

*The Prisoner's Kiss*  
**Literacy's Journey in a Waldorf High School**  
 by  
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The good news is that Waldorf high school graduates are educated well enough to enter colleges of their choice and do well in them. The recent release of the *Survey of Waldorf Graduates Phase II* answers the question that has challenged Waldorf pedagogy in the United States from its inception eighty plus years ago. "Yes, we can deliver."

In part because of that success, we stand at a threshold. We know that Waldorf education can do what is expected of it by the outside world. Now what? Do we need to keep perfecting it as a vehicle for entry into mainstream educational institutions? I think not. We don't want success to be the cause of failure on a deeper level. In the closing address of the Christmas Conference, "On the Right Entry into the Spiritual World: The Responsibility Incumbent on Us," Rudolf Steiner clearly places this 'outside world' in perspective. He says,

. . . if human civilization were to remain for a long time under the influence of what can be taken in in schools by way of what is traditionally passed down by civilization, then sleep would become ordinary life. Human souls would pass through the portal of death into the spiritual world and then be incapable of bringing any strength of ideas with them into their new life on earth. For though you can enter the spiritual world with today's thoughts, you then cannot leave it with them. You can only leave it in a state of soul paralysis.

You see, present-day civilization can be founded on the kind of cultural life that has been nurtured for so long. But life cannot be founded on it. (254)

Waldorf education, as we all know, was meant to be a renewal of cultural life. That is our task.

Obviously, we do very creative work in our classrooms, especially when our teaching is impelled by the anthroposophical point of view: those students who sit in front of us are spiritual beings who need guidance to incarnate into themselves and into their society properly at this age. It is this vision, this concept and its implementation, which can protect us from sharing the baleful fate of other pedagogies that run the risk of becoming vehicles for the demise of spirituality and, consequently, civilization itself.

It is a vision, though, which we need to augment with deeper insights into our own living principles. With every passing year, children are less receptive to what we offer, parents are better informed than we are about alternative pedagogies that are more or less compatible with what we offer, and the times we live in are more dismissive of our principles and assumptions. The Grand Inquisitor himself must be surprised at how widely accepted his rejection of the true Spirit in favor of a 'supply-side' dogma has

become in the century that has passed since Dostoyevsky identified him in *The Brothers Karamazov*. The number of children with special needs increases, as does the pressure we feel to work effectively with them. Even ten years ago, the “No Child Left Behind” legislation would have been unthinkable as a national program; now it is the vanguard of those forces of test-score-based accountability and economic reliability leading the assault on any educational program that values qualitative work with children. It is the law of the land.

I am convinced that standing at the threshold as we are we have the opportunity to work through the curriculum, which conveys our vision, with the confidence that success brings. We no longer need to keep perfecting it as a vehicle for entry into mainstream educational institutions: we need not strive to prove ourselves; rather, we need now to advance our own appreciation and understanding of anthroposophical pedagogy in order to strengthen our teaching. In this way, we can counter the social, ‘civilization’ forces—represented even as the law of the land—that try to mitigate the strength and breadth of our vision.

*The Prisoner’s Kiss* is an attempt to augment the usual way of teaching literacy with principles of anthroposophical pedagogy that allow us as teachers to speak more directly and formatively to the students before us. Our vision of the whole child will serve as our principle guide.

This short look at literacy’s journey in a Waldorf high school is meant to be illustrative, not comprehensive. In order to picture literacy as it emerges from the curriculum, I begin with an overview of archetypal concerns. I focus attention on those elements that are the domain of all humanities teachers, especially teachers of writing and literature: *Reading Comprehension*, *Writing*, *Grammar*, *Reading* (by which I mean reading out loud), and *Research*. I have included the category of *Thinking*, which, though hardly ever mentioned as an element of literacy in training programs, should also find its rightful place in our high school teaching. After noting these elements, I show how I have worked with them. All the anecdotes refer to what has actually occurred in a classroom, though the descriptions in the monograph may sometimes sound more cerebral and transparent than were the experiences.

Though there are many ‘bridges’ between the archetypal and the anecdotal, I chose for this monograph to use the four different questions traditionally associated with the high school grades: “what” in grade 9, “how” in grade 10, “why” in grade 11, and “who” in grade 12. Their importance as more than merely rhetorical devices will become evident in the course of the narrative. Let me assert from the start, though, that the more carefully and consciously we use these visionary questions the more we can extend our appreciation of literature, learning to see it created ‘from the inside’ as it were. We will also see how they can help us revise our ‘trained thoughts’ about literature and move us beyond the important literary observation—“there are only two stories in the whole of literature: the love story and the journey”—to the more essential realization that “there is only one theme in the whole of life: I and the world.” The former is an astral concern; the latter one challenges the ego. The former, however innocently or inadvertently, mandates

repetition; the latter expects change. The Grand Inquisitor, who is still among us in one guise or other, is definitely not happy with this insight about the ego.

Much of what is presented in this monograph I have shared with other humanities teachers over the years and have not met with any degree of opposition that would lead me to change my mind, though I am grateful for the many comments have helped me to refine my thinking. I have read the two ASWNA publications most closely related to this work, *Colloquium on English* and *Colloquium on History* and find myself co-existing with the tenets and thoughts expressed therein by my peers.

A word on pronouns: it is symptomatic of our times that pronouns become more prominent and problematic in our narratives. In this text, I will use ‘we’ when referring not only to teachers as a somewhat homogenous group but also to the classroom constellation of teacher and students; I will use ‘I’ when presenting something which is more personal as an assertion, practice, idea, etc; I will refer to a teacher as ‘he’ and a student as ‘she’ when I do not refer to them in the plural. Generic authors and other artists—if you can imagine such creatures—I will refer to as ‘she.’ When I speak directly to you the reader I will use ‘you.’

## GRADE 9

We treat nature around us as real because it impinges on our senses in some obvious and overt manner. Its presence is assured by the space it occupies. We consider human nature to be real for the same reasons. This essential, obvious presence is the “What” of life and literature.

### *Reading Comprehension*

- we concentrate on the ‘physical body’ of a text: setting, story line, and all elements that give a feeling for place;
- we seek out new vocabulary the same way we seek out new sense experiences.

### *Writing*

- we insist that the students write many short paragraphs rather than long essays. (This is not only healthier but also assures us that they will write long paragraphs which convey their interest and enthusiasm);
- we emphasize at least five different paragraph forms: (usually) personal narrative, personal experience, description, process, and journal (which neatly combines the previous four). These paragraphs are the ‘body paragraphs’ of an expository essay developed completely in grade 10;
- paragraphs are rewritten until they satisfy the requirements of the form;
- paired and/or class editing and *rewriting* are emphasized;
- book reports are written to convey useful information; they are characterized by facts and conclusions rather than the student’s like or dislike of the text;
- we work up the outline for longer essays (without writing more than one paragraph of them);

- students are challenged to paint in words.

### *Grammar*

- we begin with the parts of speech and review them until the students are comfortable: that is, until they remember and have a feel not only for the differences among the parts of speech but also for the distinctions made *within* each specific kind, e.g., different kinds of nouns, tenses of verbs, etc. Students' answers can be wrong;
- we use parts of speech in the sentence. I try to train the students' thinking by having them carefully attend to what is happening in a sentence, e.g. a noun is no longer designated a noun but rather a subject, a direct object, etc. First they notice, then they replicate, then they create. Here the emphasis is not on what is right or wrong but rather on what one can actually do and say when actively involved in writing. Eventually, they become conscious of how every word is used in a sentence;
- we point out from time to time that the choice an author makes when using words and creating sentences/feelings is what we call style.

### *Reading*

- students read out loud in class their own written paragraphs, selections from novels, short stories, newspaper articles, et al. They need to be heard by others;
- selections are almost always best read twice, first to introduce the material to the class and second to let them follow along in their thinking;
- students learn tact when they critique orally the work read by their peers.

### *Research*

- we teach and demand the use of quotations, indirect and direct, when they are cited within the text;
- I reject research papers at this stage.

### *Thinking*

- we insist that the students pay attention to the phenomenon, however idealistic they are;
- we train their inductive powers by emphasizing 'literal' postures, often balancing left-brain and right-brain postures.

### *Reading Comprehension*

I am very fond of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. I prefer to teach it in grade 9 so that I can refer to it in later grades. It is, for one thing, an American classic, and I think it is important for students to know that there is such a thing as a classic. Our discussions of it lay the groundwork in their feelings for a better, more exact comprehension of what a classic is later in their reading careers. For most of them, this articulated comprehension comes only after high school, which is fine with me. No teacher should be surprised that adolescents enjoy a story about adolescents.

Let me stay in the future for a moment. I think it is important, critically so, to point out that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* can act as a fine balance to *The Mysterious*

*Stranger*, which was published posthumously in 1916. Twain's characteristic cynicism, which in his early works was fueled by an accurate observation of human nature and which 'supports' the wickedly-funny insights delivered in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is personified in the mysterious stranger, the angel, named Satan, who expresses endless contempt for human beings. It is its sense of superiority, fueled by a "Moral Sense", which infuriates the Angel throughout the short story. This angel generates only death, destruction, and mayhem with its superior talents and unflinching intellectual accuracy. It is a very difficult short story to read. Since it was published posthumously, it can even be savored as one final Twainian punch-line.

Perhaps, a student's dismay over the immense cynicism that lies at the heart of *The Mysterious Stranger* would be mitigated were she able to recall the innocence of Huck Finn and the archetypal idealism of the novel, particularly evidenced in its structure; were she able to say to herself, inwardly: "I knew him when...." Perhaps it would even spur her on to consider the notion that Mark Twain wrote *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Samuel Clemens wrote *The Mysterious Stranger*. Such an insight, merely mentioned by Ken Burns in his documentary *Mark Twain*, needs to be thoroughly explored if we citizens of the world are to expand our appreciation of the constructive and destructive forces that welled up in Nineteenth-Century America. They continue to influence the actions not only of the United States but also the world to this day.

There are forty-three chapters in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. I teach the novel in skills class over a span of about five weeks. Every night the students read two chapters; on weekends they read four. They write a commentary on each chapter. I used to devise, for other novels, different 'directed reading' guidelines for each evening. I was always tired. Now I use the same directed reading for every chapter. The questions are printed on a blue sheet. In the end, each student will have worked on forty-three blue sheets and turned them in as a 'book.' I am not nearly as tired, despite the fact that the students actually turn in more work than before.

The blue sheet poses the following 'questions' in this order:

1. What happens?
2. Where does the action take place?
3. Important incidents or ideas.
4. Favorite sentence(s).
5. Comments.

The first two questions direct the students' attention to what I think needs to be emphasized in grade 9: the literal and the spatial. The first deals with the story line which, technically, is a recounting of everything that happens in the chapter. I left only a small space for the response to this question, but that never deterred those who needed to be exact and comprehensive in their renderings. Not being able to use the other side of the sheet (because I used both sides) they found ingenious ways to crowd out the other

responses. As I insisted on neatness, these students eventually became more civil in their squatting. Others, naturally enough, finished their commentary with plenty of space to spare. We all know that it is one of our tasks to teach our charges how to balance what needs to be said with what can be said. I found that I interacted very often with some students who needed the full forty-three ‘sessions’ to begin either to write less or to write more in a conscious and responsible manner. Since they had to overcome something deeply ingrained in their soul constitutions, I felt they were healthier for the effort. I was too.

The third question lets them have their say. Some begin to track those parts of the story that we would call themes. I find this activity especially beneficial when they note how Mark Twain establishes (grounds) the themes in his narrative. Symbols make their appearance on the scene, which the students array somewhat haphazardly without any real appreciation of their complexity. They are expressions of received wisdom or parental comments. I value them as such.

The fourth question introduces and insists upon correct use of quotation marks and citation. I teach them the use of the ellipsis.

The fifth insists that they have a relationship to the text.

What happens? I take the work she does on the first eight chapters at face value. I collect the sheets on Friday and look them over at the weekend. The first weekend I find the following: many students don’t write in complete sentences (despite oral instructions to do so), many think a general location for #2 is adequate, many ignore quotation marks and pagination in noting their favorite sentence in #4; many think ‘no comment’ is a comment for #5. Some are quite content to leave a blank, for some unexpressed reason.

First thing Monday I disabuse them of their assumptions. We begin to construct good reading habits. First, though, I tell them very emphatically that I do not want them to make any corrections in work they have completed. What’s done is done; there will be ample time to make necessary adjustments and corrections as we work through the remaining thirty-five chapters. (Blanks they *do* need to fill in, for that was not work completed.) I tell them just as emphatically that I do not want them to repeat any of their mistakes. Some students don’t hear either emphatic statement, but most do catch the first one.

During the following weeks we have many discussions about the novel which go beyond the ‘limits’ of the blue sheets: some days we concern ourselves with character, some days we venture into themes, symbols, even style. Since I like to ‘go’ where the students lead, I seldom discourage these conversations; however, I do ground them—the students and consequently the conversations—in the text and the literal. I probably say “What?” at least ten times every class.

Early on I find that the ‘n- word’ (nigger) offends them greatly. Invariably, their reaction emerges in response to #3. Because of the intensity of their reaction, we deal not only with the essential theme of slavery but also the social implications of the word today,

including the fact that the novel is still excluded from certain libraries and school curricula. We cover current events. Students remind themselves of the history they have learned either in elementary school or through their own interests. As they concern themselves with the ‘content’ of the discussions by getting their facts right, I work hard to model a mature response that neither denigrates their concern nor grants any long-term value to their resentful emotional reactions or their tendency to condemn some historical ‘them’ as culprits. Invariably, I find some way to speak about what I call “I and the world.” In grade 9 I rarely do more than introduce the theme; I let the students define it as they can. Even when they create their own societies in the history block I teach on *Idealism and Humanity* I don’t use the polarity in more than a structural way. I am always surprised how often I must mention the polarity in order to alert some students to its existence. (I think in the past—ten years or so—students were instinctively more receptive to this idea than they are now.)

