and then we shall move on to reading," Steiner said in a lecture to English educators.¹⁴

The above examples are just a few of the misunderstandings that overlook or misinterpret the unique power of art, the language of color and form and the timeliness of certain teaching methods and artistic techniques. As a teaching artist in a Waldorf school, I have encountered these misunderstandings numerous times and regularly seek to correct them. They demonstrate how the sources of Waldorf education need to be continually researched and regularly reviewed, relearned and even revised in some cases if we are not to lose many of the significant gems of this educational movement.

In conclusion, to avoid Waldorf misunderstandings:

1. Think twice about excluding the black witch from the banquet of color choices.
2. Reconsider presenting finished pictures and ideas.
3. Let the materials and techniques be appropriate to the age, place and occasion.
4. Return to the source whenever possible and be especially attentive to the needs of the child.

Van James is a Hawai'i-based artist, author and educator. He teaches painting, drawing and the history of art at the Honolulu Waldorf School and is a regular guest instructor at colleges and training centers throughout Asia, Oceania, and America. He is chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i, editor of *Pacifica Journal*, and award-winning author of numerous books on art and culture including *Spirit and Art*, *The Secret Language of Form*, and *Drawing with Hand, Head and Heart*.

¹² Rudolf Steiner, *Discussions with Teachers* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1967), p. 22.

¹³ Rudolf Steiner, *The Kingdom of Childhood* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964), p. 37.

¹⁴ Rudolf Steiner, *What is Waldorf Education?*, p. 112.

Report from the Research Institute for Waldorf Education and Waldorf Publications

Patrice Maynard

Director of Publications and Development

The Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE) is sponsoring “September: Screens Off Because School’s On” Month — a screen-free month — in collaboration with the Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood as well as with Victoria Duncckley, M.D., Richard Freed, M.D., Red Hook Middle School, and others. Join us by simply emailing patrice@waldorf-research.org, and we will keep everyone posted on who will try this school-prep screen fast as teachers and students get to know each other in the new school year before inserting a screen between them.

Also underway is research on parents of Waldorf school students and graduates, following on the Survey of Waldorf High School Graduates, 1990-2017. The purpose of the parent survey is to discover how parents found Waldorf education and to give voice to their reflections on how Waldorf education influenced their style and practices. The survey is also intended to give parents a place to share their observations of their children’s learning practices in school and after graduation, as well as their recommendations for the future of Waldorf schools. The plan is to launch the parent survey once the results of the graduate survey are published.

This latter survey, based on responses from over a thousand Waldorf graduates spanning the most recent 25 years, is now in production and will appear shortly as we enter the hundredth year of Waldorf education. For the first time, analysis of these responses will be twinned with comparable statistics from other independent high schools, thanks to a newly-formed collaboration between RIWE and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Already we begin to see how Waldorf graduates line up with students from other American independent schools — and, perhaps more interestingly, where they diverge. Results of this latest survey will appear both in book form and on the websites of the Research Institute.

At this writing RIWE is preparing its fifth colloquium devoted to the investigation of technology and its rightful place in education. This year’s focus will be on the connection between technology and the world of nature — especially of animals. The recent publication of

Wolfgang Schad’s *Understanding Mammals*—a greatly expanded edition in English of his celebrated original, *Man and Mammal*, in the 1970s—and of Douglas Sloan’s masterful *The Redemption of the Animals*, sparked this focus. Craig and Henrike Holdrege from the Nature Institute will be our colloquium guides for this year’s efforts. RIWE’s international board will be enhanced with individuals connected to this topic.

From the busy offices of RIWE’s Waldorf Publications, Betty Staley’s new book *Tending the Spark: Lighting the Future for Middle School Students*, along with Frederick Amrine’s *Kicking Away the Ladder: The Philosophical Roots of Waldorf Education* and a new edition of *A Phenomena-Based Physics, Volume II, Grade 7*, will be on their way soon to AWSNA member schools. The next round of books will include several landmark additions to the Waldorf100 celebrations, including *Emil & Berta: The Origins of the Waldorf School Movement* by Sophia Christine Murphy; Nana Göbel’s monumental history of *The Waldorf Schools and Their People, Worldwide* being translated by Jan Kees Saltet; *Parsifal: A Forerunner of Modern Man*, by Sonia Setzer; and *Exploring Shapes Creatively through Pure Form Modeling* by Arthur Auer.

