

Waldorf Journal Project #11

May 2008

AWSNA

Morality and Ethics in Education

#2

Compiled and edited by

David Mitchell

It is curious—curious that physical courage should be so common in the world, and moral courage so rare.

— Mark Twain

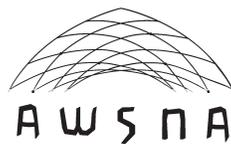
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FOREWORD

The *Waldorf Journal Project*, sponsored by the Waldorf Curriculum Fund, brings translations of essays, magazine articles, and specialized studies from around the world to English-speaking audiences. This eleventh edition of translations from Waldorf journals in Norway, Germany, and Switzerland is comprised of articles intended for personal and faculty study.

The theme for this edition, as well as for *Waldorf Journal Project #10*, is morality and ethics in education. At a conference at Harvard University exploring the needs of education in the 21st century, a group of experts called for a return of morality and ethics to curricula of the American schools. It was mentioned that Waldorf education has successfully incorporated these themes and a question arose: Why don't they share their ideas? *Waldorf Journals #10* and *#11* are an attempt to do just that. There is much written on these topics and this is merely a sampling.

The first article is by Rudolf Steiner; in it he sets forth the basis of lifelong health upon the foundation of a moral and ethical education. This is followed by an article by Christopher Clouder in which he makes a case for the protection of childhood. Karl Brodersen looks at the nature and development of the moral "self" in each child: How do we change during our lives but remain the same? How do we take responsibility for our actions? Edward Warren explores the free and unfree spirit of the adolescent. Oddvar Granby reviews Henning Andersen's book *The Odyssey of Conscience*, and Oskar Hansen explores war and peace from a moral perspective. Next we take a practical look at geography in an essay by Christof Goepfer who shows how a school can provide moral development. This is followed by Oskar Hansen's thoughts on the abyss created by modern science and morality. We end with a provocative article by Sergei Prokofieff on the being of the Internet.

We hope that you will be both informed and inspired by these writings.

All the articles are available on-line at

<http://www.waldorflibrary.org>

For those not interested in downloading the material, inexpensive spiral bound copies are available from:

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The editor is interested in receiving your comments on the articles selected. We would also be interested in hearing what areas you would like to see represented in future *Waldorf Journal Projects*. If you know of specific articles that you would like to see translated, please contact the editor.

— David Mitchell, editor
Waldorf Journal Projects

FORCES LEADING TO HEALTH AND ILLNESS IN EDUCATION

by

Rudolf Steiner

translated by René Querido

By permeating our knowledge with anthroposophy, it is possible to unfold a vital life of soul. We need this vital soul life if we wish to have the strength for our teaching and education. I would like to speak to you now about something that is pre-eminently a goal to strive for in education, namely, that through a particular orientation in educational activity, inner forces can be gathered in order to fire the heart in an educational sense.

Today I wish to speak to the following question: With what forces are we really working when we work educationally? Actually, this question cannot be answered in any definite sense by the culture of today. We can say, of course, that the outer life, within which human beings stand, making it possible for them to earn a living, requires them to have capacities that they cannot have yet as children. We must impart such capacities to them. The behavior proper for adults is also, perhaps, something that the child cannot acquire by himself; it must be imparted to him through education. But the answer to the question of why do we actually educate remains something rather superficial in modern culture, because the adult today does not really see anything of great value in what he became through the teaching and education he received. He does not look back with any particularly deep gratitude to what he has become through his education. Ask yourself in your own heart whether this gratitude is always alive in you. In individual cases, of course, it may be present on reflection, but on the whole we do not think with deep gratitude about our own education, because the human soul does not have a full realization of what education actually means, nor which forces in human nature are quickened by it. That is why it is so difficult nowadays to arouse in people enthusiasm for education. All our methods, all our ingenious, formed, outer methods of education, are of little value in this respect. Answers to the question how can this or that be achieved are of little use.

What is of the greatest importance, however, is for a person to have enthusiasm in his work and, if he is to be a true teacher, to be able to develop this enthusiasm to the full. This enthusiasm is infectious, and it alone can work miracles in education. The child eagerly responds to enthusiasm, and, when there is no response on his part, it usually indicates a lack of this enthusiasm in the teacher. As a kind of obvious secret, let me say that although a great deal has been said about enthusiasm here, when I go through the classes in the school I see a kind of depression, a kind of heaviness in the teachers.

The lessons are often conducted with certain heaviness. This heaviness must be eliminated. Actually, it may also express itself in artificial enthusiasm. Artificial enthusiasm can achieve nothing at all. The only enthusiasm capable of achieving anything is that kindled by our own living interest in the subjects with which we must deal in the classroom.

Now, it is essential for you to realize that as teachers we need to develop a consciousness of our own. It is necessary for us to work at cultivating this consciousness. This work to develop our own consciousness is certainly made infinitely more difficult by the fact that in the higher grades we must take into account the impossible demands made upon our children from outside in preparation for graduation. This lies like a leaden burden upon the teaching in the higher grades. Nevertheless, it is essential not to lose sight of our own goal, and therefore we must work to develop this consciousness, the Waldorf teacher's consciousness, if I may so express it. This is only possible, however, when in the field of education we come to an actual experience of the spiritual. Such an experience of the spiritual is difficult to attain for modern humanity, and this fact must be faced and understood. We must realize that we really need something quite specific, something that is hardly present anywhere else in the world, if we are to be capable of mastering the task of the Waldorf school. In all humility, without any trace of pride or arrogance, we must become conscious of this, but conscious of it inwardly, deep in our hearts, not merely by talking about it; within our hearts we must be able to become conscious of it. This is possible, however, only if we have a clear understanding of what humanity has lost in this respect, has lost just in the last three or four centuries. It is this that we must find again.

What has been lost is the realization that when the human being enters the world out of his pre-earthly existence, he is, compared with the actual forces of the being of man, a being who needs to be healed. This bond of education with the healing of man has been lost from sight. During a certain period of the Middle Ages, certainly, it was believed that the human being, as man on earth, was ill and that his health had to be restored; that the human being as he was on the earth actually stood below his proper level and that something real had to be done in order to make man truly man. This is often understood merely in a formal sense. It is said that the human being must evolve, must be brought to a higher level, but this is meant abstractly, not concretely. It will be interpreted concretely only when the activity of education is actually brought into connection with the activity of healing. In healing a sick person, one knows that something has actually been achieved: if the sick person has been made healthy, he has been raised to a higher level, to the level of the normal human being. In ancient times those who knew the world mysteries regarded birth as synonymous with illness, because, in fact, when the human being is born he falls in a certain sense below his proper level and is not the being he was in pre-earthly existence. In comparison with the higher human nature, it is really something abnormal for the human being to bear within him constituents of his body, to have to bear certain heaviness. It would not be considered particularly intelligent today to say that,

in comparison with the higher nature of man, it is of the nature of illness to have to struggle continually until death with the physical forces of the body. Without such radical conceptions, however, we cannot approach the reality of what education means. Education must have something of the process of healing. In order to make this clear, let me offer the following.

The human being really lives within four complexes of forces. In one he is active when he walks, moves his legs with a pendulum swing, or when he uses his legs in order to dance or make other movements. This movement, taking place in the outer, physical world of space, can also be pictured as bringing about changes of location in space. Similarly, other possibilities of human movement, of the arms, hands, head, eye muscles, and so forth, can be designated as changes in location of an ordinary inanimate body, that is to say, if we leave out of account the inner activity of the human being. This is one complex of forces within which the human being lives and is active.

The second is unfolded when man begins to work upon the physical substances that he absorbs into himself; in the widest sense this includes everything that belongs to the activity of nourishment. Whereas the limbs of man are the mediators of what man has in common with beings that change their physical location, there is another activity that man needs in order to continue the activity connected with the outer substances that man absorbs as nourishment. If you put a piece of sugar into your mouth, it dissolves. This is a continuation of what sugar is in the outer world. Sugar is hard and white. You dissolve it, and it becomes liquid, viscous, and then undergoes further changes. The chemist speaks of chemical changes, but that is not relevant here. The sugar continually changes. It is worked upon and absorbed into the whole organism. There you have a second kind of activity. This continues right into the rhythmic system, and then the rhythmic system takes over the activity of the digestive system. What happens in this second kind of activity of man, however, is very different from the human activity of moving the limbs or of moving the whole human body in the outer world. The activity of nourishment is quite different from the activity exercised when we move outwardly or, let us say, lift a weight. This activity of nourishment cannot proceed at all without the intervention, at every point of this activity, of the astral nature of the human being. The astral nature of the human being must permeate each individual part of this activity, of nourishment. In the activity that I have described as the activity of walking, grasping, and so on, we are dealing essentially with the same forces man makes use of that we can also verify physically. What really happens in these movements is that the etheric organism is set in motion and through its mediation arises a leverage movement that we can see in an act of grasping or walking. If we focus on the activity of walking or grasping, we need only consider that which we have in the physical world as it is inserted within the working of the etheric; then we have what happens in man. We never have this, however, if we consider the activity of nourishment. This can arise only if the astral body takes hold of processes that otherwise we have in the test tube. There astral forces above all must be at work, and a fact that is considered nary at all is

that in this process physical forces no longer play a part. This is exceedingly interesting, because it is generally believed that in nourishment, for example, physical forces are at work. As soon as the human being no longer exists in relation to the outer world, the physical forces cease to have their *raison d'être*; they are no longer active, no longer have any effect. In the activity of nourishment, the physical substances are worked upon by the astral and etheric. The physical effect of a piece of sulfur or salt outside the body has no significance within the body. Only the astral nature of a substance is seized or taken hold of by the astral, and then the etheric-astral is the really active factor in nourishment.