Though the blue sheets do not change, my expectations do. My firmest expectation is that each student improves her work from one sheet to the next. There is no excuse for not improving. The only free-pass was for the first week’s work. There are always the hasty ones who can’t find the means to write down the proper pagination for their quotation. These, not unexpectedly, are the ones who have to redo that ‘question’ for credit. There is always a contest to find the shortest sentence to quote. The dubious joy of that soon pales. With the passing of time and the accumulation of information and insights into *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the students’ comments need to become true comments redolent of interest or at least understanding. The very best comments are, sooner or later, indicative of a personal reaction to the novel. Often I find a student will wonder about the possible futures, the ‘fate,’ of certain characters. I take this to be a sign that, in time, she will have subtle insights into a writer’s style: she is, after all, doing the work of the writer, who also needs to wonder about the lives of characters in heads other than her own. I tell the student that, in class, out loud. As much for the other students to hear as for herself.

The most difficult question to answer is the second. It seems so innocent; yet, it can only be satisfactorily handled when the student doesn’t think she is answering a question! She has to say to herself, quite consciously, “I am not answering this as if I were doing a math problem. Actually, I am simply stating in an interesting sentence the specifics of locale which are important for the narrative.” After the first week, I do not accept “the action happens . . .” or “the location for Huck’s clever action . . .” or any other variation that suggests an answer is forthcoming. I am particularly ferocious on this point; of course, some students resent this task immensely, which always allows for fun and fireworks. It is especially these students who need to feel (not just resentfully admit) that location/setting/climate etc. actually play an essential role in all literature since they ground the work and allow all else to occur. In order to answer this ‘question,’ she must first erase it as a question from her mind; she will then, because of that activity, look at the events slightly differently: she soon reaches a place of equipoise, of objectivity, which allows her to write something like, “The Mississippi, which keeps rolling along, often enough provides refuge in the shape of islands and danger in the form of sand bars.” Some students take all five weeks to express location as being important in its own right; it is that difficult.

At the same time, many discover in the third week or so that if they make their statement(s) about location first, then their comments about the story line, #1, need not be redundant. They have no need to repeat themselves. Thus, the storyline assumes an interesting vitality of its own. She, the student who is learning selectivity, will almost inevitably begin to note only the essential elements of the storyline, regardless of how capable she is of remembering absolutely everything that happens in the chapter.

The chapters live quite differently in the imaginations of the students when the questions metamorphose into vital pictures that they build up from what they have read. Questions #1 and #2 encourage picture making.

The daily reading and writing can become tedious, especially for the writers in the class. What do I do? I introduce the 'yellow sheet.' I show the students as a class how to transform the information they have used for their blue-sheet work into a well-written paragraph which covers the same topic. The introductory sentence often can be found in the most important incident, #3, or the comment, #5. The body of the paragraph exists in some form in the story, #1, and/or location, #2. There is, by definition, a need to make a clear citation, #4.

Interestingly enough, few students turn in even one yellow sheet. I simply make it available to them and they ignore it.

I can't imagine what would happen if we used *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as an opportunity to teach vocabulary. Best to use other novels and written material for that end. I certainly do need to be more attentive to the building of vocabulary. Context clues should not be the only way of discovering the meaning of words; there are books which help one do just that, and we should encourage their use. I sin most often in assuming that students can 'read for meaning' the history handouts or primary source material that I give them. Some texts lend themselves to vocabulary-building; *And There Was Light* by Jacques Lusseyran is quite serviceable in this regard (and for many other reasons as well, of course).

### *Writing*

These reading comprehension exercises are well suited to help the ninth grade students improve their writing. Directed reading by definition creates a call for intense focus, at least on some level; the imaginations they create for themselves as they learn how to deal with location demand precise and/or imaginative articulation. Writing style is the handmaiden of attentive reading.

I see no value in writing long essays at this grade level. Let me categorically state, in fact, that I find them harmful. If a student wants to write a lot, let her. But assign only that which can be rewritten well and often. I receive very few paragraphs that cannot be improved grammatically, contextually, or conceptually through rewriting. I receive no paragraphs that cannot be fruitfully revamped from a different point of view. Students who make the journey of literacy work through more than cultural imperatives, they work through human nature. Rewriting forces each student to 'live' within her capacities,

firming them up or extending them. After all, most all mistakes or infelicities of style are structural. The point is that the students, not we the teachers, should make the corrections. We make suggestions. They need to have a working knowledge of their own human nature; let them effect change through writing.

Paragraph writing provides the foundation for the student's further work. Another foundation, the sentence, I construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct in grammar classes. Let us concentrate our efforts on introducing the students to different kinds of paragraph writing rather than wasting our energy and their time on concocting longer works of marginal import. Different demands are met with different paragraphs: sometimes we as writers need to describe an event, a place, sometimes a person who is mysterious or at least intriguing (personal narrative); stories need to be narrated, emotions need to be explored in very personal ways (personal experience); descriptions need to be made (descriptive); things need to be built, ideas need to be proved, arguments need to be waged, with and without acrimony (process); journals need to be kept (journal). I assign the journal at the end of the year; whenever possible I tie it to a class excursion. In a very interesting and 'literary' way it includes all other types of paragraphs. A journal paragraph—which actually consists of many paragraphs jotted down over a number of days—is usually more fun to write because of the illusion of freedom it creates in the writer: it doesn't really feel like a homework assignment. An author's style begins to peep out from the text. The journal is also very beneficial because the student is called upon to be accurate, reporting what is factual as well as personal, noting what she 'finds' important. Human nature and the nature around us merge quite nicely in these exercises.

How can a writer find her voice without using it? Leave the introductory and concluding paragraphs until grade 10: write body paragraphs. Then have her rewrite them until the assignment, not she, is satisfied. Be critical of its literal value. (There are other paragraph forms that can be used. Different classes have different needs. I have simply noted those I find most useful.)

One variation of the descriptive paragraph is noteworthy. I challenge the students to paint in words. I have found it very useful to have the students read a text closely and then form a very clear and precise image in their mind of something they found important or just simply liked. Usually they recall a significant image which they render in a realistic manner. Their task is then to describe the image in writing so completely that others in the class can render it as a drawing, having *heard* the description *read* to them. All students, from the least to the most literal, will find this a balancing exercise. It is most potent when we as teachers don't overly critique their work but rather allow them to live quietly with it. As they approach in their thinking the creativity of others, a sense of awe, indeed reverence, invariably arises. Overt criticism is simply out of place in this soul environment.

When I spring this writing exercise on the students they of course react with a variety of reasons indicating why such a task is impossible. Actually, I enjoy watching them work through their entire elementary school repertoire of excuses. I let them have their last glimpse of what they are leaving behind under my tutelage as a subject, not a class,

teacher. Everything having been said (for about ten lively minutes), they do the exercise. Right then. They write it well. They rewrite it even better.

I don't know about you, but I spend quite a bit of time and energy putting the students into situations in which the automatic "I can't" is proved to be patently wrong.

### *Grammar*

I use grammar to teach students how to think. Everything I do is driven toward that end. I play every day in class when I teach grammar.

I begin with a review of the parts of speech. With a bit of scheduling luck I can teach this during the first quarter of the school year. I want the students to feel the nature of the adverbs, verbs, et al; I also want them to remember what they feel. (I cannot pass this moment without providing an anecdote from my own teaching. My experience is that most students don't remember any grammar worth mentioning. They have some nouns floating around in their heads, but not much more. I used to worry about that. I was particularly perplexed when one group of ninth graders could not work through adverbs. I brought it to their attention, with perhaps less subtlety than the situation warranted. They responded to me, "Our class teacher never taught us that." There was a long pause, and then we heard one of them exclaim, "Oh, you were our class teacher." Indeed I had been.) There is a need for review. With the review of the parts of speech I want the students to make clear distinctions without losing their feeling attachment to what they know. I use all the distinctions that help us think about, or at least categorize, nouns; I emphasize adverbs for they always seem to be problematic later on; I amuse them with the notion that adjectives are comparable; I whip through interjections; I explore verbs only to the present, past, future, and perfect tenses; I join this, that, and the other thing with conjunctions, which I categorize, and prepositions, which I over-utilize.

When they are comfortable we move on to usage. I teach them to look at a sentence for its skeletal structure: find the verb first, then the subject by asking 'who' or 'what', and then locate the direct object, if there is one, by asking 'whom' or 'what'; *'who or what' verbs 'what or whom'* is their cognitive structure. I rely heavily on this cognitive structure.

The second-most important structure I use to support the students' work is the repetitive instructional pattern. I work first with the students' reading, then their writing. That is to say, we first find in sentences whatever it is we are looking for, then we write sentences that repeat, and eventually expand, the pattern.

Students are always startled when I say, "There is no noun in a sentence." We argue for as long as it takes for them to realize that they are not making fine enough distinctions. For many in grade 9, their first clear thought (beyond their memories) arises when they distinguish between what they know is a noun and what acquires more specificity in a sentence according to its placement. "Nouns can be used in five different ways in an English sentence," I say. We look for them in our own use of language. They can recall 'subject' and 'direct object' because they just reviewed the skeletal structure; 'indirect

object' and 'object of the preposition' usually require vigorous class 'discussion' as we hunt down these wayward nouns. (The broader the conversations the better, as far as I am concerned; when I hear "subjective mood" loudly, indeed competitively, offered, I know we have miles to go before we sleep.) I do not remember anyone ever coming out with 'appositive.'

Let me highlight a few points about usage which I make in some manner every year.

It is a significant accomplishment when a student can *look* at a sentence and *recognize* what she knows is a noun and *identify* it as one of five alternatives. (This activity used to be more common, indeed natural, to students, but every year I find ever more need to move the students from an 'audience' style of participation to an active participation in their own thinking.) We realize that it is possible to write excellent sentences with many nouns.

Adjectives are a bit easier to recognize. We see that though it is possible to use many adjectives in a sentence, before long the sentence can become silly or overburdened or pretentious or something else undesirable. I often find myself cautioning the students about adjectives, saying something like: "Yes, of course, the sentence is correct, but is it worth anything? Would you ever use this?" If the student needs to be right at all costs and says, "Yes, I would use it," I simply sigh, and we both know what is meant. My favorite and most notable moment comes when a student questions out of her own observation, "The adjective doesn't change, does it? It is the same as a part of speech as it is when used in the sentence?" I have her repeat her observation until everyone in the class hears it.

Adverbs they find trying, for it is only when we focus on usage that distinctions are significant and, indeed, useful. It is not long before I forbid the use of 'too' or 'many' to modify another adverb. With adverbs, as with adjectives, it is possible to write a correct sentence while transgressing every spoken or unspoken aesthetic feeling, not to mention usage of good English.

Prepositions allow us to move into word groupings, in this case the phrase. Rare is the student who senses how variable and challenging is the land she has just entered. Usually I allow the students to abuse the English language by piling prepositional phrase upon prepositional phrase: the amusement soon wears off and, more importantly, they learn how not to write.

Conjunctions lose their innocence when, in addition to grouping things, thoughts, what have you, together, they play their magical role of allowing us to think and speak in clauses. And what a merry time we have when these clauses suddenly take on a persistence and nomination of their own, such as adverbial clauses, noun clauses, adjectival clauses.

I leave verbs and verbals until grade 10. Verbs are functions of time, which is more a concern of grade 10. Verbals can be very confusing.

I do give quizzes that test their command of grammatical processes we have endlessly read and written. I may issue a series of instructions:

The first instruction could be: “Write a compound sentence.” Compound sentences arise rather easily in their minds: two separate statements or ‘things’ or events joined in one sentence. One student will remember because she enjoyed the practical nature of a compound; another will remember because she resented having to learn that the perfectly good word ‘sentence’ is now to be called an ‘independent clause’; another will remember because there is something ‘aesthetically pleasing’ about the compound. Whatever their path, each student will be able to cognize the relationship of two somewhat-related events. There is something expansive about a compound sentence.

The second instruction could be: “Write a compound sentence with a compound noun.” Some students remember this distinction concerning a part of speech; others have to reconstruct it. Both approaches lead to the formation of words signifying one specific person, place, thing, etc. The expansive quality evident in a compound sentence is replaced by the restrictive quality of a compound noun: there is only one League of Nations, one great-grandfather.

The third instruction in the series could be something like: “Write a compound sentence with a compound noun used in a compound indirect object.” The challenge is not simply to remember what an indirect object is but, more importantly, to recognize that the compound noun is only one of the two indirect objects. The students should hand in something like the following:

Jane gave her father-in-law and her sister a parcel; they wondered why?

I want to see if they remember some facts, of course; more important though is the way they calmly struggle with the different ways the concept ‘compound’ is used. It is not really easy to sort out differences.

Using ‘compound’ as a concept and as exact denominations is as far as I stretch them in grade 9.

“What are we to make of all this?” she wonders from time to time. The answer lies not in the grammar actually, but rather in the mental activity she works through every time she reads and every time she writes a sentence in grammar class. I tell the class flat out that I don’t expect them to recall in grade 12, specifically, much of what we are doing in grade 9, but I expect them to think clearly and with stamina because of our play. They are visibly relieved.

### *Reading*

I don’t really teach reading out loud in grade 9, I just create a space for it to happen. One of the very best things about students reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* out loud is that, for the most part, I can’t expect them to get it right! The six dialects that Twain weaves into the narrative don’t lend themselves to oral work.

Such a wonderfully sobering, and subtly transforming, thought for a ninth grader: it meets their literal idealism head on. However, the value of reading out loud lies not in what they cannot do, but in what they can. I tell them quite emphatically that I want them to read Twain's narrative correctly; the characters' voices they can manage as best they can. I also insist that they read out what they have written down on the blue sheets. I am always amazed by the number of students who, having spent five minutes or more writing down their thoughts correctly on paper, are inclined to tell me simply what they think in the moment when called upon, making up the response as they go, as if they hadn't anything at hand!