Douglas Gerwin, RIWE’s Executive Director, was the keynote speaker at a conference this spring on the future of Waldorf education sponsored by the Franz E. Winkler Center for Adult Learning in Garden City, NY, a RIWE supporting member. Later in the spring he was traveling to Edinburgh for the twice-yearly meeting of the International Forum for Waldorf/Steiner Education. Meanwhile, Patrice Maynard, RIWE’s Director of Publications and Development, flew to Shenzhen, China, to meet with AngelOnline, a company devoted to reaching as many as possible interested in new ideas for parenting and education. This collaboration will benefit both the Chinese offerings on RIWE’s Online Waldorf Library (OWL) and AngelOnline resources in China. This material joins a growing repertoire of materials available on the OWL in foreign languages, primarily in Spanish.



Report from the Online Waldorf Library

Marianne Alsop
OWL site Administrator

The Online Waldorf Library continues to be a positive and effective resource for those interested in Waldorf education in countries all over the world. Our 2018 data indicates 198,500 visitors to the OWL. Although site visits from English-speaking countries predominate, Spanish-speaking site visitors are on the increase. Interestingly, in 2018 the OWL saw the same number of site visits from Kenya as from Switzerland... 393 visits from each country! Djibouti accounted for just one site visitor and the United States for 47,000.

We are fortunate to be able to offer an ever-expanding number of eBooks, available in PDF format, which can be accessed by downloading free software from Adobe Reader.

eBooks added since the Fall of 2018, in English, include:

- *Dancing Hand—Trotting Pony* by Wilma Ellersiek
- *Research Institute for Waldorf Education issue on Technology*
- *The World of Fairy Tales* by Daniel Udo de Haas
- *Walking with Our Children* by Nancy Blanning
- *The Mood of the Fifth*, edited by Nancy Foster
- *Merrily We Sing* by Ilian Willwerth
- *Toymaking* by Gun Lee Blue
- *Love as the Source of Education: The Life Work of Helmut von Kügelgen*, edited by Susan Howard

eBooks added in Spanish include:

- *Creando un Círculo de Liderazgo Espiritual Colaborativo*, edited by Roberto Trostli
- *El Desarrollo infantil Los primeros siete años*, WECAN, Gateways Series #3
- *Una bienvenida cálida y apacible: Niños de cero a tres años*, WECAN, Gateways Series #5

New articles in Spanish are posted every month and can be accessed from the Home page and clicking on *Artículos en Español*.

As always, back issues of the *Research Bulletin*, *Gateways* (Waldorf Early Childhood Assn.), *Pedagogical Section/Rundbrief* and a number of other international publications are available online in our Journals section.

The Online Waldorf Library welcomes your questions and we are happy to help you with your research projects.

**Visit the Online Waldorf Library at
www.waldorflibrary.org**

About the Research Institute for Waldorf Education



The Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE), founded in 1996 in order to deepen and enhance the quality of Waldorf education, engages in sustained dialogue with the wider educational-cultural community and supports research to serve a wide range of educators in their work with children and adolescents.

The Research Institute supports projects dealing with essential contemporary educational issues such as computers and the effects of media on children, alternatives to standardized testing, physical health and psychological well-being of students, science teaching with a phenomenological approach, the role of the arts in education, and the philosophical underpinnings of Waldorf education.

As a sponsor of colloquia and conferences, the Research Institute brings together educators, psychologists, physicians, and social scientists for discussions on current issues related to education. RIWE publishes a *Research Bulletin* twice a year and prepares educational resources, including collections of eBooks and articles (a growing number of them newly translated into Spanish). Many of these publications are available without charge on the website of the Online Waldorf Library (OWL), a virtual library created and managed by the Research Institute: www.waldorflibrary.org.

In 2013 the Research Institute took over the publications arm of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and re-branded it as Waldorf Publications. It includes resources for teachers and administrators, readers and children's books, collections of plays and poetry, science materials and kits, science and math newsletters, inspirational essays, proceedings of colloquia, and a range of publicity materials about Waldorf education. It also carries books published by the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN) and the Pedagogical Section Council (PSC) of the School for Spiritual Science, as well as AWSNA's twice-yearly magazine *Renewal*.

As an initiative working on behalf of the Waldorf movement, the Research Institute receives support and guidance from the PSC and financial support through the following organizations:

- Astoria-Stiftung
- Foundation for Rudolf Steiner Books
- Freunde der Erziehungskunst
- Rudolf Steiner Charitable Trust
- Sprout Foundation
- Waldorf Curriculum Fund
- Waldorf Educational Foundation
- The Waldorf Schools Fund

The Research Institute is a tax-exempt organization and accepts contributions through its annual giving campaign and special appeals.

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A think tank for questions of freedom in education

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