Going further, we come to the activities taking place in the rhythmic nature of man, in the blood rhythm, in the breathing rhythm. In their inner constitution these activities are similar to the forces at work in the system of nourishment. They are the result of cooperation between the etheric and the astral, but in the activity of digestion the astral is in a certain respect weaker than the etheric, and in the rhythmic activity the astral becomes stronger than the etheric. In the rhythmic system the etheric withdraws more into the background (though actually only the etheric that is *within* the human being). The etheric outside the human being begins to take part again in the activity that is exercised in the rhythmic system of man, so that actually with the activity of breathing one has the force of man's inner etheric body, the force of the outer ether of the world, and the astral activity of man.

Now, picture to yourselves what is really going on when the human being breathes. The physical activity of carbon, oxygen, and so forth, is completely suppressed, but the combined working of the etheric outside, the etheric within, and the astral is a most important factor. This plays a great part. These are the forces, however, that we must know in any substance if we wish to speak of the healing effect of that substance. We cannot discover the extent to which a substance is a remedy if we do not know how that substance, when introduced into the body, is laid hold of by these three systems of forces. The whole of therapy depends upon knowledge of these three forces in connection with the substances used. Knowledge of the healing influence in the outer and inner etheric and in the astral is what constitutes therapy in the real sense. What does it mean when antimony, for example, is used as a remedy? It simply means that some form of antimony is introduced into the body; it is laid hold of in a certain way by the inner etheric forces, by the outer etheric forces that enter by way of the breathing, and by the astral forces in the human being. We realize the extent to which antimony is a remedy when we understand the effect of these three systems of forces on a substance within the human organism.³

In ascending to the rhythmic activity, therefore, we come to recognize a much more delicate process than exists, for example, in the activity of nourishment. It is essentially this rhythmic activity that must be considered if we wish to recognize the healing effects. Unless we know how a particular substance affects the rhythm of breathing or the blood circulation, we cannot understand the nature of this substance as a remedy.

Now the strange thing is this. Whereas the doctor brings into operation the therapeutic forces in the unconscious, in the rhythmic system of the blood circulation or the breathing, as teachers we must bring the next higher stage into operation: that which is connected with the activity in the nerves, in the senses. This is the next metamorphosis of the remedy. What we do as teachers is really to work in such a way on the physical human being that the substances that are taken up are subjected to the etheric activity and to the outer physical activity—namely, to perception, whenever something is perceived—and to the inner physical activity, that is to say, to the inner changes of location brought about mechanically through the human being's moving himself. Whereas in the remedy are contained the outer and inner etheric and the astral, in education are contained outer physical forces (as in gymnastics) and inner physical forces. When the human being bows his head, a change takes place in his entire dynamic system; the center of gravity shifts a little, and so forth. In the workings of light upon the eye we recognize outer physical forces in their greatest delicacy and refinement. Moreover, outer physical forces are operating when pressure is made on an organ of touch. We therefore have etheric activity, outer physical forces, and inner physical forces, that is to say, physical changes in the nervous system, destruction in the nervous system. These are true physical processes that are actually present only in the nervous system of the human being. It is with these three systems that we are essentially dealing as a teacher with the child. This is the higher metamorphosis of what is done in healing.

What kinds of activity are present in the human being? There are the movements of walking, grasping, the movement of the limbs, outer changes of location, the activity in the process of nourishment, the rhythmic activity—which is through and through a healing activity—and the perceiving activity if we regard it from outside. Regarded from within, educational activity is entirely a perceiving activity.

This will now give you deeper insight into the nature of the human being. You will be able to say to yourselves that, since factors are active in the rhythmic system that are healing factors, there is a doctor continually present in the human being. In fact, the whole rhythmic system is a doctor. The function of a doctor is to heal something, however, and if healing is needed there must be illness. If that is so, walking, grasping, digesting must be continual processes of illness, and breathing and blood circulation a continual healing. This is indeed the case. In modern science, however, where discrimination is lacking, it is not realized that the human being is continually becoming ill. Eating and drinking, especially, are processes that continually create illness. We cannot avoid continually injuring our health through eating and drinking. Eating and drinking to excess merely injure us more seriously, but we are always injuring ourselves to a slight degree. The rhythmic system, however, is continually healing this illness. Human life on the earth is a continual process of becoming ill and healing. This process of becoming ill brings about a genuinely physical illness. What the human being does in intercourse with the outer world, the consequences of walking, grasping,

and the like, is a more intense but less noticeable process of becoming ill. We must counter it through a higher process of healing, through a process of education, which is a metamorphosis of the healing process.

The forces inherent in education are metamorphoses of therapeutic forces: they are therapeutic forces transformed. The goal of all our educational thinking must be to transform this thinking so as to rise fruitfully from the level of physical thinking to spiritual thinking. In physical thinking we have two categories which, in our academic age, give rise to a vacuous enthusiasm that has such a terrible influence. We have only two concepts: right-wrong, true-false. To discover whether something is "true" or "false" is the highest ideal of those whose entire lives are given up to the world of academia. In the concepts "true" and "false," however, there is so little reality. They are something formal, established by mere logic, which actually does nothing but combine and separate. The concepts of "true" and "false" are dreadfully barren, prosaic, and formal. The moment we rise to the truths of the spiritual world we can no longer speak of "true" and "false," for in the spiritual world that would be as nonsensical as saying that to drink such and such a quantity of wine every day is "false." The expression "false" here is out of place. One says something real regarding this only by saying that such a thing gives rise to illness. "Correct" and "incorrect" are outer, formal concepts, even regarding the physical. Pertaining to the spiritual world, the concepts of "true" and "false" should be discarded altogether. As soon as we reach the spiritual world we must substitute "healthy" and "ill" for "true" and "false." If someone said about a lecture, such as the one I gave here yesterday evening, that is "right," it would mean nothing at all. In the physical world things can be "right"; in the spiritual world nothing is "wrong" or "right." There, things are reality. After all, is a hunchback "true" or "false"? In such a case we cannot speak of right or wrong. A drawing may be false or correct, but not a plant; a plant however, can be healthy or diseased. In the spiritual world things are either healthy or ill, fruitful or unfruitful. In what one does there must be reality. If someone considers that a lecture such as I gave yesterday is healthy or health-bringing, that is to the point. If he simply considers it "right," he merely shows that he cannot rise to the level where reality lies. It is a question of health or illness when we are dealing with spiritual truths, and it is precisely this that we must learn in connection with education. We must learn to regard things in their educational application as either healthy or unhealthy, as healing or injurious to health. This is of particular significance if one wishes to engender a true consciousness of oneself as a teacher. It may be said that engendering this consciousness begins with passing from the "true" and "false" of logic, to the reality of "healthy" or "unhealthy." Then we come quite close to understanding the principle of healing. This can be developed in concrete detail, but we must also let ourselves be stimulated by a comprehensive knowledge of the human being, a knowledge of the human being in relation to the world around him.

In describing the breathing process, for example, according to modern science, no particular weight is laid on the essential factor, on the actual human

factor. It is said that the air consists of oxygen and nitrogen, leaving aside for the moment the other constituents. The human being inhales oxygen along with a certain amount of nitrogen. He then exhales oxygen combined with carbon, and also nitrogen. The percentages are measured, and it is believed that the essentials of the process have been described. Little account is taken, however, of the essentially human factor. This begins to dawn upon us when we consider the following. There is a definite percentage of nitrogen in the air that is good for breathing, and also a definite percentage of oxygen. Suppose a man comes to a region where the air is poor in nitrogen, containing less than the normal percentage. If the person breathes in this nitrogen-poor air, this air gradually becomes richer in nitrogen through his breathing. He exhales from his body nitrogen that he would not otherwise exhale in order to augment the nitrogen content of the air in his environment. I do not know whether any account is taken of this in physiology today. I have often pointed out that the human being living in air that is poor in nitrogen corrects this lack; he prefers to take nitrogen from his own organic substances, depriving them of it in order to augment the nitrogen content of the outside air. He does the same with respect to the normal content of oxygen in the air. The human being is so intimately related to his environment that the moment the environment is not as it ought to be, he corrects it, improves upon it. We may say then that the human being is constituted in such a way that he needs nitrogen and oxygen not only for himself; it is even more necessary for him to have nitrogen and oxygen in certain percentages in his environment than within his own organism. The environment of a human being is more important for his subconscious forces than the make-up of his own body. The incredibly interesting fact is that through his instincts the human being has a far greater interest in his environment than in the make-up of his own body. This is something that can be proved by experiment, provided the experiments are arranged intelligently. It is only a question of arranging experiments in this realm. If our research institutes would only tackle such problems, what a vast amount there would be for them to do! The problems are there and are of tremendous importance. They are terribly important for education, too, for it is only now that we can ask why the human being needs an environment containing a particular amount of nitrogen and a particular amount of oxygen. We know that in the inner activity of nourishment or general growth, all kinds of combinations of substances are formed in the human being, revealing themselves in a particular way when man becomes a corpse. It is only in this dead form, however, that these things are investigated by science today.

Now the strange thing is that in the sphere of the human being that encompasses part of the rhythmic activity and part of the metabolic-limb activity, there is a tendency for an activity to unfold between carbon and nitrogen. In the sphere that extends from the rhythmic upward to the nerve-sense activity, there is a tendency to unfold an activity between carbon and oxygen. It is truly interesting, if one observes with a soul constitution not worn out by dry scholarship, to take a look at sparkling soda water, where the carbon dioxide appears in the liquid as the result of the interplay of carbon

and oxygen. If one observes these bubbles, one has directly and imaginatively a view of what goes on in the course of the rhythmic breathing activity from the lung system toward the head. The bubbling effervescence in sparkling water is a picture of what, in a fine and delicate way, plays upward toward the human head. Looking at a spring of sparkling water, we can say that this activity of the rising carbon dioxide is really similar, only in a coarser form, to a continual, inward activity within the human being that rises from the lungs to the head. In the head, something must continually be stimulated by a delicate, intimate sparkling-water activity; otherwise, the human being becomes stupid or dull. If we neglect to bring this effervescence of sparkling water to the head of a human being, then the carbon within him suddenly shows an inclination for hydrogen instead of oxygen. This rises up to the brain and produces “marsh gas,” such as is found in subterranean vaults, and then the human being becomes dull, drowsy, and musty.