Where will we find the time to let the students read out loud in class every day? Certainly not from the time dedicated to writing. I would suggest that in most cases the moments can be subtracted from the time we teachers would otherwise be using. I think we talk too much and too often in class.

### *Thinking*

For me, thinking in grade 9 is, for the most part, simply gathering facts to be used in some inductive manner. We take on the students where we find them and make certain they can think in a literal mode: we bring imagination to those who rely on left brain activity and reasonable order to those who rely on right brain activity.

## **GRADE 10**

My approach to literacy is different in grade 10. In grade 9 I pointed the students to the fact that there is a world outside themselves which we imagined, in many different ways, as the 'what' of life and its reflection in the written word. I expected them to identify and record it in a variety of ways, called paragraphs. I demanded that they speak, out loud, to me.

It is only in grade 10 that we uncover the subtle truth that, indeed, it is possible to build a world out of the 'what,' but it is not necessarily the case that we thereby understand what we have constructed!

In grade 10 we assert in our teaching that a true understanding of life and our place in it—which is my way of characterizing "I and the World"—can come only through a mature consciousness that needs to make sense of, to comprehend, the 'world of the senses,' including the world of others' thoughts. To forge this consciousness, to find our rightful place in this world of nature and literacy, we ask 'how', a question implying an objective criterion by which to organize and construct. When I use 'how' I look for connections. The 'how' allows.

When teaching this grade, I feel as if I am walking into lecture 8 of *Education for Adolescence* in which Rudolf Steiner describes how young teenagers, having grown into the *true*, which is their spiritual heritage, and having merged with the *beautiful*, which

they discovered in their own youthful backyard, are ready, indeed eager, “to learn the *good* in the world of the senses, the good they are to develop and bring to expression during their lives.” (Steiner, 1996, p. 135). The good, then, is our goal!

The prisoner that we encounter in grade 10 is not the Prisoner of this monograph’s title.

### *Reading Comprehension*

- we concentrate on the etheric body of the text: the plot. We emphasize ‘how’ the story moves along through the activity of an author;
- we emphasize that no literary work just ‘happens to be’ what it is, that every author has a particular way of writing (style), that the author may not necessarily be conscious of all the ramifications of what she is writing;
- characteristics of different genres are noted, especially when the students talk about their ‘outside reading’;
- we read critical works.

### *Writing:*

- we stress rewriting;
- we finish our exploration of body paragraphs by concentrating on the comparison/contrast form;
- we (formally) introduce the opening paragraph and the closing paragraph, emphasizing their different uses and practicing them as often as possible;
- by year’s end, we put all the paragraph writing exercises together into a strictly structured five-paragraph expository essay written in a distinct form: that is, we teach the students how to connect all the sounds of words, components of sentences, paragraphs, essay style, etc. into a coherent whole;
- peer editing and rewriting are refined;
- after reviewing the value of a book report and utility of outlining, we write concise summaries of texts;
- poetry is written after being expressed orally;
- creative writing is encouraged.

### *Grammar*

- we begin with a thorough review of material covered in grade 9;
- we emphasize grammar for its utility in writing, though we continue to use it to help students organize their thinking;
- we concentrate on clauses, phrases, verbs, and verbals. We play endlessly with conjunctions that move a narrative along;
- punctuation and spelling receive attention, as does sentence variety.

### *Reading*

- poetry, read expressively in main lesson and skills classes, is the primary focus this year. We offer different metrical forms so that the students speak them clearly, intelligently, and accurately;
- we continue with in-class reading of prose paragraphs written by the students and with selections from texts.

### *Research*

- same as grade 9, with the addition of multiple sources needed for expository essays. The students should be comfortable incorporating cited thoughts of others into the argument, not just the text, of the essay.

### *Thinking*

- whereas in grade 9 we emphasized the literal aspect of inductive reasoning, in grade 10 we encourage the students to experience the power of pictorial thinking, especially in oral work;
- as the year progresses, as essay writing becomes more prominent and the summaries more assured, we encourage more overt analytical thinking in so far as the students are encouraged to draw conclusions supported by published texts and self-written essays.

### *Reading Comprehension*

Though as teachers we often talk about plot by asking, “Why does this occur here in this place?” or “Why does this incident happen as it does?” or “Why is this character doing this right now?”, we actually are better served by keeping to the organic integrity of the ‘how.’ The artistic integrity of a literary work more often rests on the author’s ability to weave a credible ‘how’ into her fabric than to assert a resounding ‘why’ in her narrative.

It is easy enough to make a statement which asserts what the plot of a story is. (We will see in a few pages that Vladimir Nabokov does just that when he critiques Nikolay Gogol’s “The Overcoat” in his own eclectic-didactic manner.) There are resource books which provide us with synopses of novels that always include some rendering of the plot. Such information is useful, but it should not distract us from our task: we look to see how an author’s handling, positioning, and timing of certain incidents within a narrative allow for a purposeful story to be told in a credible way.

Relationships matter. I have the students experience this when we study Plato’s allegory of “The Cave.” As an allegory it is perfectly suited for grade 10, for here we have two stories that run side by side and need to be connected. Invariably, the students experience the following difficulties in their first reading:

1. they cannot picture clearly what Plato is describing
2. they can’t ‘find’ the second story, though they might ‘sense’ it
3. they have no ‘attack skills’ to overcome these two difficulties

In our initial conversations I find that the students don’t readily understand the text. They can’t find how it all hangs together. Thus, we have in this allegory the perfect example of the nature and cognitive significance of ‘how,’ for only when the students actually see connections do they begin to think!

I don't worry too much about the things students can't do but look to build on what they do know and thus can do. They know their 'what,' so I insist that for homework they read the allegory closely enough to be able to sketch it accurately. "What goes where?" is the essential question. Where is the wall, the path, the fire, the deluded prisoners, the incline, the cave mouth, the outside world? Where is the shadow? More importantly, what is a shadow? What does the freed prisoner do? How do you sketch that all-important action?

The next day we carefully question the different sketches, assessing their completeness and accuracy. Completeness is a function of a student's ability to recall 'what' was given in the story; accuracy is a function of a student's ability to value the 'how' inherent in the story. I remember saying things like, "Your wall is very high; in fact, will a shadow be cast by the fire if the wall is in the way? No, of course not. How would you change the sketch? Yes, you are right: Plato offers few details to help you. Nonetheless, it is your sketch, not his." Or, "Your fire is very close to the prisoner, yet your shadow on the wall is very small. How can that be? How can you make the relationships more accurate? Yes, you are right, there are a number of ways. Choose one, and make the sketch more accurate."

This precise, indeed pedantic, assessment focuses the mind on relationships. Now the students can picture what Plato describes: they see it, they think. All these relationships exist in the students' comfort zones, the world of 'what' that we developed in grade 9. We have overcome the first difficulty.

The shadow leads us to a discussion of projection and reflection.

As we seek out the connections orally, the students explore the connections inwardly. Often, they look into space with a strained look on their faces: they have pictures, and yet they don't 'get it.' Nothing enters their pictures. They can't easily make the essential connection. It is the shadow, more accurately our discussion of it, which leads them to the light, the realization that allows them to identify with the prisoner who knows the world more truly than the others because he recognizes it as a shadow. We discuss what is real and what is not. And, more importantly, how we arrive at such distinctions. They see the second story as our own human story. We have overcome the second difficulty.

The students have, in effect, participated in the activity that has characterized Western philosophy since the time of Plato: they have actualized their own cognition. They have overcome the third difficulty; the attack skill they have exercised through their own efforts, and selves, is what we ordinarily call thinking. Perhaps they took fewer steps than the prisoner, yet the steps were important ones as they moved toward more clarity and willed consciousness.

I find that teaching "The Cave" is important for the students and rewarding for the teacher. Even what we experience in our study of ancient cultures—the emergence of human civilization's intellectuality from its mythic beginnings—though more grand, can't hold a candle to the feeling of the accomplishment we experience when we guide the students from the 'what' to the 'how.'

Think about it: usually as teachers our work with the students brings almost no immediate gratification to us; it is all for the future. Fine. But the future lives in those eyes when they light up with recognition that shows without a doubt that they are truly getting it, truly thinking. It foreshadows much, and we see it in its immediacy. Every year I rediscover that we are never too old to benefit from working with the grade 10 curriculum.

One last comment on “The Cave”: patience must be our guide. We can teach the students what the allegory means, but if in doing so we drag them out of their own cave, no good will come of it. We need to entice them to come into consciousness. Not what we know but how we speak and what the sounds convey will move them, or not. It is no failure on their part to be, at their age, immature and not ready to move on. (And let’s not forget those students who, however willing and eager, do not respond as cogently as Plato’s prisoner did. Perhaps they are ‘blinded by the light’ for a longer time than the others; perhaps they don’t even realize they need to report their visions to others. These students who learn differently constitute, with every passing year, a greater percentage of the students before us. The safest and most beneficial way to be inclusive in our presentations is for us to live so deeply into the relationship of the four-fold human being to the four questions—“what,” “how?” “why” and “who”—that our class preparations and presentations will become artistically saturated; exclusivity is then impossible.)

I teach the reading of critics in grade 10. It provides the students with suitable challenges. For one thing, they need to consider seriously the thought of another person. Not only that, they need to hold it in their mind at the same time as they maintain their own opinions. Moreover, they are invited to adjust their thoughts as they hear more about what others have thought about the topic. They stay very active in their thinking. ‘How’ plays into the mix very neatly and formatively, as you will see.

On to the reading of “The Overcoat” by Nikolay Gogol. I tell the students they are all critics. Their assignment is to critique the work at home. With this little guidance, they feel as if they have been ‘turned loose’ on the text: the astral runs wild. I learn much about them, and they learn much about each other for, naturally, we present our work orally in class. In front of me sit social critics, historians, psychologists, Freudian analysts, moralists, writers, poets, and they all have a certain point of view which, when challenged by me or their peers, they can support with reference to the story. If no one mentions it, I add the observation that Gogol creates an atmosphere in the work not evident in most other short stories. As they walk out the door, most students feel that their work is done. It is not.

Next day, I produce Nabokov’s critique of “The Overcoat.” It is not an easy work to read so we do it in class. It is not an easy work to understand so we work on it out loud. I ask two important questions: “Which points does Mr. Nabokov make that you didn’t?” and “How did he go about making these points?” Most of the answers to the first question are resolved in the general observation that Mr. Nabokov confines himself, more or less, to the text, or at least his reactions to his close reading of the text. He offers us the plot:

“The plot of “The Overcoat” is very simple. A poor little clerk makes a great decision and orders a new overcoat. The coat while in the making becomes the dream of his life. On the very first night that he wears it he is robbed of it on a dark street. He dies of grief and his ghost haunts the city. This is all in the way of plot . . .” (58) This we can understand and accept, though we may find it a bit short on detail. Then, however, Nabokov continues, “but of course the *real* plot (as always with Gogol) lies in the style, in the inner structure of this transcendental anecdote. In order to appreciate it as its true worth one must perform a kind of mental somersault so as to get rid of conventional values in literature and follow the author along the dream road of his superhuman imagination.” (58)

The conversations about the “conventional values in literature” arising from this conventional phrase of our critic are always very informative because they bring us glimpses of the values and assumptions of a generation different from our own.

Eventually the best readers in the class will mention that Nabokov seems to be aping Gogol. “Certainly,” they suggest, “we do not have a traditional expository essay in front of us.” There is a certain wildness to Nabokov’s style in this critique! Support for this observation can be easily discovered in his references to the declension of personal pronouns (61), his view that Gogol’s work, “as all great literary achievements, is a phenomenon of language and not one of ideas” (61), his insistence that we can’t understand a writer whose name we cannot pronounce (61), his compartmentalization of the work into sections divided by lines, his summary of the short story: “So to sum up: the story goes this way: mumble, mumble, lyrical wave, mumble, lyrical wave, mumble, lyrical wave, mumble, fantastic climax, mumble, mumble, and back into the chaos from which they all had derived,” (60) and his assertion that “there is a curvature in literary style as there is a curvature in space.” (58)

And what do we make of this? From the work of these two days it is important to draw out something which can sustain and challenge the students: after lauding the joy that Nabokov brings to his work, and consequently to his readers, I stress the ‘how’ of the critique by pointing out its strangeness as being appropriate to the strangeness of Gogol’s story. I assert that what we find in the short story by Gogol—who in Nabokov’s opinion, is “the greatest artist that Russia has yet produced” (54) and this he writes in the collection of essays on literary giants such as Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Gorki, and Turgenev!— is projected and reflected in the critical appreciation by Nabokov, especially the atmosphere full of what I call ‘lurking meaning.’

I invite the students to be “creative readers” (54) at all times. There is a great joy in finding the many strange elements of Gogol’s “superhuman imagination;” when I point out that the superhuman has a correspondence in the short story itself, easily found in many ghosts that roam the streets of St. Petersburg, the students invariably become more alert in their reading.

Of course, it is in readings like this that students become wary of the boundaries of criticism. The phrase itself, “creative readers,” seems to invite all sorts of vagaries and

unbounded freedoms. Moreover, the students can't agree that the author meant to put into the story everything that we are 'dragging' out of it with our 'creative reading.' Dutifully, I mention, but do not explore in grade 10, the responsibility inherent in being 'creative readers' and its connection to what the author does and does not consciously manage. When I say, "Let's have this discussion when we have the whole picture; there's no hurry," I do not resolve the issue. I may even be adding a bit more fuel to the fire of indignation. Nonetheless, I do manage to 'buy myself a little time' before we need to engage the intentionality of the writer and the inner responsibility of the reader head on, so to speak.

Ambiguity and uncertainty notwithstanding, I put it to you that it is only when we begin to discover the 'how' of a work that we can enter the mind and soul of the author and, in a way, transcend the usual requirements of meeting works of art as (merely) attentive, intelligent, and well-informed readers. "If Vladimir Nabokov can be a critic and write from his well-informed heart, so can you . . . eventually," I say.

### *Writing*

When teaching paragraph writing in grade 9 I made sure each student could write in a descriptive manner when necessary, in a narrative manner when called upon, etc. Now, in grade 10 I challenge them to convey their thoughts, assertions, facts in a 'convincing' way. As we all know, there is an important difference between the two expectations. Only in the latter do I ask the question: how does all this hang together?

Once I ask, it becomes the guiding impulse for all that surges through a piece of writing. It seeps into syntax. It reorganizes paragraph content. It moves body paragraphs around in a merciless manner. Not surprisingly, this question helps the student to find the necessary connection between the body paragraphs and the all-important introductory and concluding paragraphs. Year after year I find myself making statements such as

1. "How does this sentence in your third paragraph *work* with its topic sentence? I know it is your best but, well, should it really be slumming it?"
2. "How would it look if we were to move it around and put it second? Fourth?"
3. "How are you going to summarize *all* of this?"
4. "How to begin?"
5. "No, no, no. Stopping is not ending."

If I ask this sort of question often enough a student eventually asks it of herself, not abstractly but organically. Asking the 'how' question should be a habit by the time she writes her final five-paragraph expository essay before the summer break.

I never teach the comparison/contrast essay in grade 9. In grade 10 the students are more able to hold two or more different thoughts in their minds and justify them from a certain point of view.

We can undermine the power of the 'how' in grade 10 essay writing in two ways. First, and most damaging: we can forget to laugh. A writer by definition is attached to her

work; usually she has some good, or at least defensible reason, for expressing herself in such and such a way; humor—not wit, especially in its poisonous form of sarcasm or cold irony—can deftly throw light on that reason, creating something different to look at, to think about, perhaps even to adopt. Second, we can confuse ‘how’ with ‘why.’ We do it all the time when we speak. ‘Why’ brings us too forcefully into the world of intellectual questioning. It leads us to abstraction. ‘How’ speaks to the nature of things; ‘why’ to the intruding personal intellect. We’ll find much more of the latter, in its best sense of course, from grade 11 onward.

Many students find it very difficult to summarize. Often enough they fear they will get it wrong because something important is left out. Repetition, guided, is necessary. Since anything—it need not be a written text—can be summarized, I work on this skill all year long. I begin by summarizing some activity I’ve finished. Eventually I expect them to do the same with their lives. We refine these oral renderings, moving from the more casual to the more specific, not just to make choices about the content of the summary but to make choices about concise expressions of these choices. Eventually, they write down their thoughts. In moving from the oral to the written we make the archetypal journey of the grade 10 student.

In making this journey with them, we must be more than patient. We must be understanding. By understanding, I mean less the cerebral aspect—as expressed in the phrase, “I understand something”—but rather the emotive element captured in the statement, “She is an understanding person.” It is inclusive. It is a warm embrace, even if from a distance.

### *Grammar*

I try to have at least three consecutive weeks to review the work we did in grade 9. Parts of speech are not presented abstractly; rather, by recalling the skeletal structure of the sentence and our process of identifying usage, I focus on the utilitarian.

I have found that some elements of grammar are best taught in blocks of time while others are more aptly woven into essay writing, reading comprehension, and reading in class. Examples of the latter include types of sentence, all forms of agreement, verb tenses (especially the perfect and progressive) and voice, punctuation and use of modifiers, especially in comparisons. Examples of the former are clauses and phrases. Just as in grade 9, I want the students to think through the relationships expressed in grammatical usage. In this grade, they need to hold more facts in their mind as they think through the possibilities. It is absolutely essential that the element of fun and posture of challenge be carried over from grade 9 as well, since the work is more difficult for most of them.

A clause needs to be identified as either making a complete (independent, previously called a sentence) or incomplete (dependent, also called subordinate) statement. Its presence in a written statement determines the kind of sentence we have before us (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex). These statements are the ‘what’

which we ‘mobilize’ into usage in grade 10. Clauses act as adjectives, as adverbs, as nouns. The first mentioned are introduced by a special case of pronouns, called relative; the second by typical conjunctions, called subordinating; the third are introduced by pronouns (sometimes) which are different from those introducing adjectival clauses, yet are identifiable because noun clauses, like all nouns, can be used as a subject (predicate nominative), direct object, indirect object, and object of the preposition.

As always, instructional grammar makes the activity seem more difficult than it actually is.

I have the students move back and forth, writing subordinate clauses from independent ones and vice versa: ‘She went to the store’ is boring; ‘When she went to the store’ implies 1) some action has yet to happen and 2) it will attach itself in an adverbial manner. I insist they distinguish between the two categories of clauses so they can feel the difference and infer what needs to be supplied, if anything.

I teach the adjectival clause thoroughly (see grade 9) before moving on to adverbial and noun clauses. Naturally, at first the students rely on the pronouns and conjunctions which announce the type of clause they are dealing with. Yet, with practice, the best writers feel their way into the stylistic and qualitative differences among the three types; eventually, these same writers will wonder whether a clause is needed to express a certain thought: “Why not break up this whole thing into two or more sentences?” they ask. To which I answer, “The ‘why’ I leave to you; show me ‘how’ you intend to do it, for that is not a given either.” And thus we work our way through the days dedicated to grammar.

In like manner, I work through phrases. I try to end the formal instruction with verbals because students need to struggle quite hard in their thinking to move beyond the fact that verbs are action words. Since they have for so long accurately noted that something like “I cheer” and “I am cheering” uses some legitimate form of “cheer” as a verb, they find it difficult to accept that “Cheering broke out in the crowd” does not. “Cheering” is used as a noun. As could be expected, the distinction points us to a category, the verbal (words formed from verbs that do not act as verbs in the sentence), which is itself delineated into three types: gerunds (used as nouns), participles (used as adjectives), and infinitives (used as noun, adjective and adverb). These verbals can also be used as phrases, with all that that implies.

“How is such and such used in a sentence?” is the critical question in grammar. (In order to stress the difference between grade 9 and 10 while at the same time creating appropriate habits of thought, I often use the phrase, “What has such and such become in this sentence?” in grade 9.)

I teach only as much grammar as the class can manage. Each grade 10 is different. What is important for me is that all the students, regardless of their dispositions and capacities, learn to remember distinctions that can be creatively applied in moments of self-expression.

### Reading

If you are willing to forego teaching some of the poetic devices and leave out more passages and tales than usual in the great poetic works we cover, such as *Beowulf* and *Canterbury Tales*, then it is possible for the students to *create solely through sound a language of their own*; this language has its own vocabulary. When they have mastered the language, the students write poetry. (Prose is much more difficult to master, both as writer and reader and listener.) In our times, mastering a language means writing it down, since otherwise we can't remember it. Our ether bodies are weak in that regard. When the students write down their language they often devise new letters for their new alphabet. Here the review of the origins of alphabets can be renewed and expanded. It comes to life for them, as does the power of sounds.

What surprises me every time I do this is not simply the fact that students can invent their own worlds but that the very nature of the sounds allows others, their peers, to enter into those worlds. That is to say, when we celebrate these creations (poems) toward the end of the block and read each one out loud, the vast majority are comprehensible to the listeners to a significantly detailed degree. What we see in the world as a waterfall has a way of inventing itself in sounds. How it is done is the deeper mystery of connections which seeps into the consciousness of students when we allow it. "How did all this come to be?" is the essential question and mood in grade 10, is it not?

These poems, along with other readings of creative writing, provide enough material every year to have a 'Poetry Evening' open to the entire school community. The more intimate, the better. We should 'reserve the stage' so to speak for the senior projects. So much creative writing done by the students comes to the surface in these evenings!

From time to time I have asked professors to visit the class and recite *Beowulf* and *The Canterbury Tales* and whatever else they can present as an authentic rendering. We always have a good time.

### Research

To firmly fix the 'how' is no easy work; it actually is very delicate yet strenuous work. Writing is supported by quotations that the students can find, either by referring to texts or conversations with others, including classmates. I don't think their assimilation process is helped by insisting that they affix a bibliography or even officially write footnotes in any academically accepted form. I let them continue what they began in grade 9, adding more sources as needed. Of course, the rewriting continues, one hopes on a more limited scale. The students should be slowly forming the habit of thinking before they write: they need not *always* discover what they think by reading it. Such careful attention helps them, eventually, to write what they think rather than to think in light of what they have written.

## GRADE 11

It is clear that we do not have before us the same persons we had in grades 9 and 10:

- on the one hand, I see this change as a signal that they are beginning to emerge from their ‘student years’ and take up the path of adulthood. Their individuality is taking up a home in their personality;
- on another hand, I recognize it as a validation of the developmental process that frames their lives. Here anthroposophical insights into soul development during the third seven-year cycle of 14 - 21 are informative and provide us direction. (During the first third of this period including the ages of ninth and tenth graders, we as high school teachers are concerned with the orientation of the will. The second third, more feeling oriented, embraces the ages of eleventh and twelfth graders. The final third, much more deliberately thinking oriented, leads our school graduates up to age 21. In grade 11, then, our students are entering their feeling phase of thinking;
- on another hand, I notice that 1) they have mastered, more or less, the foundational, skill-oriented work that used to give them such trouble, and 2) they no longer ‘natively’ have an attachment to the work, an attachment that used to see them through the most difficult of times, and 3) they strongly live in the mood and gesture of grasping ‘why.’

I experience, along with them, that typically at this age their world is turned inside-out. What I brought to them as the ‘world outside them’ in the foundational grades is relentlessly becoming a ‘world inside.’ The ‘reflections’ we provided for them in grades 9 and 10, as in “The Cave,” are more likely to become inner reflections in grade 11. Think of the lemniscate with its dynamic of inner-outer movement. Or think of love: think of it as a noun, think about it as a topic of conversation in Plato’s *Symposium*, and then, think it as an experience. The experience creates a sense of reality, does it not? We all feel it, even as we accept the fact it is ‘just’ an idea. Surely, this is one movement we make from the willing aspect of thinking to the second phase, the feeling.

We don’t teach many new skills during the last two high school grades. We do give the students every opportunity, guided by us, to refine what they have acquired in the foundational grades. It is immeasurably helpful to see this process as the penetration of the astral/ego configuration, with all its individuality traits, into the etheric/physical, in its more substantial supportive role. In fact, I have found that one of the best preparations for teaching grade 11 is to reread lecture 7 of Rudolf Steiner’s *Education for Adolescence* in which the distinctions of the bodies are imaginatively presented. We see the world differently when we enliven our insights by studying this lecture.

It is not too fanciful to say that we enter into a ‘new world’ when we read this lecture. We remind ourselves that as teachers, as ‘creative readers’ in a Waldorf school, we read more than literature: our literacy extends beyond the written word to our connection with all that is around us, all that we experience through science and math and the various arts. That is our ‘new world.’ I would put it to you that we need to keep this relationship of “I



“I want to come into your heart to you.”

“Then it is a small space you wish.”

“What does that matter? Though I scarcely find room, you will have no need to complain of crowding. I will tell you now of wondrous things.”

“Oh, is it *you*, Lady Adventure? How fares that lovable knight?” (IX, 1.433 – 441)

Then there is the ‘horse’ in *Parzival*, an animal that carries the knights on their quests and also serves as metaphor and symbol and image and even more! How interesting that Eschenbach points our attention to its nourishment outside the cave of imparted wisdom in the same chapter he brings the spiritual background of the quest to our consciousness.

### *Reading Comprehension*

- we concentrate on the astral aspects of the text: concepts, ideas, characters, symbols, etc. We ask the question ‘why.’ When we emphasize the text as a source of information we build upon the work of grades 9 and 10; when we discuss the author’s biography (in relation to the work under discussion) we extend the student’s sense of self-awareness and anticipate the work of grade 12.
- we definitely note that the author may not necessarily be conscious of all the ramifications of what she is writing;
- if the class is able, we introduce different critical points of view (schools of criticism) and read critics who espouse them;
- the students are encouraged to seek for what lies at the heart of every text.

### *Writing*

- students write shorter research papers on a variety of topics, using multiple sources in each one, for as long as needed in order to make them comfortable with the form, expectations, and difficulties. By year’s end, one long research paper, preferably not in the humanities discipline, should be within their reach. That is: we want to find the student, his thoughts and prejudices, in the text, sounding out either as an argument or a preconceived notion;
- we continue to stress rewriting;
- we teach students how to paraphrase textual passages after we review the more mundane outlines and summaries, drawing upon skills developed in ninth grade.

### *Grammar*

- ‘correctness’ is pragmatically synthesized into the writing exercises;
- we explore the use of different sentence structures, punctuation, and sentence variety because the writer needs to make many choices in her attempts to express something as elusive as a thought.

### *Speaking*

- we provide many opportunities for dramatic readings. The students are taught, then, to breathe meaning into their renderings;
- there is as place for debate, though it is not often conducted in formal manner;

- oral reading in class and poetic readings are continued from previous grades.

### *Research*

- end notes or footnotes should be employed as second nature by now;
- we find imaginative ways to keep track of the sources that students use to write their papers: if citations can be endnotes and footnotes, sources can be itemized on the top of each page of the essay, serving thus as a mnemonic device as well as a compilation;
- we add the ‘interview’ to the more academic elements of information gathering and selection.

### *Thinking*

- the literal, pictorial, and analytical thinking of grades 9 and 10 are aspects of inductive reasoning; in grade 11 we move into deductive reasoning in which principles or concepts are explored as referential and as valuable in their own right;
- we can enliven the pictorial as well, especially when dealing with symbols.

### *Reading Comprehension*

I see grade 11 as another beginning. So, I begin with the basics and challenge the students with one simple question posed as three: “What is reading? How do we do it? Why do we do it?” With this beginning, we are doing more than simply reviewing the previous two years’ work. All three questions generate philosophical, indeed metaphysical, discussions which I allow the students to push to the limits. I insist they be responsible for their comments, which is to say, to support whatever assertion they promote. In this way, I set some boundaries to the astrality that all too easily can take up residence in the class. I even name these boundaries: she goes by the name of Responsibility. I invite the students to picture her in the room, standing. It is all so mysterious, stranger than fiction one might say.