To begin with, these things confront us as inner—one would like to say—physical activities, but they are not really physical, for the production of marsh gas or carbon dioxide becomes in this case an inner spiritual activity. We are not being led into materialism here but into the delicate weaving of the spiritual in matter.

Now if, in teaching languages, for example, we make the child learn too much vocabulary, if we make him memorize through an unconscious mechanization, this process can lead to the development of marsh gas in the head. If we bring as many living pictures as possible to the child, the effect is such that the breathing system lets the carbon dioxide effervesce toward the head. We therefore play a part, in fact, in something that makes for either health or illness. This shows us how as teachers we must demand a higher metamorphosis of the forces of healing. To be able to perceive these hidden relationships in the human organism kindles enthusiasm in the highest degree. We realize for the first time that the head is a remarkable vault that can be filled with either marsh gas or carbon dioxide. We feel we are standing before the deeper wellsprings of existence.

In the next lecture we shall study another activity, with which this activity must be brought into balance. This can happen, however, only when there is on the one hand the right kind of teaching in the musical sphere and, on the other, the right kind of teaching in lessons that are based upon outer perception and not upon the musical sphere. Thus, our teaching takes shape, and our interest is aroused in the human being before us. To this something else must be added: the feeling of responsibility. The consciousness of a Waldorf teacher should be imbued with the realization that makes him say in all humility: People are let loose into the educational world today as if the totally blind were sent out to paint in color. Few know what is really taking place in education. It is no wonder that a blind man has no particular enthusiasm for painting in color; no wonder there is no real enthusiasm for education in the world! The moment we enter into education in the way described, however, the whole art of our education will provide the stimulus for this enthusiasm, and we shall feel that we are in touch with the wellsprings of the world, and

find the true feeling of responsibility. We will realize that we can bring about either health or illness. This enthusiasm on the one hand and a feeling of responsibility on the other—both must arise in us.

Additional Lectures from Rudolf Steiner on Moral Education

Title	Book
<i>“Pedagogy and Art”</i>	GA 36 Lecture notes
<i>“Pedagogy and Morality”</i>	GA 36 Lecture notes
	GA 304a Stuttgart, March 26, 1923
	GA 304a The Hague November 19, 1923
	GA 305 Lecture Oxford Course August 24, 1922
	GA 218 Lecture London November 19, 1922
<i>“The Education of Children from the Perspective of Spiritual Science”</i>	GA 34 Lecture Article in “Lucifer Gnosis,” 1907
<i>“Striving People of Our Times”</i>	GA 176 Lecture “Truths of Humanity’s Development” Berlin, July 3, 1917
<i>“Paths of Spriritual Knowledge and the Renewal of Artistic Morality”</i>	Dornach February 2, 1915 GA 079
<i>“The Educational Practice”</i>	GA 306
<i>“Social Understanding from Spiritual Science”</i>	GA 191 November 14, 1919

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION
AND THE RIGHT TO AN
INVIOULATE CHILDHOOD

by

Christopher Clouder

Dostoyevsky's earliest memory comes from when he was three years old. He was brought into a room by his governess and asked, in the presence of some guests, to say his evening prayers. Kneeling before the icon he began "Dear Mother God, all my hope is in Thee— give me shelter under Thy wing." This prayer he never forgot. He taught it to his own children and repeated it throughout his life.¹

This event, from the early decade of the last century, is far removed from the experience of most children of today. A deep-seated attitude of reverence, developed and nurtured in the very early years, is for nearly all the world's children a thing of the past. The tensions and turbulence of our times leave little space for such attitudes to be fostered. Hence the growing debate about values and spirituality in education and the bringing up of children that has become an important aspect of current concerns. Louis MacNeice's poem "Prayer before Birth" is more indicative of our times.

I am not yet born; console me.
I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,
with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,
on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me.

I am not yet born; forgive me.
For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words
when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me,
my treason engendered by traitors beyond me,
my life when they murder by means of my
hands, my death when they live me.

I am not yet born; O fill me
With strength against those who would freeze my
humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton,
would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with
one face, a thing, and against all those
who would dissipate my entirety, would
blow me like thistledown hither and

thither or hither and thither
like water held in the
hands would spill me.²

When we speak of the right to an inviolate childhood it becomes a truism. No right-thinking adult is against it, yet many children do face a world that contains threats to their healthy and happy development, as outlined in this poem. And MacNeice's conclusion is a stark one:

Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.
Otherwise kill me.

This is the antithesis of the hope and joy that each child brings into life at birth. Rembrandt's paintings of Christ's birth in a stable at Bethlehem, where the light streaming from the child shines into the surrounding darkness and embraces even the most humble of creatures in the dismal areas of the structure, are a depiction of a universal truth. A newborn baby brings light and love with it that can illuminate all the recesses of the human heart. As adults we participate in an intuitive wonder that draws us towards the baby:

It is of extraordinary significance that we, in our descent into earthly life, draw together forces from the universal ether, and thus take with us, in our ether body, a kind of image of the cosmos. If one could extract the human ether body at the moment when the human being is uniting himself with the physical body, we should have a sphere which is far more beautiful than any formed by mechanical means—a sphere containing stars, zodiac, sun and moon.³

A child is born into a social context. "And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger." The binding of an infant to prevent movement, as though still enwrapped and protected by the womb, is still practiced in some cultures. In others it is seen as detrimental to a child's need to exercise its limbs and move freely, thereby stimulating the senses. Our social and cultural differences manifest themselves from the first breath onwards and are part of the child's learning process in becoming a social being. Rudolf Steiner tells us that in earlier cultures children were born with innate social capacities but in our times these abilities have to be learned. This underlines our need to understand—and to work with greater insight—the evolution of consciousness and cultures if we are to serve the needs of young children in a healthy and desirable manner.

Firstly, a child should be welcomed. How that welcome is expressed can vary according to the times and the social fabric around the child. A report from the Swedish Aid Commission touches on elements that confront us as citizens of the affluent minority world.

Basic to a good society is that children are welcome, are given a good environment during childhood and are the concern of the whole society. Children have a right to secure living conditions that enhance their development. Preschool has an important function in children's lives. It offers a comprehensive program and is the source of stimulation in the children's development. It gives them a chance to meet other children and adults and to be part of an experience of fellowship and friendship. It is a complement to the upbringing a child gets at home.⁴

For many children, Ellen Key's concept of the "Century of Childhood" has brought countless benefits, though it is salutary to remember that children in the majority world have not yet been enabled to share these welcome changes to the same extent. At the beginning of the century, the infant mortality rate for most European countries was within the range of 100 to 250 deaths per 1000 live births. By the 1950s this had fallen to between 25 and 50, by 1995 only three European countries had rates of above 20, and only one, Albania, above 30. In Western European countries it is now well below 10.⁵ We have moved from a time when the death of a baby was a tragic—but expected—family event, one which parents were rarely able to avoid, to a time when we can assume that our children will reach adulthood. This is completely new in the history of childhood and is of great significance to our attitude to parenting. There are fewer siblings in a family and children are not so greatly separated by age. They grow up differently.

Ellen Key, the Swedish educational reformer and feminist, published her influential book *The Century of the Child* in 1900:

The next century will be the century of the child just as much as the last century has been the woman's century. When the child gets his rights, morality will be perfect. The role of a woman was to devote herself to the care of children, hygiene and sick nursing. Kindergartens and crèches were only second best, and schools should strive to make themselves redundant. Success in child rearing lay in becoming *as a child oneself*. The simplicity of the child's character will be kept as adults. So the old social order will renew itself.⁶

The history of the last hundred years has taught us to view such fervent certainty about a better world with skepticism, and Key's basic expectations of gender roles and the unimportance of educational institutions as no longer applicable. However, she was pleading the cause of the child in a new way at a time when the prevalent view was that the child was an important asset to the state. Childhood was assumed to be naturally akin to "a garden of delight" and, by being excluded from the world in general, a child should be able to develop "the habit of happiness" as a matter of course. The reality that most children did not have this opportunity was considered inconsequential. This was the world of implicit belief in the findings of science, and much advice

was given on the avoidance of spontaneity, emotion and individualism in the rearing of children. A distance was prescribed for parents between themselves and their offspring.

The rule that parents should not play with their baby may seem hard, but it is a safe one. (United States Children's Bureau, 1914)

and

There is one sensible way of treating children. Treat them as though they were young adults. Never hug and kiss them, never let them onto your lap. (John Watson, *The Psychological Care of Infant and Child*, 1928)

The child was to be inculcated with the virtues of self-control, obedience and respect for authority. A science-centered morality superseded the deity-centered morality of the previous century. Similarly, formula milk was promulgated as being preferable to breast-feeding because of its scientific reliability. Looking back on the formulations of that age, we can also realize how revolutionary Steiner was in his approach.

How is it, then, that at the end of the century our concern is, to use Postman's term, "The Disappearance of Childhood"? And why has the authoritative and confident tone, however lamentable the advice might seem to us now, given way to anxiety and doubts about our roles as parents, caregivers, and educators?

One cause is the greater awareness of the importance of childhood that has steadily manifested itself more and more strongly since the Romantic era at the beginning of the last century. Since World War II, the joy of parenting has been accompanied by a deep desire to "get it right." For this, parents need experts who advise them, even if this expert advice fluctuates and contradicts itself over time. In 1914, there were 175 pediatricians in the United States; by 1955 there were 6547, and this number doubled by 1966. We need expertise to help us with an ever more complex and demanding task and we set great value on our children's wellbeing.

In Shari L. Thurer's wonderfully readable and knowledgeable book *The Myths of Motherhood: How Culture Reinvents the Good Mother*, she describes this transformation. She believes that our hyper-empathetic ideal of parenting is partly a reaction to the loss of value accorded to human life in the 20th century as a result of genocidal events (such as the holocaust) and a greater awareness of child poverty and deprivation. In bringing up children, one idea supersedes another with bewildering speed, so that we always seem to be getting our awesome responsibility wrong.