The conversation about reading, which is really our first real conversation about literacy, is usually a series of impulses which have to be more organized, or at least collected together, to come to some sort of completion. Who is not surprised to discover that, according to the dictionary definition, we are, more or less, successfully literate by the time we finish grade 10? So much for expectations! I say more or less because one important element of literacy is being ‘well informed.’

“Is well-informed the same as more informed?” As teachers and students we can fruitfully ask ourselves this question as we tether the astral in our words this year.

Since the dictionary tells us we are literate, we may be tempted to conclude, “Therefore we are finished with our humanities education!” This is not the case, of course. Why? Because our literacy matures to the extent that we do. Each year we look at the questions “What,” “How,” “Why,” and “Who” differently, focusing on one while not ignoring the

others. When the students graduate, one hopes this activity, not this content, is what they take into their questions of I and the World.

Since “what” deals with specificity of space I emphasize areas of the brain and movement of our eyes when we read. The fact that we read from left to right and do mathematics from right to left is the kind of ‘mystery’ that can excite some and at least pique the interest of others. Many students are quite aware of left-brain and right-brain activities and speak remarkably accurately about them. (In the future, I will refer the students to Daniel Pink’s *A Whole New Mind* now that I am aware of it. I like to point out research which supports the foundations of Waldorf pedagogy.)

Over time, “how” becomes a gateway into thinking: in grade 10, it pointed us to the connections we made as readers; these connections helped us find some meaning in a text. With maturity and an interest in the lives and thoughts of others, students will adapt this ‘how’ to include the thinking patterns of others. These ‘others’ can be seen as individuals or periods of time, for example, the late Middle Ages or the Enlightenment. I bluntly tell the students that in grade 11 we are going to search for meaning in these texts; that we will find some; that we will, more importantly, note the ‘standards’ or ‘assumptions’ that underlie our searching. I also tell them, flat out, that we are going to draw quite a bit upon what they already know.

“Why” then comes to life in its two-fold strength: it bears the traditional mandate to discover motivations of characters and explanations of literary conceits, symbols, critical perspectives, and the like. It also invites us to be sociable: “Why do we find meaning?” precipitously brings the students consciously to their relationship with themselves, their peers, their society – that is to say, they invite themselves into that arena where they naturally look for explanations for and of themselves. They also look for validation. By the time the year is out, they will see that all literature up to our time is a response to the question ‘why?’ It is not possible to change the world, to make it a healthier place, without looking deeply into the ‘why’ of it all. Truly, we enter the theme of “I and the World.”

“Why” is the air we breathe insofar as we live in our thinking.

It is now possible really to look at a literary work from many points of view. In fact, since ‘why’ allows for the most varied opinions, every student in the room is equipped to opine about motivation of whatever and whoever we bring to their attention, be it through our history or our literature classes. In a very interesting way, it’s all the same to them; this differentiation we make between fiction and non-fiction is not so important.

Every humanities teacher, whether Waldorf trained or not, is prepared to read and consider literature from the perspective of character development, thematic studies, critical theories, etc. It is what we do. We ask “why?” For that reason it would be sheer impertinence for me to offer specific examples of what I do from year to year when actually we all do some variation on it so well. I would, however, like to mention a few

suggestions which serve *The Prisoner's Kiss* as examples of processes and/or background supports for our teaching.

When I teach Dante's masterpiece I begin by making sure the students imagine the terrain as clearly as they can, right down to the rivers Lethe and Eunoe. I assure them that they need to be ever vigilant as regards terrain if they are to have any hope of understanding, on some deeper level, this great work. My overview of the upcoming journey through *The Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradisio* provides them with the plot which is so universal that it (usually) poses no problems for articulation. I tell them to be ever watchful of how Virgil leads Dante, for the posture of the former (in all senses) is one of the most important pedagogical tools used by Dante the author to impress wisdom and justice on Dante the traveler. We read Canto after Canto, as many as possible. I stress the appropriateness of the punishments suffered by the sinners and make sure the students see the point of them: the 'why' rules. There is never time to read all three hundred Cantos, but we always read *The Inferno* in its entirety.

When we read selections of the two remaining works, we follow not only the journey of Dante and his guides but also compare and contrast appropriate Cantos within the trilogy. In this way, we shine a light on the structure of the work. When I don't have much time to give an elaborate overview of *Purgatorio* and *Paradisio* I choose the first Canto of each. In this way, the students have the opportunity to work with motifs about the journey from three decidedly different perspectives, forcing them to be as imaginative and exact as is the text. This particular exercise I have always found to be worth the effort because so much of what they can't readily see is 'made visible' in the relationships they establish through their thinking.

(I do take these readings into space itself as often as possible. One year, I even 'commandeered' a humanities classroom which we, the students and I, turned into a hell crowded with their own creations of punishments for 'modern transgressions' against either nature or human nature. It was splendid. An artistic success. It also became a social issue. Teachers rightly missed using the room.)

Ironically, it is the structure of the *Divine Comedy* that lets me explore with the students the social aspect of the question 'why.'

I remind them of the societies they created in the ninth-grade *Idealism and Humanity* block, societies that were reasonable and practical expressions of heart-felt ideals. I remind them of a few examples of the rising and falling of civilizations which we studied in grade 10 *Ancient Cultures*. Societies are created on/with standards; though they, the standards and societies, seem so necessary and sensible when looked upon 'in the moment' of their existence, with the passage of time they become quaint. Now, in grade 11, I tell them that every age has a way of reading—of denoting meaning—that expresses those standards. To learn about an age, we must learn how to read it. In this way, we will allow the astral body to do what it does so extremely well: bring, necessarily, death and destruction into life. Our observing of this astral activity is at the same time our attempting to train it.

We use primary sources whenever we can so that the students have a feel for the times we are studying.

These days we need to be quite overt. We need to lead them through a type of reading that is quite different from our own. What with the electronic gadgetry these days, we openly compete for their attention with images far more immediate and compelling than our own, so we need to go to the heart of the matter: the making of the images. Some of us are already competing with avatars in SecondLife. Let's keep them interested in themselves in a healthy sense.

I highly recommend teachers read the book *A History of Reading* by Alberto Manguel, published by Viking in 1996. Every born reader will find his own biography in this man's exposition of reading, presented from both subjective and objective perspectives. His work spans centuries of literacy; let us refer to him for Dante's times.

I never read out loud from Alberto Manguel in class, though I would recommend him to a particular student if I thought she would appreciate the suggestion. As we read *The Divine Comedy* in grade 11 it is clear that we are reading as citizens of the twenty-first century. I vigorously point this out to the students, not to criticize but to differentiate. The gist of what I do say is found in the chapter "The Missing First Page." Here Manguel writes:

Around the year 1316, in a famous letter to the imperial vicar Can Grande della Scala, Dante argued that a text has at least two readings, 'for we obtain one meaning from the letter of it, and another from that which the letter signifies; the first is called literal, but the other *allegorical* or *mystical*.' Dante goes on to suggest that the allegorical sense comprises three other readings. Setting as an example the biblical verse 'When Israel came out of Egypt and the House of Jacob from among a strange people, Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion,' Dante explains: 'For if we regard *the letter alone*, what is set before us is the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt in the days of Moses; if the *allegory*, our redemption wrought by Christ; if the *analogical* sense, we are shown the conversion of the soul from the grief and wretchedness of sin to the state of grace; if the *anagogical*, we are shown the departure of the holy soul from the thralldom of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory. And although these mystical meanings are called by various names, they may all be called in general *allegorical*, since they differ from the literal and the historical.' (86, 87)

With all grade 11 classes I make the obvious point that times change! "Do we read this way now?" I ask. It is always difficult for them to wrap their minds around the categories which seem so clear and devoid of warmth. At this point, many admit that in previous ages, those who were educated were 'very educated' — in fact, more educated than we are today. (The same realization can be gleaned from a reading of George Washington's "Farewell Address" which is couched in vocabulary far exceeding the currency of the realm these days.)

If we have time, we take a passage from the *Comedy* and read it in the four-fold way Dante meant it to be understood. We have difficulties, disagreements; in the end, we usually cannot fully agree on one true reading. That doesn't concern me very much. Why is that? We can let Signor Manguel finish his paragraph and find exactly the experience we have in the classroom:

All these [the four distinctions] are possible readings. Some readers may find one or several of them false: they may distrust a 'historical' reading if they lack the context of the passage; they may object to the 'allegorical' reading by regarding the reference to Christ as anachronistic; they may find the 'analogical' (through analogy) and 'anagogical' (through biblical interpretations) readings too fanciful or far-fetched. Even a 'literal' reading may be suspect. What does 'came out' mean, exactly? Or 'House'? Or 'dominion'? It would seem that, in order to read at even a skin-deep level, the reader requires information about the text's creation, historical background, specialized vocabulary and even that most mysterious of things, what Saint Thomas Aquinas called *quem acutor intendit*, the author's intention. And yet, provided reader and text share a common language, any reader can make *some* sense out of any text: dada, horoscopes, hermetic poetry, computer manuals, even political bombast. (87)

Alberto Manguel's comments remind me of quarrels we had in grade 10 when I was 'teaching the Bible,' quarrels we can now put into a more mature perspective: we need always to point out that to read something and to understand it is not in any way synonymous with believing and obeying it. It is, rather, a matter of responsibility to know what moves one, and how it is done. It is also our responsibility to seek out the paradigms we think with and through.

Signor Manguel's comments do more than give us an opportunity to revisit quarrels of the past, however valuable they may be. His treatment of the past naturally invites us to look at our own way of thinking, our way of creating standards by which to value our society and our selves and our accomplishments. In this way we give the students an impulse to be inquisitive. Perhaps even more important that stimulating motivation in the students, I find this exploration of reading to be an essential way for them to incarnate into the feeling phase of their thinking. We attach them to one way of thinking, we let it go; we attach them to another way of thinking, we let it go: again and again. As we differentiate their thinking, we create, as it were, a sense (organ) for those elements of human nature we all share.

I once saw a teacher lead a class through a Midrash excursion; it was brilliantly done, probably because the exercises in class were consonant with Midrash itself: "a collection of scholarly investigations into the possible meanings of the sacred [Hebrew] texts" (89). Though the students could not bring scholarship *per se*, they could air their disputes with religion in general and specific terms which one could 'accept' as scholarship in grade 11. The discussion was lively and conducted with great responsibility.

Of course, our elaboration of feeling in our thinking is not confined to literature. All kinds of historical questions arise when we study nineteenth-century American history: to read selections from *The People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn is to introduce a perspective that students need to understand and appreciate. How informative to compare/contrast it to Yellow Journalism!

I always distinguish “Old History” from “New History” for they determine quite clearly and forcefully the way we as teachers and students absorb the standards of our times. It took me many years to find an historian and critic who forced me to look at the teaching of history in this age. At first, I was appalled at how unconscious I was about my own assumed values and standards. It was very instructive for me to see how I struggled to read other ages’ assumptions in their works while blithely equating my assumptions with my age. I think it is important for students to know why they think their habitually assumed thoughts.

So, I read Keith Windschuttle’s *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering our Past*, published by Encounter Books in San Francisco (2000). Keith Windschuttle challenges every view of history which is not Old History. When he says that “the truth [is] within the historian’s grasp” (p. x) he is referring to the accomplishment of ‘old historians.’ ‘Issues’ he leaves to the forging of new historians.

He is not afraid to argue his point, taking on every prominent and influential new critical stance that would distort the study of history *per se* and undermines the integrity of university humanities departments around the world. My generation is the product of those universities. Though I almost never find a way to mention in the classroom anything really substantive from Windschuttle’s work, for the content itself is beyond the interest and ‘need’ of the high school student, I nonetheless value very highly the experience of reading *The Killing of History*. I find myself ‘attacked’ when chapter by chapter he takes on “The Ascension of Cultural Studies and the Deluge of Social Theory,” “Structuralism and Ethnohistory in the Pacific,” “Poststructuralism and Anti-Humanism,” “Relativism, Hermeneutics and Induction,” to name a few of the prevailing critical positions of contemporary scholarship — and thus, of education.

Why do I allow this challenge? Why begin the year with a rereading of some chapter in *The Killing of History*? For the information? To be sure, though I use it only as background material, if at all. For the class? To be sure, though there are quite literally thousands of other historians we could read ‘for their thinking.’ Beyond these reasons, I feel I need annually to reclaim the right to affect the students’ feeling phase of thinking by experiencing at first hand, on a yearly basis, what it actually means to ask someone to hold and feel deeply more than one point of view. When I challenge myself to do this, I undertake the soul work incumbent upon me as a Waldorf teacher. That too is preparation. I know of no critic who will annoy me, in the best sense, more than Keith Windschuttle. Every year, he picks me apart and puts me anywhere but at my ease.

Think of Prospero. It is well and good that Miranda is discovering a “brave new world” as everyone around her is being freed from a form of imprisonment; it seems so right. Yet

what does Prospero say? He strikes a cautionary tone, filled with wisdom, as he comments: “T’is new to thee.” (5.1.213)

A few words more about teaching reading comprehension: there is one text that the class and I simply read, *Parzival*. I don’t encourage them to bring into our conversations any interpretative critical views or stances, however apt they might be. The students can choose (almost) any approach they find valuable and informative when they do their artistic project. The text we simply read and talk about. We live the experiences of all the characters — this is life enough for one block!

I usually do something more which introduces the students to a concept that should expand their interest beyond the astral elements of the exciting discussions. I ask them to find the ‘heart’ of *Parzival*. I want them to uncover what Gabriel Marcel, a Catholic existentialist of the twentieth century called the ‘creative center.’