Few women could read about their formidable power to harm their children without a pang of conscience. What mother hasn't momentarily failed to stimulate or pay attention or delight in all

baby's accomplishments? Who hasn't been provoked by her children . . . screamed or even, dare I suggest, slapped them . . . only to undergo a black period of agonizing guilt and self-recrimination? According to child experts, even unconscious hostility could plant the seeds of neurosis in her offspring . . . A deficient mother (you!) could be exposed by the very symptoms of your child's pathology. Crankiness in a baby, withdrawal, uncontrollable crying, school phobia, surliness—all betray mother's ineptness.⁷

It is calculated that it costs £100,000 in the UK to bring up a child. Yet even in a society where such affluence exists, many children are undernourished, abused and deprived. On one side there is excessive consumerism. As the tide of an article in the *New York Times* once memorably put it: "It's a boy! It's a girl! It's time to shop!" In the United States, one in eight children goes hungry, and recorded abuse has increased by 40% since 1980. In the UK, child poverty has increased threefold since 1979, 350,000 children under age 12 are left daily in unsupervised homes, and 20% of children suffer from psychological problems, of which more than half are anxiety disorders.⁸ These two countries are not exceptions in the Western world, as the problems are acknowledged as becoming more widespread. There are resistance factors that enable children to become what Norwegian researchers call "dandelion children," enabling them to cope with such disadvantages. These factors have been found to be good communication skills, a sense of religious faith, an ability to reflect and a strong attachment to parents in the first years. Yet many of our contemporary cultural trends tend to deny many children the possibility of developing these very abilities.

In all historical cultures there have been acceptable means whereby children could be transferred from biological parents to non-biological parents. For the ancient Celtic tribes of Britain, this transfer often took place when the child was seven years old, so that they would not become too circumscribed in one family setting and would develop skills of mobility and flexibility at a young age. In the last century, it was a method of family economic management whereby a family with too many mouths to feed could transfer a child to a family that needed another pair of working hands. Now it has become axiomatic that adults have the right to have a child as a source of their own emotional completeness. Society feels it is correct that childless couples are given this opportunity as a right to personal fulfillment. However, this attitude lands us with another tension on the question of bringing up children, where the area of human rights becomes entangled and self-contradictory.

As we saw at the beginning of the century, the essential vision of childhood was one of powerlessness and dependence, and good parenting prolonged this state. Now a hundred years later, the authority of parents has significantly declined and children demand and receive early access to the adult world. This is stressful for all concerned, and this tension works right down into the early years, as it affects the way we perceive our children. This signal is

one to which they are acutely sensitive. A child is a person with rights and autonomy and yet also has the right to be a child. These two principles can be contradictory and therefore give rise to problems for us all. This right to be child is often expressed by its absence:

Boredom!!! Shooting!!! Shelling!!! People being killed!!! Despair!!! Hunger!!! Misery!!! Fear!!! That's my life! The life of an innocent eleven year-old schoolgirl!!! A schoolgirl without a school, without the fun and excitement of school. A child without games, without friends, without sun, without birds, without nature, without fruit, without chocolate or sweets, with just a little powdered milk. In short, a child without childhood.⁹

As so often, what is absent becomes the definition of what an inviolate childhood should be.

In her seminal book *Children without Childhood*, Marie Winn looked at the radical changes taking place in the way adults were treating children and how this affected their behavior. Her concern was that parents were finding their traditional role as protectors of childhood more and more difficult to fulfill.

[A]s today's children impress adults with their sophisticated ways, adults begin to change their ideal about children and their needs; that is, they form, new ideas about childhood . . . as adults act less protectively . . . and as they expose children to the underside of their, lives—adult sexuality, suffering, fear, of death—these former innocents grow tougher perforce, less playful and trusting, more skeptical—in short, more like adults.¹⁰

Winn sees this tendency as a regression to the Middle Ages, when there was no concept of protecting children from the exigencies of adult life. Following this came several centuries when childhood was seen as an estate clearly differentiated from adulthood. In Winn's view, it becomes vital, in an increasingly complex and turbulent society, to restore "real childhood," that the period of nurture and protection is not shortened, and that this needs adults to be encouraged to take an authoritative—but not authoritarian—role in family life.

However, it is not surprising that some parents, faced with a plethora of demands they feel ill-equipped to handle, and looking for simplicity in a confusing and contradictory task, find a more authoritarian approach attractive. An example of this would be the organization Growing Families International, which has rapidly become a multi-million dollar business. Their publications recommend that babies as young as eight months should be drilled in high-chair manners, to sit up straight with their arms by their sides, and pinned in this position until they obey. At 18 months, babies should be smacked with a plastic spatula to "inflict pain, but not break bones or damage skin tissue." In a return to turn-of-the-century views, "Teach, the

child to obey according to the character of true obedience, immediately, completely, without challenge and without complaint.”¹¹ This flies in the face of the contemporary appreciation of each child as an individual and verges on child abuse, yet many parents resort to such ideas out of despair and not knowing where else to turn.

Paradoxically, this advice appears at the same time as another view suggesting that the parents have little influence on a child and that the most potent agents of child socialization are peer groups. Judith Rich Harris’ paper,¹² which first appeared in *Psychological Review* in 1995, and her subsequent book *The Nurture Assumption*, has aroused much interest and her propositions have reverberated ever since. Like much else in this field, ideas generated in the United States wing their way across the Atlantic and become areas of debate and practice in Europe as well. Her convincing and well-written paper claims that, from the many hundreds of studies undertaken into parental influence on children, almost no evidence has come to light that proves this influence exists at all. Even evidence as to how children react to extreme experiences such as divorce, abuse and adoption are elusive because children react so differently. She points out that higher primates can be raised successfully by their peers when they have lost their mother, and she asks whether this could not also be the case with humans.

We swing from the omnipotent demanding parent on one hand to, on the other, the powerless parent who points to genetic traits, social pressures, consumerism, peer pressure, and birth order as being far more determinative of their child’s development than they can be. Howard Gardner’s effective critique of Harris’ view, although showing respect for her sincerity and scholarship, shows that the peers a child has are basically a question of the society and circumstances the parents themselves create. There is a tremendous differentiation between cultures here. What applies in one setting need not apply to another, and the paucity of evidence for parental influence might be more due to a matter of a weakness in the scientific process, as there are certain elements of human life it does not take into account.

In the absence of credible parents and other adults, most children would not be able to deal effectively with life . . . Whether on the scene or behind the scenes, parents have jointly created the institutions that train and inspire children: apprenticeships, schools, works of art and literature, religious classes, playing fields, and even forms of resistance and rebellion. These institutions, and the adults who run them, sustain civilization and provide the disciplines—however fragile they may seem—that keep societies from reverting to barbarism.¹³

In other words, children are born into a culture and this culture, with all its assumptions, history and aspirations, will have a profound effect on how they experience their childhood and indeed their adult lives as well. Human cultures vary enormously in their approaches to the rearing of children, and one culture cannot claim to be the template of good practice for all.

Yet there is the factor of our common humanity and something that can

be recognized as universal childhood. In our international work on behalf of the young child, we should strive to understand this, as well as to deepen our perception and knowledge of our own culture and others. In this roller-coaster-like plethora of advice, research and increasing polarization of views, we must look to the deeper aspects of childhood so that as parents, caregivers, and educators we do not also become restricted to a particular one-sided approach. The young child expects us to be social beings as well and will absorb from us our attitudes toward each other.

How quality in early childhood education and care is defined and evaluated will be a concern not only for politicians, experts, administrators and professionals, but will also be a matter for a broader citizenry . . . It becomes important to create forums or arenas for discussion and reflection wherein people can engage with devotion and vision . . . Within these arenas a lively dialogue can take place in which early childhood education and care are placed within larger societal contexts and where questions concerning children's position are made vivid.¹⁴

If we wish to help our children develop “devotion and vision,” we have to strive for them ourselves, as in our world they are no longer just a given fact of life. On this basis we can work for an international forum along the above lines and work in alliance with others who have goodwill towards the infant and young child for the benefit of children worldwide.

Universal childhood consists of basic elements that are a definition of being human and which appear in all our earliest years: the capacities for walking, talking and thinking. It is claimed that ninety percent of our learning takes place in the first three years of life, so how we learn these things is of fundamental importance to us all. Walking, for which we are biologically equipped, is nevertheless a cultural activity. The Wolf Children of Sri Lanka and the Gazelle Boy of the Sahara did *not* acquire this skill because they were brought up by the animals who adopted them as their own. Nor is it just a practical matter of locomotion, as these children who learned to run on all fours could be as swift as their animal associates.

Underlying learning to walk there is an inner adjustment—an orientation of the young child. The equilibrium of the organism, with all its possibilities for movement becomes related to the equilibrium and all the possibilities for the movement of the whole universe, because the child stands within it. While learning to walk, children are seeking to relate their equilibrium to that of the entire cosmos. . . to meet the forces of statics and dynamics both in body and soul and to relate these experiences to the whole cosmos—this is what walking is all about.¹⁵

That these first steps are an enlightenment is vividly depicted on the child's countenance when it takes them. The child has found its place and beams up at us its joy at joining our community. In the ancient culture of Egypt, where these mysteries were experienced more directly and less cognitively, uprightness was divine. The backbone was venerated as the manifestation of the father god of the afterlife, Osiris. Mummy cases were made to stand upright for the passage through death, and uprightness was petrified and made immortal in the obelisk. One of the greatest yearly festivals was when a Djed column, the symbol of the backbone, was hoisted from a recumbent position to a vertical one; this was celebrated as a deed of resurrection. The child too experiences standing and walking for the first occasion as a unique and special event, towards which it has patiently struggled for some time.