Indeed, I insist that they draw it. All the preparatory work done in grade 9 as part of their writing exercises and in grade 10 as part of their penetration of “The Cave” comes to their aid here, not in the drawing itself but more importantly in feeling what the question asks for. They know, in a feeling sort of way, what is being asked of them. As the drawing emerges from their understanding, it captures their deep appreciation of what was most essential in their journey through reading. It is a very hard task, but, then again, so was finding the Grail.

Here is an example of my own rendering. I draw Parzival’s first exit from the Grail Castle: the drawbridge kicks him out; he is on a Grail horse, not his; the horse is dead center on the page, suspended; the drawbridge is center left, partly shown, there is no object center right; the background, a far horizon, is the forest through which our eponymous knight will find himself: the sun is rising. The Grail steed is well fed.

Every year I learn a bit more about left-brain and right-brain polarities. In *A Whole New Mind*, brought out in paperback (2006), Daniel Pink provides us with a nicely apt distinction: “The left hemisphere specializes in text; the right hemisphere specializes in context.” (20) As a teacher, every year I find my own orientation out of which to unite these polarities. Insights such as these nudge me to being more inclusive and more artistic.

### *Writing*

Having laid a suitable foundation for essay writing in the first two high school grades, we now can demand longer and more accomplished essays. Almost always these are expository essays, for there always is some point or other to be proved. The essay’s content is more rigorously expanded: all students are expected to have a point of view cogently expressed; all are expected to include the opinions of those who don’t agree with these thesis statements.

I try to find ways to include creative writing and journalism in the class work, but usually these kinds of writing find their homes in clubs. I have just begun to wonder how to bring blogs into the picture.

As regards research papers, our goal is to help them express one clear idea in an essay, that idea being a synthesis of 1) their own thoughts which, upon inspection, turn out to be received wisdom from their parents, friends, etc.; 2) new thoughts which arise in them as they write the essay, thoughts that may be difficult to capture in words and expressions; and 3) thoughts of critics, other sources, etc. which need to stand in their own integrity.

Students usually find it hard to write an interview questionnaire; much care must be taken to create an investigation which includes general background information and a workable focus on a specific aspect of the topic. Likewise it is hard to conduct an oral interview. They need to practice.

*Grammar* and *Research* are folded into *Writing* in grade 11 so let us adjust our form a little bit. Grammar is either correctly applied or deconstructed creatively. Voice is not thoughtlessly used, either in content or context. There is nothing wrong with being simple when the simple is called for; the opposite is not so true.

Research is expected. Interviews are undertaken. Footnotes are de rigueur. Endnotes are fun to play with. Rather than formal bibliographies, I suggest that the students prepare simple listings of books, articles, interviews, even internet sources appended accurately at the end of the work. It seems more human to allow them to make their own versions of a bibliography before we provide the more accepted forms in grade 12. It is just one more way of ‘honoring’ their creativity and imagination, isn’t it? I mentioned one possibility in the overview of GRADE 11.

In both grades 11 and 12 I try to mitigate the abstractness of citations. As regards the footnote, I put it into a historical perspective, for footnotes have not been with us since time immemorial. One of my favorite books is *The Footnote* by Anthony Grafton. Grafton sets out to find what he often calls “the origins of the historical footnote.” (191) Not content with finding the first notations themselves, he looks to earlier instigations of that notation. We learn that there were many different ways to write a notation before the footnote *per se*. In effect, Grafton leads the reader through a merry romp of historiography and the tending of scholarship until there is a meeting of the ways, in the archive. I have used the book to provide background for what I ask the students to do. I have also referred to it in our conversations about the nature of Old History (in *The Footnote* more commonly called Classical History) and New History. Grafton’s very style shows the students that writing can be fun.

One quick example of both Grafton’s style and the importance of his work: he offers a broad definition of something that dominates the contemporary scene but was new in the Nineteenth Century: Scientific History. This history, says Grafton, “rests on primary rather than secondary sources.” (34) He identifies Leopold von Ranke as the principal

exponent of this way of viewing history and offers us an anecdote about Ranke's promotion of it:

Ranke's books thrilled thousands of readers, while his lectures and seminars won dozens of earnest young men to the belief that history, properly studied, would enable them and their country to master the chaos of the modern world. He made a crowd-pleasing hero for this attractive series of scenes. (35)

Grafton touches upon what we call the astral nature of it all when he says, "Other historians complain about having to read dull sources in dusty archives far from home. But collections of primary sources and folders of archival acts acted on Ranke like clover on a pig." (35) More nutrition.

### *Speaking*

In grade 10 it is important for the students to learn how to say what it is they want to say. They need to get it right. In grade 11, we want them to articulate the mystery of it all as well.

Working with speaking is a full-time job. In the classroom, I emphasize that speaking is only half the story: there must also be listening. In this grade, the students begin to actualize what was provided as instruction in previous grades: we talk for the listening of others. Our words, indeed the very way we breathe, carries a meaning to an 'audience:' sounds carry a burden of meaning and feeling. Such a great opportunity to harmonize our astrality! Many poets, but especially William Shakespeare, offer the students endless opportunities to put themselves on the stage in front of their peers. I have also used 'great speeches' through the ages to bring warmth, scholarship, and responsibility into the history curriculum.

Outside the classroom I treat speech somewhat differently. I am more diffident. I see that the uncertainty that so many carry around with them at this age can find a reflection in their heartfelt sharing of deep thoughts with each other. This speaking out is often a form of exorcism, if that is not too strong a term; it helps forge anew the person she is to become in the future. It must be something to do with the gestures.

One year, I experienced a wonderful amalgam of both the academic and social spheres of speaking. It arose out of a summer reading assignment. *Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl had been assigned to the entire high school student body. On the first day of classes, each of the four high school grades met and discussed this non-fiction work. Faculty members participated in these discussions, but in the upper grades, they intentionally did not take the lead. I was fortunate enough to see the work of all four grades. What an eye-opener. Each class could manage insights that were clearly grade specific: grade 9 was comfortable with deciding what actually happened; grade 10 tried to decide how such a catastrophe as the concentration camps could happen at all; grade 11 struggled with the relationship of Frankl's experience in the camp to his dealing with it in psychological terms; and grade 12 was very interested in understanding the text's psychology, specifically its terms like Logotherapy and "the existential vacuum." For each grade, only those comments which carried the burden of meaning and feeling came

across as honest and convincing. All other comments were more or less preparation for what was clearly so persuasive. No one went beyond this voicing of feeling thinking.

### *Thinking*

There is a difference between the inductive work of grades 9 and 10 and the deductive work of grades 11 and 12, in which we show the students how to remold the foundation with individuality and begin to make it more truly theirs. As high school teachers we emphasize synthetic reasoning to help the students think in a mature fashion. This is completely in keeping with the times; in fact, if Daniel Pink is correct, it is the harbinger of the future when the right-brain will finally command the respect it deserves.

By year's end we can say: "the practical device we have used consistently in three high school grades to imprint thinking into the physical, etheric, and astral nature of the students is the creation of pictures in the mind and the rendering of them in line, sound, and form." This is a gift of anthroposophy and we should use it. At year's end we can ask ourselves: "Is there really anything, more powerful in the pedagogical sense, than picture making?" In grade 12, we will find that the answer to this question is, "Yes, there *can* be."

### GRADE 12

'Full disclosure.' That's what we use these days to forestall criticism, isn't it? In full disclosure, I want to say that I am not content with my work in grade 12. It's because of the potential so evident in grade 11. Does my work enable the students to reach it? Does it prevent them? I find grade 12 a 'work-a-day' kind of world, especially when compared with the magic, mystery, and majesty of grade 11. Over the years, the students have begun to say the same. So many seem to be finished with school by the end of grade 11. Rather than reaching for a true fulfillment of their talents and desires in grade 12, too many seem merely to repeat their successful selves, giving us what we have taught them without taking the process a step higher by digging into themselves a bit deeper.

Of course, as teachers we can experience some richly intimate moments with seniors, especially when they share their inner feeling and thoughts in a more mature manner. But do we have enough time to nurture this important connection so that it too blossoms in its own way? They are very involved with their immediate, present life situations — sometimes to their hazard. They need to get accepted by some colleges. They have many academic demands placed on them.

The culmination of their work with us seems to happen without us.

I wonder: 'Is this the price we pay for our success in that we prepare them for life in a way our society suggests is valuable?' In a way, I think it is so. I often think that as teachers and as a movement we are selling ourselves short as regards what we expect the students to learn and to do in this their last year. We are all so bound up in our own trainings and expectations.

In *The Tempest* Prospero owns up to his own shortcomings and so should we. In the crucial scene, two humans and a magician look upon other humans who are, in a sense, still imprisoned by Prospero:

Sebastian	Ha, ha; What things are these, my Lord Anthonio? Will money buy em?
Anthonio	Very like: one of them Is a plaine Fish, and no doubt marketable,
Prospero	Marke but the badges of these men, my Lords, Then say if they be true: This misshapen knave; His mother was a Witch, and one so strong That could controle the Moone; make flowes, and ebs, And deale in her command, without her power; These three have robd me, and this demy-divell; (For he's a bastard one) had plotted with them To take my life; two of these Fellowes, you Must know, and owne, this Thing of darknesse, I Acknowledge mine. (5.1.307-320)

Can we find time to 'take on' *The Tempest* in grade 12? Could it be summer reading, along with something Russian of course? "Prospero as Ego presence" is a worthy theme, given the nature of the drama. There is a kind of forgiveness which is set as a possibility in a Cell (which is of course akin to a cave):

Prospero	Goe Sirha [Caliban] to my Cell, Take with you your Companions: as you looke To have my pardon, trim it handsomely. (5.1.338-340)
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The theme of forgiveness is essential for grade 12. As we finished our discussion of grade 11 literacy, I asked the question: "Is there really anything more powerful in the pedagogical sense than picture making?" I had this mood of forgiveness in mind when I answered the question, "Yes."

Let us not forget that Prospero is a Magician who imprisons most of the characters appearing on his island. He gathers them together in the way we intellectually gather our facts for analysis or synthesis or simply argumentation or promotion. Prospero has his reasons. He imprisons with the help of Ariel, herself a prisoner, yet a creative one. As the agent of Prospero, Ariel is the creative handling, creative picturing of what he brings together. And doesn't she lead some of them a merry chase around the isle! How important for us all to call to mind that it is Ariel who reminds Prospero of what 'it means' to be a human being.

Ariel	your charm so strongly works 'em That if you now behold them, your affections Would become tender.
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Prospero      Dost thou thinke so, Spirit?

Ariel          Mine would, Sir, were I humane.

Prospero      And mine shall.  
 Hast thou (which are but aire) a touch, a feeling  
 Of their afflictions, and shall not my selfe,  
 One of their kinde, that relish all as sharpely,  
 Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd then thou art?

                  Thogh with their high wrongs I am strook to th'quick,  
 Yet, with my nobler reason, gainst my furie  
 Doe I take part: the rarer Action is  
 In virtue, then in vengeance: they, being penitent,  
 The sole drift of my purpose doth extend  
 Not a frowne further: Goe, release them Ariell,  
 My Charmes Ile breake, their sences Ile restore,  
 And they shall be themselves. (5.1.19-36)

This 'nobler reason' has generated much critical attention. None of it contradicts the role I see for it in the grade 12 curriculum: it is that which allows us to gain access to our better nature, our higher I, if you like. It allows us to feel good about being human, despite our past actions and despite world events happening around us. This optimism is essentially a gift we can give the students as we send them out into the world. It also is the mood we need if we are to benefit from the Prisoner's kiss.

### *Reading Comprehension*

- we concentrate on the 'ego' of the text: the writer's style;
- we resolve the discussion about what a writer actually writes in her work;
- as we explore the 'who' of grade 12 through our approach to style we approach, somewhat hesitantly perhaps, the realization that there just might be something more, some greater 'who' that is writing the author. We leave this thought as a seed in the students.

### *Writing*

- we note the stylistic characteristics of writers. Some students try to imitate them;
- though we continue to assign short essays, we also expect a major paper.
- I compare and contrast the styles of authors with the styles of movies;
- we complete our movement of conceptual condensation from book reports and outlines, through summaries and paraphrases to the precis.

### *Grammar:*

- see grade 11.

*Speaking:*

- we continue the work of grades 9, 10, 11 and provide the ultimate forum: the senior project in which the student will show whatever command of material and presentation she has synthesized within herself by this her eighteenth year.

*Research:*

- we demand a complete, long, well-researched, documented and noted paper on some interesting topic that is critically explored from a notable point of view, with bibliography;
- we can expect the students to use more than one style sheet in their high school years.

*Thinking*

- grade 12 is synthetic throughout.

*Reading comprehension*

If we have taught the students to read for the physical body, etheric body, and astral body of the text, they will quite readily recognize, in a feeling sort of way, the author's style. Or at least recognize that there is some unifying agent which more or less 'explains' the presence of all other textual elements.

For three years we have been telling the students that the writer is not conscious of 'putting into a text' all that the reader discovers. We have been trying, of course, to disabuse them of the idea that anything at all can be 'put into a text,' as if the final product were some bag of goodies and gifts. Just because we often think about literature in a reductionistic sort of way does not make it necessarily so; just because we say "the author does this with this character" does not relieve us of the responsibility of envisioning the author as more than an 'input' machine. By putting off the question until grade 12 we give the students a necessary lesson in life, for what happens is that the question disappears as the students cultivate the response inside themselves!

Now that they have had the conscious experiences of finding meaning in their reading of fiction and non-fictional work, especially in religion, history and sociological texts, now that they have written and rewritten their own thoughtful essays without ever managing to say completely what was 'there' inside them to be said, now that they have heard themselves express their convictions in class and have had to accept in full responsibility the content and articulation of what they said, they are prepared to accept the "mystery of creation." I present it to them in just those terms.

Style is individuality speaking out: they agree with this concept. What is individual becomes the focus of their attention, as should be.