Speech is likewise the accomplishment of the whole human being. For the last hundred years it was thought that the ability to produce speech was a function of particular areas of the brain. Recently, however, research has shown that there is a widely spread, multi-centered language system that extends through the whole brain, including areas that were previously thought to have nothing to do with it. It is therefore not just an additional skill that has been added in the course of evolution, but also something that permeates all our acts of thinking, feeling and remembering. Language flows out on the current of breath and provides a basis for our thoughts. An inviolate childhood is one in which these capacities are allowed to develop in such a way that they can be transformed and renewed later in life, not just as bodily functions but also as soul ones. A child must be allowed to breathe, in all the metaphoric and natural connotations of the word.

Martin Luther King stated: "We are challenged to rise above the narrow confines of our individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity . . . through our scientific genius we have made a neighborhood of our world; now through our moral and spiritual genius we must make of it a brotherhood." These are latent powers of childhood, and in respecting the early forms of these gifts in our caring and upbringing, we can help our children realize their potential later. What we learn, we learn so that we can transform it. We do not learn so that later we can be held in learning's thrall. Our first breath is an expression of our potential, just as our first cry is an expression of our rights on earth. For the Egyptians, breath was the manifestation of the goddess Isis. Unlike her consort, she remained on earth so as to accompany humankind in its destiny. Her wings were laid across the chests and lungs of the dead as they returned to the realm from which they had originally come. She lived in the air which we all share and united humanity by entering us all without exception or preference. She was wise beyond all measure because she alone knew the secret name of the sun god. In Egyptian art she is often portrayed holding the new child, the offspring of her marriage to Osiris, on her lap and giving him her breast. Steiner spoke of the need to find the new Isis, because we have lost her and because she is that which expresses our common humanity. In our realm of work with the earliest years of childhood, we can find that the wisdom of childhood

informs and inspires us. We can work with the combination of Isis and Osiris and the incarnation of the child that is expressed by the *Sistine Madonna* in all its majesty.

To this end it must really be so among us that one helps the other in love, so that a real community of souls arises in which envy and all such things disappear, and in which we do not each look at our own particular goal, but face together, united in love, the great goal we all have in common.¹⁶

This is the gift the child brings to us all, and in coming to a better understanding of this gift, and by giving it the time and space to unfold we are endeavoring also to transform ourselves.

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THE HUMAN SELF

by

Karl Brodersen

translated by Ted Warren

Sometimes you meet people on the street whom you have not seen for a long time. Such coincidences are embarrassing when you find yourself trying to remember the name of the person who has engaged you in a conversation. Of course she knows you and your name, but you are pulling a total blank! Then, once you find the name, a series of memories pops up in your mind and you think to yourself: "How this person has changed!" Her eyes are the same, her smile is too, and eventually you find the relationship between the businesswoman standing before you now and the girl you took rowing along the fjord during the smooth spring evenings many years ago. Her hair is gray now, the beautiful face lined in wrinkles, and her voice is business-like due to her professional life. If your encounter were to turn into a conversation at a coffee shop, you might well observe outer signs that she has changed inwardly as well. The businesswoman has her own opinions on her friends, on the Prime Minister, on how to bring up children, and soon you realize that you have not rediscovered a friend, but actually lost one.

What is the shock about these meetings is not that the person has changed, we all do. She is the same person despite her changes. We can picture ourselves as babies, as children and then on through the stages of life with shifting features both inner and outer. We can imagine ourselves in our clothes from past years and the image becomes clearer. The shocking realization is that we have never been who we really are!

So we can ask: Who was she really? Who is this previous rowing partner and now-present businesswoman with four children and everything else that follows? If we look beyond the roles people play and the costumes they wear, what is there? The questions are not any different if we were to enter a deep psychological analysis of that human being, and consider which characteristics are intimate parts of the personality. They are subjected to the laws of change, and during our lifetimes we are recast many times. But the continuity, a feeling of unity remains from all the way back to our first memories. It was I who stood in the hall and burned matches when the angry women walked out, I, three feet tall with pants and big holes on my knees in the rust-brown homemade knee socks.

We can experience ourselves as the core of our conscious life, that which everything collects around, but we can also experience it in other people, for example when we discover them in new roles behind new masks. We say, "I"

and thereby speak of the unique entity that lives in each human individual. That is certainly a paradox. Even if we investigate the “I” in us or in others more closely, we can shed the layers but still not find the core. Everything is in transformation, every quality we can attribute to a person can change and yet the person remains deep within her Self, for her consciousness and for the rest of us.

The Self is simultaneously the center and the periphery of our being. It feels like a core, but entails all of our qualities, experiences and relations to the world around us. The Self is a cohesive power that gives individual meaning to our lives. This power unites us more intimately with other people’s Selves, whether through sympathy, antipathy or neutral interest. In this way human beings are united not only geographically as dwellers on this limited planet, but they are united in their Selves to one large entity, the whole of mankind. If we observe this from a more dynamic perspective by considering the Self both in its function and its development, we conclude that the Self not only includes who we *are* in the moment, but also who we *have been* and thereby provides continuity in our existence from the cradle to the grave. This feeling of identity with our Self through the shifting roles in life and on to broader feelings of identity with other people, yes, with all of humanity, is the only secure support for our existence.

When we hear little children repeat with grave seriousness something they heard from adults it seems comical or charming. Children unite themselves with words, with language but not with opinions. We can observe the same phenomena every day with adults who gossip about what others have said. However it is not as charming. The Self is not present in such outbursts, no matter how bombastically they are spoken. In sleep, in unconscious states of being, and under hypnosis, the Self completely removes itself from our words and our deeds. Similarly, it can also be more or less present in what we say and do. We can speak of a more or less state of Self. In English we cannot use the word *selfless* because it carries the additional meaning *unselfish*. We are defining a state of being where the Self is no longer active.

Another possibility is a state of being in which the Self becomes too strongly united with certain qualities or situations. The Self becomes fixated and egocentric because it loses its flow of transformation, its movement. Such obduracy, such callousness takes place in normal phases of personality development but it can also become a permanent state—with tragic consequences. Life is made up of continually new circumstances: friends shift, we age and truly meet new situations every day.

The deepest riddle of the Self is our destiny, the pattern in our lives and the coincidental events that receive meaning for us when placed together. These may be illnesses or emergencies, responsibilities or tasks, and it may be pleasant or unpleasant to meet the life that is our own, a part of our Self. Largely what we meet are the consequences of who we were previously and what we did. Some situations are so puzzling, so clearly incompatible with our earlier life that we might imagine we are meeting consequences from a previous life on earth.

The task of the Self is to unite itself with our entire existence and to receive the consequences of our own actions. A person who fails to do so loses his relationship with his inner being and either remains fixed in denial or defiance or flees from himself, in either direction abandoning the meaning of his life. We continually vacillate between these polarized possibilities.

I think it is important to point to true humanity, the entity in time and space because in our present time we employ great acumen to disconnect from our true being in its multiple factors, physiological, psychological and philosophical. The result of such endeavors is to release the human being from any responsibility for his actions. For example a crime can be explained away by factors of genetics and/or environment. The analysis may be accurate, but if we discount or remove a person's responsibility for his deeds, we also discount or remove part of his human dignity. As a prisoner said to me, "Of course there must be a punishment for crimes, but they should not be meaningless."

The Self that lives in us is threatened from many angles. Even in the societies where respect for the individual is strong, the modern technological ways of life challenge the Self to deal with situations it really cannot connect with. In our social life there is automation that prevents the Self from being present. Children struggle to adapt to the emptiness, meaninglessness, to the dehumanized activities surrounding them. The Self must adapt to the context it lives within but it is obliged to two sides of its being; it cannot abandon the entity nor the context in its being without being ruined.

A human being is never determined. It continually becomes something else, from the cradle to the grave, and as a core in the entire movement the Self retains the entity and the context, an entity and a context that tend to include more and more of the world we live in and to continue to include more people as if our lives depended on it!

THE FREE AND THE UNFREE SPIRIT¹

by

Ted Warren

translated by the author

By mentioning the capacity for moral intuitions, we touch upon a theme that is essential for any deeper understanding of the question of freedom. At the same time, this capacity in each individual is not easy to grasp and awaken. It is a field of knowledge that demands intense focus and repeated efforts. This capacity will not develop without difficulties as we are challenged to bring new consciousness into the course of our actions.

Every day we meet situations in life that are clearly influenced by mental pictures or experiences that are determined by past deeds. Many of these life situations present themselves as problems, for we realize that something has to change. We are forced to look at the problem in a new way, whether we want to or not. This is a complex situation, naturally, because not everyone sees the same problems, nor realizes the need for change.

In the individual life and in the world, many challenges arise out of the fact that personal and community activities are not longer able to develop naturally out of the given course of action. A quick glance through the newspaper will provide examples of unproductive and repulsive behavior: illusions of stability, the inordinate power of money, totalitarianism, first class weaponry, environmental ruin and many aspects of social life that no longer contribute to the health or positive development of a respective country. All of these problems are the result of past deeds and ways of life. And we are confronted with a major question: What do these problems have to contribute to the future? How will these challenges be transformed into positive aspects for the evolution of the human being?

Results of past deeds may be accompanied by a sense of emptiness. The human spirit is then placed behind a veil of helplessness and no one knows where to turn. The experience of this emptiness is something we share in common with all mankind. Such isolation may not be avoided, but more importantly is how we stand in this experience and work to create something new out of it.

We no longer receive moral impulses from the past. New moral impulses have to be sought for in the inner life of the individual, despite any obstacles created by past experiences or mental pictures. Through repeated efforts, the resistance is overcome and new strength of consciousness may be created by which the moral capacity for intuitions may be awakened. But how do we search? The given methods of natural scientific research may provide a

valuable starting point, but they will not take us to the depth of the experience in the inner core of the individuality. Nor will passive behavior carry us very far. The many forms of materialistic mysticism that bring quick results may actually mask the true impulses working in the individual's life of soul. A genuine search for moral intuition is very hard work and will have to take place in the course of time. Our capacity for moral intuitions has to be discovered, actively employed and then strengthened day to day.