A discovery of this kind carries such force! With a kind of budding new responsibility, through which can speak the voice of ego, they can admit that many intellectual dilemmas have no real meaning. They are astral enjoyments which, though enjoyable, are incapable of inculcating leadership in the human being. Of course, anthroposophy tells us that the ego does not come into its own until around the age of 21; it is certainly coming to birth, though, in these eighteen year olds. The wisdom, the whisper of this new responsibility is itself a pathway into their thinking phase of thinking. It is enough in grade 12 if the students can, through the year, somehow feel the presence of what has yet to emerge out of their education and destinies *and distinguish it from their astrality (that is, their normative way of thinking and feeling.)* To be content with the astral figurations of our times is symptomatic of our age; it is not, however, a sufficiently mature state of being because it leaves out a concern or awareness of a living ego which, *per se*, rules rather than obeys our every wish and thought. Imagine a treasonous, murderous Caliban as ruler of the isle. Can we say we are going to change/save/heal our times or the world or the New World and yet fail to recognize the ego in some manifestation beyond the astral? No. Such a concept offers no life. Naturally, I keep these thoughts to myself and share them with the students only by calling forth from them more intense participation in their own striving and more heart-felt thinking about others.

Whenever I teach seniors I find some way to talk about style. Outside the classroom, I discover what they are reading in their free time and find some way to discuss with them what is their attraction to these works. Since I am by nature more interested in the ‘how’ of an author than her ‘what’ or ‘why’, the conversations naturally run, sooner or later, to style. I can’t imagine having a conversation about style without looking for the mystery that occasions it. Some students, I am happy to learn, may read all that a particular author has written because they like the way she writes — the ‘how’ of her writing.

In the classroom, I have students read out loud their written homework assignments and, tactfully, make suggestions that focus on the structure of the work. For instance, I may point out an indecisive quality of a paragraph that may suffer from seven sentences, all beginning with a clause or phrase.

To narrow our focus, I offer three different approaches to give students a practical glimpse into the nature of style. Typically I use William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, Derek Walcott’s poetry, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. (It has never been possible to work with all three authors in the same year.)

I find William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* very useful. We read the entire work before beginning the search for precise examples of William Golding’s style. I open the conversation by asking the students to characterize the writing. The best conversations include terrain and plot. Invariably we touch upon the importance of the conch. The ‘why’ of it is easily discussed. Eventually, I ask them, “A thing this important must have been a significant discovery. How was it found?” The answer to this question is to be found in the text:

“What’s that?”

Ralph had stopped smiling and was pointing into the lagoon. Something creamy lay among the ferny weeds.

“A stone.”

“No. A shell.”

Suddenly Piggy was a-bubble with decorous excitement.

“S’right. It’s a shell! I seen one like that before. On someone’s back wall. A conch he called it. He used to blow it and then his mum would come. It’s ever so valuable –“

Near to Ralph’s elbow a palm sapling leaned out over the lagoon. Indeed, the weight was already pulling a lump from the poor soil and soon it would fall. He tore out the stem and began to poke about in the water, which the brilliant fish flicked away on this side and that. Piggy leaned dangerously.

“Careful! You’ll break it –“

“Shut up.”

Ralph spoke absently. The shell was interesting and pretty and a worthy plaything; but the vivid phantoms of his day-dream still interposed between him and Piggy, who in this context was an irrelevance. The palm sapling, bending, pushed the shell across the weeds. Ralph used one hand as a fulcrum and pressed down with the other till the shell rose, dripping, and Piggy could make a grab.

Now the shell was no longer a thing seen but not touched, Ralph too became excited. Piggy babbled:

“-a conch; ever so expensive. I bet if you wanted to buy one, you’d have to pay pounds and pounds and pounds – he had it on his garden wall, and my auntie –“

Ralph took the shell from Piggy and a little water ran down his arm. In color the shell was deep cream, touched here and there with fading pink. Between the point, worn away into a little hole, and the pink lips of the mouth, lay eighteen inches of shell with a slight spiral twist and covered with a delicate, embossed pattern. Ralph shook sand out of the deep tube. (16)

Quick analysis by the students points us to the precise, indeed scientific manner, in which Golding writes *Lord of the Flies*. Who else in modern literature is so comfortable talking about fulcrums of human action? Quick synthesis by the students points out the ubiquitous presence of Golding’s writing style in the novel.

Golding seems to raise naturalism to a new height when he talks about clouds; he relentlessly makes clinical comments about the human being, especially when one of the characters is feeling something that is important to himself personally, for instance Golding described Piggy as “a-bubble with decorous excitement” in the passage cited above. We find a good example of both predilections when Simon is sitting before the Lord of the Flies; first we read:

Simon looked up, feeling the weight of his wet hair, and gazed at the sky. Up there, for once, were clouds, great bulging towers that sprouted away over the island, grey and cream and copper-colored. The clouds were sitting on the land; they squeezed, produced moment by moment this close, tormenting heat.

Simon looked directly at the Lord who

. . . hung on his stick and grinned. At last Simon gave up and looked back; saw the white teeth and dim eyes, the blood – and his gaze was held by that ancient, inescapable recognition. In Simon’s right temple, a pulse began to beat on the brain. (138)

*Lord of the Flies* is relentlessly naturalistic. Darwinian ‘survival of the fittest’ is writ large in nature and human nature alike. William Golding pictures it in its clinical appearance in nature and human nature with equal detachment and vigor.

We can more deeply appreciate the novel if we see William Golding’s modern ‘scientific consciousness’ create and describe humanity and one of its critical concerns, society building. (I tell the students that our author was a scientist by avocation before he turned to writing.) The students have no trouble picturing the human being as one who walks around in nature in a detached way, subjected to the laws of physics and relying more on instincts than anything else for survival.

Consequently, they find a consonance between the Golding’s style and the thoughts themselves. We can find more than that, though, for we can take our concept that ‘style is individuality’ and answer a question that our author himself posed when he discussed *Lord of the Flies* for a publicity brochure. William Golding explained:

The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable. The whole book is symbolic in nature except the rescue in the end where adult life appears, dignified and capable, but in reality enmeshed in the same evil as the symbolic life of the children on the island. The officer, having interrupted a man-hunt, prepares to take the children off the island in a cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his cruiser? (204)

“Who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?” Who indeed? In William Golding’s own words, only a “moral” force can effect such a rescue. There is, by definition, no moral force evident in Darwinian naturalism. There is no hope, actually. There is no rescue. There is, though, literature, which concerns itself, however creatively, with the theme of salvation. Even when the message is that there is no hope!

I ask the students to think back upon this work when, in college or later life, they may come across Sisyphus pushing his rock up the hill in his existential obedience to a nature, self-defined in its task and presumably ennobled by the activity.

I ask them to recall the self-dissolution of the important question which has followed us for years, one whose premise was supported by our immaturity and not by any

substantive foundation of its own. I also ask them, “Is there not more to life than dead heads attracting flies?” If so, where do we find it?

In the context of *The Prisoner’s Kiss*, the answer to that question lies not in the “what” or the “how” or even the “why” of our nature, be it our human nature or the nature of the world surrounding us, but in the ‘who,’ the individual. The first two elements of our nature—physical and etheric—ground the age we live in and cannot exist outside it; the third, our astral, brings the questions of our times and the needs of the questioner: it needs to penetrate our times. It is the fourth, the ‘ego’ which *as individual* confronts the personality it finds as a kind of entitlement connected to the physical body, ether body and astral that brings hope to our age. It is the individual, the true ‘who’, that is essentially ‘more than our times’; it is that which can lead our age, and which initiates a true healing.

This I do not tell the students. But I do insist that the *mystery* of the ‘who’, which we have already established over four years, signals the presence of something in life and literature that is more than the evident or already-attempted — in other words something more than the sum of our physical and etheric foundation and the astral activity confronting it.

I never talk about reincarnation unless students ask. I do use a suitable analogue for it when discussing style, though. Poets and some prose writers create themselves anew with every published work. *I treat this process as a transformation of different personalities by something that is more authentic than any single expression of it.* I even call the more authentic, yet never attainable, self the individual. We can feel the mystery of style, its malleability within form, well up within us as we touch upon these transformations.

Whenever possible I use the Nobel Prize winning poet Derek Walcott to show how a poet actually develops a style over time. Derek Walcott, a West Indian poet and playwright, was born in the port of Castries on the island of San Lucia in 1930 to an English father and West Indian mother. His personal heritage and his social circumstances both bespeak a divided self and country. His poetry has always explored this ‘divide.’ For his entire career he has fought for an identity that embraces without denigrating his heritage. He has a poet’s consciousness.

In his early collections he quite overtly explores the poetic conventions and themes of the Western literary tradition within which he is writing. He becomes quite pictorial through his shameless borrowing from English, American, and Russian masters. In 1973 he publishes *Another Life*, his most overt biography. With this publication, his voice changes; from that time on he keeps those elements of the Western tradition which he needs as he simultaneously and with maturing confidence explores the rhythms, musical qualities, geography, and history of his native land. His vocabulary changes, too. His references change and he begins to live as creatively in the reality of his environment as in the world of Poetry. His intention is ever the same: to find his voice which signals his self in his life which is his poetry, writ large. We have a long narrative poem rather than a collection of poems.

It is not only the journey of Derek Walcott that is attractive: after all, which poet of any insight does not undertake this discovery of the self? What attracts me and makes Derek Walcott so valuable is the fact that he is so conscious of it all. As teachers we can track it with the students and show them the process of self discovery. For purposes of our quest, we can say that Derek Walcott is an ever-vigilant and ever-changing (maturing) renderer of the 'who' in literature.

How do I teach this 'who?' Naturally enough, I use the poet's own words and devices.

It is too difficult to show that Derek Walcott always arranges his poems in the collection in such a way as to make a recognizable statement. Rarely do the poems stand alone in a collection, for the poet always creates an inner voice by combining poems into a unit according to theme or cadence or imagery or some other binding poetic element. Each collection of Derek Walcott's work has its own voice. Each voice speaks about the most recent journey of the self. To develop this concept with the students calls for more time than is available. However, it is possible to show what Derek Walcott does with the first poem of the early collections and how it becomes significant.

He published *In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960* in 1962. In the first poem, "Prelude" we find

I, with legs crossed along the daylight, watch  
The variegated fists of clouds that gather over  
The uncouth features of this, my prone island.

Meanwhile the steamers which divide horizons prove  
Us lost;  
Found only  
In tourist booklets, behind ardent binoculars;  
Found in the blue reflection of eyes  
That have known cities and think us here happy. (1-9)

In *The Castaway and other Poems* which he published in 1965 he opens with "The Castaway." We find

The starved eye devours the seascape for the morsel  
Of a sail.

The horizon threads it infinitely.

Action breeds frenzy. I lie,  
Sailing the ribbed shadow of a palm,  
Afraid lest my own footprints multiply. (1-3)

He publishes *The Gulf* in 1969. The first poem is “Ebb.” We need to read almost all of it to find what we are looking for:

Year round, year round, we’ll ride  
this treadmill whose frayed tide  
fretted with mud,

leaves our suburban shoreline littered  
with rainbow much, the afterbirth  
of industry, past scurf-

streaked bungalows  
and pioneer factory;  
but, blessedly, it narrows

through a dark aisle  
of fountaining, gold coconuts, an oasis  
marked for the yellow Caterpillar tractor.

We’ll watch this shoveled too, but as we file  
through its swift-wickered shade there always is  
some island schooner netted in its weave

like a lamed heron  
an oil-crippled gull;  
a few more yards upshore

and it heaves free,  
it races the horizon  
with us, railed to one law,

ruled, like the washed-up moon  
to circle her lost zone,  
her radiance thinned.

The palm fronts signal wildly in the wind,  
but we are bound elsewhere,  
from the last sacred wood.

The schooner’s out too far,  
too far that boyhood.  
Sometimes I turn to see

the schooner, crippled, try to tread the air,  
the moon break in sere sail,  
but without envy. (1-33)



exciting self-conscious poet not only a picture of poetry itself but also the unseen presence of that ineluctable something that needs to speak its own nature and name: the individual. There is one individual who creates all of these different personalities in poetic form.

Some students find this sort of thing ‘too damn clever by half,’ but such a criticism is premature. When we focus on the device used by Walcott to grow himself, we might find it hackneyed: but when it leads him to that moment in *Another Life* when he says

Other men’s voices,  
other men’s lives and lines. (Chapter 16, 84-85)

and we recognize that he is also the ‘other men,’ we know that we are in the hands of a poet who consciously grows from a referential poet into one who is transformational. Sometimes his wonder is perhaps a bit too cleverly conceived and worded, but it is never contrived. He raises the hackneyed to new heights that, along with suffering, is also his noble calling, inspirational source, and everyday journey.

Styles within a style: “It really does make one wonder ‘who’ is writing all this poetry,” I comment to the students. More importantly, it makes one wonder who is writing the poet. This the students can hear as a real question.

There is yet a third way to focus the students’ attention on style in our comprehension of reading. I find it useful to let the students discover its power by seeing how two or more authors handle a given topic.

This gives us the opportunity to move into the world of cultural studies or history. We really can’t teach the Russian block without mentioning that Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Lev Tolstoy both concern themselves with the question of Christianity. I’ve always used the two of them to look into the theme of “I and the World,” for each famous author has a different view which can broadly fall within the concerns of the “World” and the “I.” Lev Tolstoy extols a viable Christian society on earth. He does so by attacking the dogmatic positions and tenets of Christian churches. He tries, in effect, to envision the future world as a Christian state. It is not whimsical to suggest that Lev Tolstoy’s “New World” would be a New Christian World. I won’t provide any examples; they are easily found in his works. Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s relationship to Christianity is more in keeping with the normal concerns of the “I.”