Let us look at the twofold nature of a free act of will. The first side may be seen in the spiritual activity that reaches the moral intuition. The activity of this intuitive element checks the human organism. This takes place when the free individual acts without external or internal influences, in such a way that the action is determined only by its ideal motive. The other side of the twofold nature is realized when the spiritual activity of the ideal element replaces the influences of the physical organism and works into the will.

The moral action must first take place and afterwards may the facts involved be understood. In this way our work differs from natural scientific research as we are not limited to the world of the senses and the motives for the deeds are not dictated by past deeds. If we first understand all the facts involved in an action, then these facts might be chosen as the motive for our action and thereby influence the possibility for a unique deed.

Various authorities from all walks of life may not see the possibility for a free act of will. They contend that no act of will may be free. And many people try to condition, manipulate or use individuals in order to gain advantage over them. Rudolf Steiner maintained that only those who cannot observe the twofold nature of a free act of will believe that free deeds are impossible. When we try to observe free acts of will, two qualities may build the basis for our observation. The first one is love for the action that is carried out. Thereby the free spirit is not bound by any duty or compulsion. And when this quality of love is strengthened over the course of time, the second quality may appear, namely, trust between those who are active together. Once the free action has been observed, new meaningful relationships between the free actions of other individuals may be researched.

We may take a step further in our search for new actions by examining the way in which the world of ideas works in two different people. In the social life we may find many examples of fixed orders that try to regulate or define the life of will of their people. On the other hand, we can find examples of individuals who merely seek the realization of their own egotistical needs. Neither type of activity can create the basis for a free social life.

How can two people experience the world of ideas in two different ways and still find a constructive way of working together in daily life? Before we approach a clear understanding of how ideas work in different people, let us look at Ralph Waldo Emerson's description of the world from which our intuitions spring:

We denote this primary wisdom as intuition. In that deep force, the last fact, behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being, which in calm hours rises,

we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them, and proceedeth obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceedeth. We first share the life by which things exist, and afterwards see them as appearances in nature, and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and the fountain of thought.²

If Emerson is correct in his observation, that the source of intuition is shared by mankind, and “not diverse from things,” why do our experiences of that source differ? Why do we have individual moral intuitions and original deeds?

Steiner also observed the source of intuition—a world of ideas—as a unity, but unlike Emerson he went to great efforts to show how the ideas in this world of ideas become individualized through moral intuition. An action based on pure moral intuition does not have the perceptible content of the action as its motive. In other words, even though I may see the content of the action, I do not allow it to determine my action. If I allowed the content to determine the action, my action would not be free; it would be bound to that given content. When the motive for my action is determined by purely ideal activity, then the action is determined by the way in which the intuition works in my will at the actual moment of the activity. In this way two different people may have moral intuitions, but the contents of their actions do not interfere with the activity in the will that is determined by their unique intuitions. Both act freely and individually. We can observe Steiner’s way of expressing a basis for free social life:

A moral misunderstanding, a clash, is impossible between human beings who are morally free. Only the morally unfree who follow their natural instincts or the accepted commands of duty come into conflict with their neighbors if these do not obey the same instincts and the same commands as themselves. To live in love towards our actions, and to let live in the understanding of the other person’s will, is the fundamental maxim of free human beings. They know no other obligation than what the will puts itself in unison with intuitively; how they will direct their will in a particular case, their faculty for ideas will decide.³

Free men and women must not necessarily agree with each other, as they realize that they conceive their ideas without obeying outer or inner authorities. Though their intuitions are individualized, they act together as one in spirit.

An unfree spirit first recalls past experiences in the form of mental pictures, and the motive for his actions accompanies the mental picture. He follows the given motive without creating original mental pictures. Perhaps an external authority intimidates him. Or he may have convinced himself to

follow the decisions of a particular party line. He may feel bound to family traditions, or he may merely follow his blind instincts. In contrast, the free spirit uses his thinking to make an original decision. His motives are purely ideal, and he participates in creating new moral impulses.

That which we meet in the world of nature is given. Our new moral impulses, in contrast to the world of nature, must first be created. We have a necessary relationship to the moral laws of the past, but new moral ideas may not come from the past. Can educational systems designed in the past meet the needs of youth today? Am I justified in acting a certain way because so many people have done so in the past? Life changes after all, but do we?

Endnotes

1. This chapter is from *Freedom as Spiritual Activity* by Edward Warren, London: Temple Lodge, 1994.
2. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Self-Reliance," in *Essays*, Everyman's Library, London and New York: Dutton, 1995, p. 41.
3. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Philosophy of Freedom*, Chapter 9, London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1979, p. 139.

RECAPITULATION (RECALL) IN THE HIGH SCHOOL MAIN LESSONS

by

Ken Power

Recapitulation or recall is the process of gathering together what has been achieved in the past day or days, so that a student can go forward in a more conscious manner. It establishes continuity and can lead to a growing understanding through comparison and experiencing change or development.

In main lesson the student engages in a process of active listening, responding and writing. The student's thoughts, feelings, and observations are written up for homework. The active listening and thinking, both in the lesson and the homework, engages the student's will and opens the soul to the enrichment of sleep. Significantly, recall allows a brief moment for this enrichment to come to consciousness. Often an essential idea not expressed in the course of the lesson or in the homework comes from sleep and will be stated the following day. If the whole class is listening carefully, the heart of the matter can be received by everyone while recalled by a student. Careful, active listening is of the utmost importance.

The high school main lesson is a balance of thought processes. It is beneficial to look at these processes as planetary qualities: Moon through Saturn. In Class 9 I have tended to concentrate on the first two of these qualities, Moon and Mercury. Therefore, careful, painstaking reproduction is required as well as the ability to observe in detail, list phenomena and make general comparisons. As the teacher I must insure a balance of qualities and inner dynamic by seeing that Jupiter and Saturn qualities are also present. If successful, the lesson will come alive of itself and not just out of the inspirational gifts of the teacher. Recall offers further opportunity for these latter qualities, Jupiter and Saturn, to come from the students themselves after having the space to sleep on the lesson.

For instance, after the lessons on Michelangelo in Class 9 History of Art, I have asked pupils to recall by writing in their notebooks the word or phrase which would sum up his work. Many students' hands shoot up and the words *will*, *purpose*, *courage* are spoken or rather called out. Some boys in the act of leaping out of their chairs give voice to not only a Saturn quality in the word *will* but a Jupiter quality in the leap.

As mentioned above, the main lesson should contain a variety of thought processes in dynamic interaction. This dynamic should be fostered in each part of the main lesson in metamorphosis. We can therefore look at each of

the six planetary qualities, the three below the Sun—Moon, Mercury and Venus—and the three above—Mars, Jupiter and Saturn—in relation to recall as an essential part of the main-lesson. Below I will give examples of recall which have worked in main lesson and which stimulate a given thinking (planetary) quality.

First is Moon, the ability to remember and reproduce or repeat something accurately. A written description in a given time of, say, ten minutes, of a painting, a part of a biography, a story, a route taken, an experiment are examples of this form. A sketch of a painting detail or a map would be another approach. More examples and variations can be used and made suitable to different classes.

Next is Mercury, the making of comparisons and concise lists of relevant points. Here I have often asked students to compare two subjects, either two paintings from one main lesson or two paintings of the same period but different artists, or two works of art from different periods. Sometimes I will ask students to look only for similarities, at other times only differences. Possibilities are almost endless, but careful attention needs to be paid to what is asked of each age group.

The last “under Sun” quality is Venus, the realm of feeling, and here the feelings of the pupils need to be taken as objective phenomena and thought about. Sympathy and antipathy with respect to a painting, a story or an animal species are facts as much as the red of a robe or the blue of a crystal. Class 10 marks a good beginning time to teach this and the recall in a clear, precise manner of one’s feelings; and the attempt to designate these properly is an excellent exercise. It is very good for vocabulary work as well.

The fourth quality is Mars, the forming and expression of sound judgment based on sound reasoning. Various recall exercises can encourage this. In the Friday lesson the students can be asked to recall the whole of the week in reverse order. In Class 11 they can be asked to recall three subjects from each day in reverse order as well as the above. This is more than remembering. It is establishing a right order, which is more difficult. The teacher needs to have thoroughly prepared for this one, or he/she will be caught out. Next, the teacher can take any recall exercise, as above or below, but ask a pupil to come forward and read his own recall (Classes 9/10) or speak it extemporaneously (Classes 11/12). This speaking out in front of the class is a Mars quality and, as such, should be done properly—standing straight, speaking slowly and clearly, not dropping words, and so forth. The reading out of homework is also helpful in this regard. In my lessons, every student has the opportunity to stand in front of the class and read his/her homework essay. The shy ones are helped because they know everyone has to do it; it is taken seriously, the class is appreciative and it has “always been done.”

In Class 11, they can begin to criticize each other’s essays. The teacher must be sensitive here but the students need and even want this. It must be well structured, clear and simple. The criteria of criticism need to be well defined and easily understood. For example, the teacher could ask the class to note the number of physical qualities, colors, objects, and so on, noted by

the reader with respect to a given painting. Based on this, the teacher could then ask if a full enough description was given. Students can also take one of their own sketches (Classes 9–12) and critically compare it with the original, following clearly stated criteria. In Classes 11 and 12, they can perform the above with a sketch from another classmate. Both critiques, as well as all the above recall exercises, are written up and included in the main lesson book.

Jupiter gives the opportunity to recall gesture, the dramatic gesture of a lesson, a period, a sculpture, and so forth. In the Class 9 History of Art lesson, I have asked a class to close their eyes and recreate the image of, say, the painting *Madonna of the Rocks* by Leonardo da Vinci, and then to picture clearly the Madonna, her hands, posture, head, and so on. One student is asked to come to the front and recreate the Madonna's exact position. Other students can come forward and alter this, the first student becoming the model for the day until the class is satisfied. The teacher does not have to show the slide or print to check for accuracy. Working on the gesture is the important thing.