The clearest way to show this relationship is to have the students read “The Grand Inquisitor” from *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Here is the story: The Christ returns in his gentleness to Seville during the Inquisition. The day before His return there had been an *auto da fe* in which hundreds of heretics had been burned at the stake: the crowd had cheered. The Christ returns and walks among this crowd: they cheer and take Him to themselves in the streets. The Grand Inquisitor sees the commotion and has the Christ imprisoned. In jail the Grand Inquisitor recognizes whom he has imprisoned and assures the Prisoner that the next day He will suffer the fate of heretics. The Christ is guilty of returning and *in so doing* changing what for seventeen

centuries had found its rightful place in the dogma of the Church and the authority of the Pope, whom the Grand Inquisitor serves on earth. The people, the crowd, will obey the representative of the Pope. The crowd always obeys authority. The Prisoner listens to the harangue of the Grand Inquisitor who takes Him through the reasons why He must die: the Christ expects too much from humanity, the Christ missed his chance when he did not accept *any* of the offers made to him when He was tempted in the wilderness, the Christ cannot just presume to change what is established.

At this point in the story (which is told by Ivan to Alyosha as his own creation, though he does not know if it is to be rendered in prose or poetry) I read the words of the Grand Inquisitor as he makes his peroration, as he positions himself as a true representative of striving humanity on earth, as he presents himself as the modern, self-confident, responsible Ego. The Grand Inquisitor says:

And we who have taken their [the masses'] sins upon us for their happiness will stand up before Thee and say: "Judge us if Thou canst and darest." Know that I fear Thee not. Know that I too have been in the wilderness, I too have lived on roots and locusts, I too prized the freedom which Thou has blessed men, and I too was striving to stand among They elect, among the strong and powerful, thirsting "to make up the number." But I awakened and would not serve madness. I turned back and joined the ranks of those *who have corrected Thy work*. I left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble. What I say to Thee will come to pass, and our dominion will be build up. I repeat: to-morrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. For if any one has ever deserved our fires, it is Thou. Tomorrow I shall burn Thee. Dixi. (269-270)

I can't tell you how many times I used this quotation, or one like it, to summarize the issue before us. If I had been aware of the analogy between the masses in this work and in Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*, I would have drawn some clever, instructional parallels. Of course I told the ending, and even warmed to it, but that was not my focus. *My focus on the "I and the World" was from the point of view of the I and the World.*

I would never repeat that shortsightedness. I see now that it only serves as preparation. I tell you straight out that it was only with the need to consolidate what I had done in classrooms in the past that the power and importance of an image which I only mentioned before became apparent to me. It became the title of this monograph, already two years in the perplexing.

I now find a way to bring this passage to the students within the context of uncovering, in the best sense, the elusive 'ego' of it all. Do you recall the reaction of the Christ to the harangue of the Grand Inquisitor?

When the Inquisitor ceased speaking he waited some time for his Prisoner to answer him. His silence weighed down upon him. He saw that the Prisoner had

listened intently all the time, looking gently in his face and evidently not wishing to reply. The old man longed for Him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But He suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on his bloodless aged lips. That was all his answer. The old man shuddered. His lips moved. He went to the door, opened it, and said to Him: ‘Go, and come no more. . . . Come not at all, never, never!’ And he let Him out into the dark alleys of the town. The Prisoner went away. (272)

I put it to you: as readers this kiss should somehow be our reaction to the harangue of “The Grand Inquisitor,” a harangue whose only complete analogue is the very world we live in. It is such a kiss that brings back to ‘life’ lips that are dead, “bloodless and aged.” I imagine them as two tombstones lying on the ground: astral monuments. What passes for wisdom from talking heads, be they lords of flies or commentators dressed in suits and dresses, or inquisitors of all persuasions is not even an embrace, let alone a kiss.

It is said rightly that ‘charity begins at home.’ So also does forgiveness; let’s not forget that Prospero was a jailor before he could grow out of it, prodded by the forces of his own imagination. Who is not a jailor?

There is something about those Russian novelists which elevates conversation! Our students seek for the authors’ intentions, their *quem acutor intendit*, by reading the footsteps of their souls. With the Russians, so many times there are footprints of the spirit as well.

### *Writing*

We come to the full exposure of the power of the research paper. The students have learned to collect their thoughts into paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words so as to express in a reasonable fashion the full extent of their explorations and thinking. They know they write to express their own thoughts; they know they write so that others can understand those thoughts. The students have learned to incorporate the thoughts of others into their narratives and have practiced using quotations marks to note such activity; they know how and when to track the ‘incorporated thoughts’ of others in their text by using endnotes or footnotes which themselves have a certain traditional formatting. What more can we say? The task is clear; the support is at hand. Now, we expect them *to do*.

If we have waited until grade 12 to show the students the fine points of bibliography citation they will come to the experience with a freshness which, though not to be mistaken for enthusiasm, is at least tinged with some amount of interest. Unfortunately, I know of no critical book comparable to *The Footnote* to ameliorate the pain of compiling bibliographies. I did have one riotous class one year, though. I dramatized the reading of different bibliographic notations, stressing the punctuation quite elaborately. We had great fun, especially when the parenthesis appeared from time to time in all its looming grandeur..

As we read drafts of the research papers we recognize that the students do indeed have a style of their own, more or less consciously used. It is recognition that we want to teach them in grade 12. They should know when their sentence structure is too elusive and prevaricating to carry the concise thought they are trying to bring to birth. They should recognize certain habits and begin to separate themselves from an unconscious attachment to the form; for example, they should recognize how their use of adverb clauses to introduce a sentence often prevents them from getting directly to the point. To read a sentence for its intention and not simply for its correctness or attraction needs to be taught over and over in grade 12. Often enough, I feel that the students are too young to create distance and objectivity. Nonetheless, the need should be emphasized.

Writing research papers is an act that defines our age. We teach it and the students learn it. But let us never forget how cerebral both it and our age are. We need to provide a balance to its underwhelming conformity.

Creative writing electives and journalism classes and clubs offer just such opportunities for students to work out the subjective-objective relationship to themselves and to reality. They are always encouraged, as far as I know.

I offered an elective entitled “Novels go to the Movies.” I thought it would be fun and instructive to have students read a novel, watch the movie spawned by that novel, and discuss the relationships between the two. The elective was open to grade 11 and 12 students, so we worked through the entire spectrum of setting, story line, plot, ideas, characters, concepts, and authorial styles. (I always showed the movies in the evening and invited the entire school community to come to both the viewing and the general discussion which followed immediately.) Some of the more instructive works we used were Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men* and the first movie version written and directed by Robert Rossen; Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Nile* and its 1978 rendition directed by Andy Wilson; Ryunosuke Akutagawa’s short story “In the Grove” which became *Roshomon* in 1950, directed by Akira Kurosawa; and Isabel Allende’s *Like Water for Chocolate*, which was released under the same title in 1994, directed by Alfonso Arau.

We read the novel, we ‘read’ the movie, we discussed the similarities and differences and in these activities intuited much about style as we reviewed the elements of literature. For instance, one recurring question was, “How closely does the movie follow the novel?” This ‘how’ led us organically to the ‘why’ that informs different media. “The visual arts must be different from the literary,” we declared. Then we tried to see why it was so. It is also interesting to ask: “Who is the ‘who’ in a movie?”

I would teach this class differently were I to do it again. I would not confine myself to reading the novel and ‘reading’ the film. I would include a ‘writing’ component. I don’t mean that I would ask the students to write up their thoughts as essays: that we did. (Not to much effect, I must say.) No, I would begin with the movie, rather than the novel, and then ask: how will the author write this as a novel? The student either individually or with my help would select certain moments in the film that she would transliterate into prose.

She would have to concentrate on style, for the story line and plot and characters and all that was already given to her. No great shakes finding them. Style would direct her attention. For those students who need literal examples of what is expected of them, I would suggest the early Sherlock Holmes movies, starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, for they easily transliterate into the written short stories of Arthur Conan Doyle.

Alongside the technical value of this exercise arises its true worth: a picture which is turned into words. Imagine it. We would exercise the picture-making capacity of the students in an aggressive manner. Simultaneously, we could insist for pragmatic reasons—to which they would readily respond—that they be more conscious of what they were writing *before they indeed did it*.

I do not use writing to teach students how to develop their own style. I am certain that a style develops out of the need to express what we call the self. In most pedagogical systems this statement is complete. For Waldorf teachers it is not.

From time to time, in passing, I do ask the students to imagine a writer's style; that is, I ask them to make a picture of it in their minds so as to capture its dynamic individuality. Generally speaking, the students find it easier to picture what Hemingway does than to consolidate their thoughts into an image for what any of the Russians create. (With this exercise it is possible to see which students are deeply attached to their feelings, and thus able to make pictures that show their reactions rather than the author's actions, and those who have begun to move from this dominance of feeling into the more objective thinking phase of thinking which will become their domain after leaving high school.)

### *Speaking*

The goal has already been expressed in the overview of grade 12. What is to be done has also been mentioned earlier in the suggestions I offered about technique in grades 9, 10, and 11.

*Grammar* and *Research* have been folded into the topic of *Writing*, as was the case in grade 11.

### *Thinking*

We succeed in our unspoken task of relating the students to their own thinking process when they develop the habit and capacity to explore their own conceptions, preconceptions, and patterns of thinking. To 'get an answer right' now and then is a bonus. By grade 12 they realize that they are as much a phenomenon as the world outside them. We make them consider the relationship of the individual to the society (world). Such an exploration of their own thinking in high school prepares the way for an energetic (willed) and sympathetic (felt) command of clear thinking in their ensuing lives. All these assertions support the oft-repeated phrase, "We prepare students for life."

This thought returns us to the introductory comments of this monograph. Interestingly enough, we are in much the same situation we face every year when we graduate a grade 12: the thought arises, “Now What?” Our usual response is to prepare for the coming year. We do it in a variety of ways.

I would put it to you that the most harmonious, pragmatic, and influential way to improve what we do in the high school is to embrace more consciously some of the anthroposophical insights that support our work. (The subject matter we need to use will come almost of its own accord. There is not much point in concentrating on the traditional reading material when, actually, it is the children we need to learn to read. The same reservation can be raised about other pedagogical models.)

What follows are some preliminary thoughts to that end. Perhaps in the future *The Prisoner’s Kiss* could serve as a prolegomenon for a more comprehensive exploration of the curriculum and its essential ‘identity.’ [Such a work would necessarily synthesize the entire curriculum (sciences, maths, arts) and, more importantly perhaps, incorporate the suggestive work being done with different learning styles, a topic that could only be hinted at in this monograph.] These following thoughts are not exhaustive, illustrative, nor exclusive; they are intended to be suggestive.

It would help our true work immeasurably were we to concentrate our attention on our four-year high school curriculum. We want to see more clearly its source, not just its articulation.

- Primary in this endeavor is attention to the seven-year developmental cycle and the sub-division of each cycle: for instance, what do we actually carry as a concept in our minds when we work in the high school with the thoughts about willing in the Thinking phase, feeling in the Thinking phase, thinking in the Thinking phase?
- The students graduate their first moon node awaits them? Should this influence our work with the curriculum?
- Is there a need for a Waldorf college along the model of a university or other institution of higher learning?

It would help our work immeasurably were we to broaden our conception of ourselves as teachers:

- Rudolf Steiner often spoke about the role of teachers. In our high school ‘text’, *Education for Adolescents*, he says: “Our teaching must live. It must reach beyond the ideas, images, feeling, and skills the children have acquired. We must give them something that can—depending on their dispositions and possibilities—continue into their adult lives.” (16) I suggest to you that it is time for us to explore more consciously the thought that our teaching must “reach beyond the ideas, images, feeling, and skills” that we impart. In the final lecture we read, “During our reflections on education, we have had to emphasize that our work as teachers depends on the manner in which we ourselves develop and find our way to the world.” (120)

- Thus, we must reach to the Pedagogical Law which focuses our attention as adults on the Spirit Self. What do we actually do when, in dealing with a student who is living in her astral while birthing the Ego, we strengthen our Spirit Self emerging from our Ego?
- We find the spiritual truth of the Pedagogical Law working in *The Work of the Angels in Man's Astral Body*.
- We discover that the astral body is not only the body of feeling and thinking but also of faith in the lecture cycle *Faith, Love, Hope*. We discover also the consequences of neglecting this work.

It would help our work immeasurably were we to know more accurately the times in which we live.

- We need to take seriously the results of not allowing spiritual impulses to enter our teaching, as shown in *The Work of the Angels in Man's Astral Body*.
- We need as a faculty to talk to one another: what is thinking in the humanities, in science, movement, the arts, movement? Focus on inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. Sciences need deductive reasoning: it leads to a resolution, something emphatic which is a true statement; in humanities, it leads to nominalism, to divergent resolutions. Also, how important it would be to answer this question: How does the 'why' and 'who' express itself in the teaching of science and math?
- If we believe as a faculty in what our peers can do, we can more easily believe in what the students can do.
- If we can understand thinking processes we can participate consciously in the events of the world around us, not to complain but to forge something substantive and new: social forms out of individual activity in a group. Our times are seeking the spirit because the spirit is approaching.
- It would make teaching symptomatology a lot easier if the students, already aware of the three-fold nature of society, already comfortable with having and articulating thoughts, were ready to look in all seriousness for those symptoms which bespeak the illnesses of the times. Not all illnesses are fatal; in fact, it is an exciting challenge to be healthy.
- It is always beneficial to find our *modus operandi* in Rudolf Steiner's *Awakening to Community*: "We must learn, on the anthroposophical path, to start with knowledge, raise ourselves to the level of art and end in the warmth of religious feeling"

It is neither possible nor sensible to predict what will arise from deeper insights into what we are as individuals and what we do as a faculty in a Waldorf high school. It is customary to say something like: We need to create new forms and new intentions out of our insights. In the end, all will depend on how well one listens to the spirit which motivates us all.

Up to now, human beings have read and written nature and literature from its own point of view and been led to the spirit. In these times we need to be spiritual beings all the more consciously, reading and writing and sounding nature and literature from that

perspective. After all, it is the Prisoner's kiss that frees us: not as a reflection, as in these few comments about literacy, not as an artistic ideal, as in *The Brothers Karamazov*, but as an actual embrace that we receive on our journey of love through the I and through the World.