Finally, Saturn is the essence of what we do and what we strive to think about. We sacrifice hours of time and effort for this quality, and it is worth the sacrifice. The students make the sacrifice willingly. But what is it? And, more importantly, can the pupils find it in themselves? Earlier in this essay I mentioned this quality in connection with a main lesson on Michelangelo. I asked the students to recall the one word or phrase which would sum up his work. The teacher could also ask for three words, or a sentence, to characterize a work, a life, and a period. In Class 11 students have discovered the meaning of style in this manner.

Recall in main lesson can be used to encourage, indeed to train, a moral, living thinking in students. Although only a small part of a main lesson, the whole array of thinking qualities can be found within recapitulation and used as a teaching tool.

THE ODYSSEY OF CONSCIENCE¹

by

Henning Andersen

a book review by Oddvar Granly
translated by Ted Warren

We all have memories from our childhood of the first time we were confronted by our conscience. For example, of the time when a tempting cake stood on the table while Mom and Dad were out in the kitchen; we had a guilty conscience but the cake sure tasted good! Or of the other time when our inner voice spoke and we helped a friend. Looking back we notice that we became aware of such feelings at a certain point in time, that the feeling of conscience had not always been there, it appeared.

This leads us to ask when conscience appeared in the evolution of mankind. Can we point to the moment of creation of conscience and trace the phases of development through which it has passed? Waldorf teacher Henning Andersen asked himself these questions and wrote up his results in a book titled *The Odyssey of Conscience*. One of his tasks was to illuminate conscience and the developmental phases of the concept of conscience in ancient times based on texts from Homer, Aeschylus, and Euripides and on passages from the New Testament: St Paul and parts of the four Gospels. His other task was to edit Rudolf Steiner's descriptions of the appearance of conscience in ancient times and its relationship to mankind's development since then.

A number of middle-Europe authors have written from an anthroposophical perspective on the transformation of consciousness and have spoken of the emergence of conscience in Greece in the fifth century BC. Ernst Uehli, Emil Bock and Friedrich Hiebel addressed this in their cultural-historical works. The strength of Andersen's book is its breadth in the presentation of conscience as specific phenomena. The reader notices that Andersen's insights into the Greek tragedies are the fruit of many years of dedicated study of and loyalty to the works—to the extent that, behind the poetic words, the spiritual dimensions have spoken.

The following example from his book is his descriptions of Aeschylus' play *Eumenides* [The Furies]. When Agamemnon returns from Troy, he is murdered by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aigisthos. His son Orestes seeks revenge and kills them both:

It is worth noting that Orestes' experiences are almost removed of anything we would call the pains of conscience. He is moved emotionally by what he sees but more in the way we are filled with

fear when we face something threatening. He knows that the beings before him represent 'revenge in the form of a pack of hounds, sent by his mother,' but the experience does not reach his inner life to awaken regret or desperation from his actions. He is shook up but not about himself.

It has been said that the scene in which Orestes sees Erinyes come storming over him is a description of the pangs of human conscience. With the help of symbols for the sake of dramatic effects, Aeschylus gives conscience the outer trappings of the goddesses of revenge.

Had something similar happened to Aeschylus, he would certainly never have been accused of unveiling the secrets of the mystery centers in Greece. He was taken to court because in him lived an individual with the resonance of earlier initiation. Because Aeschylus knew the effects of ritual murder and knew what the executer was exposed to and which forces confronted him in the moment of murder, he could describe the stages that Orestes experienced when he killed the murderers. Orestes receives insight into the world of godly beings to which everyone else is still blinded. He is driven out by the powers that he sees clearly. He must leave the scene from one moment to the next as if he were forced by the threat of weapons.

Here Aeschylus does not work with symbols but with realities, just on another level than the chorus leader. If the reader takes this into account, he can meaningfully place *Eumenides* in the timeline of the development of human consciousness. Aeschylus knows that there are two kinds of people: those who still have spiritual experiences and those who no longer have them. If the reader postulates that Aeschylus uses symbolic language, then he will forget or ignore this relationship and thereby miss the value of his works. We will revisit the question of symbolic language later on.

While in the last part of *Oresteia* the Chorus consists of Furies, the goddesses of the sea, in the first part, the Chorus consists of old men whose attention was directed to the past from which came all instruction for their actions. They honored the old gods and maintained the old traditions. As Cassandra warned what would soon take place around them they could not understand her words, and when the events transpired, they were totally crippled in their willpower, which left them able merely to create *thoughts* on what they *should* do. They were subjected to the necessities of the past and did not know the free forces of initiative for the future.

In *The Choepori* the Chorus consists of captured women from Troy who suffer daily from the ruling pair (Clytemnestra and Aigisthos), and by their words and actions lent strength to Orestes and Pylades toward their goal. Simultaneously, in their inner lives they painfully empathize with Orestes in his reaction to the murders.

In *Eumenides* the Chorus consists of entitled people, which design provides an indication of where we are today. The weight is placed in the world of the gods, which also confirms at first sight the cast list: in addition to Orestes and Eumenides, we find the ghost of Clytemnestra, Apollo, Athena

and a priestess of Apollo's Temple in Delphi. The priestess is an oracle, a being with access to the spiritual world. She is able to see the goddesses of the sea among the people immediately surrounding Orestes after the murder of Clytemnestra. By itself the cast list takes us beyond the earthly world. For that same reason Pylades does not appear in the third part of the trilogy. Even his closest friends are not allowed to take such a journey that will not avoid the gods.

That means, at the same time, that this is not the day-to-day Orestes we meet in *Eumenides*, but a far more significant Orestes that Aeschylus points to at the end of *The Choepori*:

Next came a hero's kingly sufferings, and stabbed in a bath the warrior Chieftain of the Greeks perished. Now two once more, third in order, there hath come, we know not whence, a savior, or should I call it doom? Where then is the violence of calamity, when lulled, to find an end; or where is it to reach a termination?

Thus Aeschylus lets us know that the essential questions for the Greeks of his day were: What is the relationship between family and the individual? Shall one murder draw the next one with it into eternity? Can there not be redemption from this eternal cycle? Cannot an evil cycle be broken? In brief, here is how these themes play out in *Eumendides*:

Orestes seeks the temple at Delphi to receive the protection of Apollo. He is promised it and is cleansed of his guilt by the god who suggested he kill Agamemnon's murderers. He is sent to Athena and Hermes, who is not only the god of all travelers but also the guide of souls to the underground.

The ghost of Clytemnestra rises and awakens the sleeping Erinyes so they can resume their persecution of Orestes. Erinyes and Apollo exchange words, and, with his bow, Apollo drives the women, dressed in black, out of the holy place.

In Athens the goddesses of the sea find Orestes as he clings in supplication to the statue of Pallas Athena. They sing their magic songs and dance their round dance to lame his soul and ice his stomach before he is to be buried in his grave. Athena arrives in time to take the situation in hand—she calls in the parties to argue their cases at the newly-appointed court on the Ares heights, the Areopagos. After hearing both sides Athena rules to acquit Orestes; it is settled in his favor. Cleansed of guilt and free of persecution, Orestes is allowed to return home, and he leaves the court, accompanied by Apollo.

Athena remains behind with a flock of furious Erinyes to whom she immediately offers a home under her temple at the Acropolis. She bestows on them the honor to promote joy at home, in the fields, among the animals and in each mother's womb. Thus the Erinyes were transformed into friendly Eumenides.

It has often been pointed out that Aeschylus's intention with *Eumenides* was to show that the horrors of bloody revenge that ravage families could be replaced by the power of justice served by a court of volunteers. Such a court

shall have the authority to set passions aside and put a stop to its free reign. This perspective belongs to an evaluation of the drama, especially from the perspective of conscience when one considers how in modern times there is a relationship between society's judgments and punishing mandates and the resulting experience of conscience in the inner life of man.

But to consider this the main message which Aeschylus brought to his time is a mistake. The substitution of justice for bloody revenge has significant effects on the transformation of the human soul structure. It is effects and transformations that are the main subjects of Aeschylus' works. Therefore Orestes cannot remain in the physical world; he must delve deeper or climb higher to find them. He enters the underground to the Erinyes and reaches up to Olympus with its gods, and his task in *Eumenides* is to arrange a confrontation between the gods and the sea goddesses so soul constitution of the human being can be classified.

In that context let us view a key passage, the scene in which Apollo and Orestes meet on the Areopagos together with the Erinyes, who proceed to ask Orestes about the murder of his mother. The accused does not deny the murder and explains how it occurred but mentions Apollo's incentive role in it. He asks his accused a question: Why did they not pursue Clytemnestra after she killed Agamemnon?

The Greeks who experienced these tragedies already knew the answer. Everything that came down through the ages, their entire inheritance that was firmly settled in their inner feelings pointed in a certain direction: Clytemnestra did not kill her own blood, but even worse were the crimes Orestes committed. Therefore it must have shaken the sensitive audience in the Theater of Dionysus to their bones to hear Orestes's reaction:

The Erinyes:

The man she murdered was not of the same blood.

Orestes:

Am I connected with my mother by the bands of blood?

The Erinyes:

Yes, blood hound! Under her heart your mother bore you. How can you deny blood's valuable inheritance?

One must imagine that Orestes asks his question not only to the Erinyes but to himself. The insight he gained from Apollo at Delphi and under his torment after the murder is so new to him and mysterious that he continually asks himself how he is truly connected with other humans. Orestes notices to some extent the connection with relatives through blood. Inside he acknowledges a memory of family that allows him to look backwards from generation to generation. He knows deep inside that he has his father's being in him as well as his grandfather's being. But he also notices a new element from one side that has grown stronger and stronger through the generations: the experience of an isolated individual and a new organ for knowledge that has slowly replaced the capacity to observe the world of the gods as a picture.

When he searches for this element among his forefathers, he finds his father's (Agamemnon's) much too thoughtful, unpurified image of himself. He sees it clearly, and he finds it in all previous generations of his family, all the way back to Tantalus, who sacrificed his own son, tore apart his life content to control the godly clairvoyance with the power of thinking, and for which he was severely punished because the evolution of thinking cannot take place simultaneously with the evolution of clairvoyance.

Through blood Orestes is related to his family; but through this new consciousness, thinking isolates him within himself, just as it isolated Tantalus. The isolation and his thinking help him discover an inner core of being that was previously hidden by the family experiences and the world of picture images. While today we say, "He cannot see the forest for the trees"—the details prevent us from seeing the totality—in earlier times, it was just the opposite: One did not see the trees for the forest. In other words an all-encompassing picture consciousness separated us from the individual, both in the outer world and in the inner. For the Tantalus family, the individual experience appeared bit by bit, and simultaneously a growing need to remove the isolation and reconnect with the world that was now lost for them. This need combined with the wish to once again eat at the table of the gods, to reconnect with their forefathers, to meet their mothers and to experience the totality of life. But the totality was broken and the new totality complex, but still a totality, for one will be conscious within it, acting consciously and loving consciously. A new contact with the world is possible but the pathway may be navigated only by thinking and by new powers of love from individual to individual. It will no longer be navigated by families and blood relationships, but with consciousness—from Orestes to his father—and it will be aimed at the individual Agamemnon, and also from Orestes to the individual Clytemnestra.

Therefore the question of knowledge becomes: Am I connected with my mother by the bands of blood? From that ancient view Orestes answers for himself: "Yes, blood hound! Under her heart your mother bore you. How can you deny blood's valuable inheritance?"

Yes, he can. The old world order based on ancient families of gods is over. A new one has begun, and if one asks it for advice, he will experience new values because the balance of the world has been moved. And when the question is asked: How can we defy the inheritance of valuable blood relationships?, an answer appears from the new world order. Therefore, at this precise moment Orestes turns to Apollo. He prays to the god to explain to the Erinyes if his mother died "justifiably or not."

With Apollo's appearance we see that his disgust for Orestes' persecutors is stronger than his arguments, but if you take his comments as indications of the deeper basis upon which Aeschylus' tragedy rests and not as witness documents in an intellectual, legal process, everything looks different.

Apollo points out that, as a prophetic god, he does not lie but always proclaims what Zeus, the father of all gods, asks of him. Many answers have been given from the oracle at Apollo's holy temple at Delphi—to many

cities that have asked for advice when in danger, and also to the countless individuals who sought guidance in their daily activities. Characteristic of the answers—and we have records of many—was always their ambiguity. I am not searching for any weakness in the “art of prophesy,” but for a meaningful characteristic of the family of the gods to which Apollo belongs.

Apollo descended from a family of gods that arose from violent battles with earlier families of godly beings. First Chaos ruled, which has nothing immediately to do with the word as we use it today but was a world of archetypal images waiting to be realized in physical form. From that world of latent, spiritual, creative forces arose a family of gods that formed a totality: Uranus and Gaia, the heavenly and the earthly principles. Their descendents were the Titans, six male and six female. Fearing they would rob him of his power, Uranus threw the Titans down to Tartarus, the deepest realm of the underworld.

Gaia forged a steel sword and gave it to her youngest son, Chronos, who, in his outrage over the fate of the Titans, mutilated his father. Of Uranus’ blood arose not only the Giants but also the Erinyes. Therefore it is not hard to understand that the sea goddesses had blood forces violently housed within.

From the Titans, Chronos and Rhea became the next family of the gods. Chronos liberated his sibling Titans and married his sister Rhea, who gave birth to Pluto, Poseidon, Zeus, Demeter, Hestia and Hera. Chronos also feared his own children when it was prophesied that one of his sons would take away his power. Therefore he swallowed them as they were born. Only the youngest son, Zeus, did not suffer that fate when his mother immediately placed a stone in the birthing clothes and tricked Chronos into swallowing it instead of the newborn. Zeus was taken to Crete and hidden in a grotto on Mt. Ida and nourished by bee honey, goat milk and ambrosia brought to him by doves.

But Zeus’ siblings once again saw the light of day because Rhea tricked Chronos into drinking a poison. Zeus joined his siblings, took power from Chronos, and banished him to Tartarus together with the other Titans. He set guards on them so they would never return. Zeus became the head of the third family of gods, consisting of the six children of Chronos and his own children: Pallas Athena, Ares, Hephaestus, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite and Hermes.

By this time human beings had already existed for some while. Uranus and Gaia had created them when they created the world. When humans stood before Zeus, they did not stand before their creator but before a god who was himself created and could recall the family of gods that preceded him and had fought with each other. Even Zeus’ fight for power lived in his memory. So we have a family of gods who came from a lineage and have the capacity for remembering, and from many avenues this capacity was given to the humans in the form of clear thoughts, reflections and recollection.

For hundreds of years Delphi was the main seat of learning and advice from the world of the gods. Often the prophecies were ambiguous but within their mystery lay hidden intention that was aligned with the key task of this

third family of the gods—to challenge mankind to not only “Know Thyself” but to “Know Thyself in the World.” In addition to the advice from the gods, the petitioner received help to increase his own power of knowledge.

The Greeks loved the clear light of day and therefore also insight and wisdom. Above them, their gods carried the task of promoting clarity of thought; they lived high up on Mount Olympus and reveled in the light of day.

In contrast, the Greeks resisted darkness and everything that was darkened and impenetrable. Death was for them something to dread. In Hades humans led a life in shadow and in death were themselves transformed to shadows, from which light was always hidden; from the kingdom of death one never returned. The gods of the underworld were surrounded by brooding darkness that traveled inside the earth or in the under-conscious forces of man and lived in his blood and in the collective, family ties, as well as darkened states of consciousness. To these gods belong the Erinyes who arose from the blood drops of Uranus.

In the scene in *Eumenides* when these beings of darkness stand before Apollo, we see these two opposing factions of the gods standing in the battle for the human being, an old being but of significance to the gods because it has the ability to change. When Apollo expresses that he does not lie in his own activities and prophecies and instead defers to Zeus, he speaks with clear words about what the battle for the human being means: Shall he go down to the under-consciousness and purge his experience of Self or should he pursue the activities of thought and knowledge? In ancient language: Shall he move to the mother principle or the father principle?

Thus the dialog exposes the conflicting relationships between the underworld and the supernatural gods, between the old and the new, between blood and nerve, conflicting relationships that appear both in men and women, implanted by the first family of gods, Uranus/Gaia, the forces of heaven and earth.

Yet this family of gods was creative. Zeus observes, judges and works with wisdom. Therefore when Agamemnon is murdered, the new element of thinking is also “murdered” and, even though it is unpurified in Agamemnon, it is that which shall be saved for the future. Aeschylus works with this point of view in his trilogy. He has the outraged Erinyes to protest that Zeus misused the father principle when putting his father Chronos in irons. Apollo’s reaction is filled with anger and disgust:

Ah ye abominable, brutish, god-detested! Fetters he may loose, for that there is remedy; and many, very many are the means of undoing what is done. But when the dust hath swallowed the blood of mortal man, once he is dead, there is no raising of him. Spell for this, none hath my father made; all else without breath of displeasure, this way, or that again, he doth reverse and dispose.

With his thoughts Zeus can turn things inside out. This is part of the opportunity that thinking provides but also its shadow. In relation to death Zeus is powerless. Death is shadow as well. But there is a great difference between sending Chronos to the kingdom of death and to Tartarus. Apollo argues that Chronos retains the option to transform, to loosen his chains and leave the underworld where the Erinyes live. He can raise himself to the father principle. Whereas if he were in the kingdom of death, all hope would be gone.

Apollo points to the world that is created around the third family of gods, the future world. His speech would sound like pure caprice if it were not seriously connected to the question of consciousness. For we must realize that the ancient Greeks understood the speech and the themes presented in the Dionysos performances. They experienced godly forces in the characters of Zeus and Pallas Athena, not only in their surroundings but also deep within their souls. For them the picture images were clear indications of the realities they experienced intensely. They went to the theaters not to be entertained, but to learn. And through enlightenment they experienced catharsis.

This, too, I will explain, and mark thou how straightforwardly. The mother of what is called her child—is no parent of it, but nurse only of the young life that is sown in her. The parent is the male, and she but a stranger, a friend, who if fate spares his plant, preserves it till it puts forth. And I will show thee a proof of this argument. A father may become such without a mother's aid. Here at my hand is a witness, the child of Olympian Zeus—who even ere she came to light, grew not in any womb, yet is a fairer plant than all the powers of heaven could beget.

Zeus took Metis, wisdom, as his first wife. Though fate decided Metis should bear him a son who would be the king of the gods and of human beings, he swallowed his wife. Afterwards he felt pregnant and Pallas Athena was born from his head after Hephaestus as midwife chopped a hole in his forehead. Athena sprang from the opening in full armor swinging a sharp lance. The goddess of thoughtful intelligence and peaceful superiority, Athena is also the patron for the arts and handicrafts, being an expert weaver herself. She taught humans how to weave threads together with well-ordered and harmonious methods, both with physical materials and with the life of thinking.

It is Pallas Athena and Apollo who lead Orestes to victory. And Apollo appeals to the Erinyes to look to the future human being and not remain stuck in the powers of blood and family that merely hold humans in the past. Both work with the significance of thinking in human life, one in the direction of wisdom, intelligence, goodness and inner balance, the other in the direction of enthusiasm, transferring cosmic light through purified power and healing forces. Both fight darkness and support forces for the individual. And both have the task of liberating human beings from the underworld and demonic powers.

But the battle to be fought is not for the humans in the first phase, it starts with the gods. In Aeschylus' drama, the individual forces in mankind are not yet fully developed. Therefore we experience in Orestes no inner battle and no pangs of conscience from his bloody deeds. Rather, the battle rages on a supernatural level: Apollo and the Erinyes are fighting for the humans. The underworld wants to imprison them within blood relationships and in the collective depth of family under-consciousness, while Apollo wants to raise them to the level of knowledge, independence and responsibility.

And when Apollo advises Orestes to murder not his "mother" but rather the "murderer of Agamemnon," this is not a capricious method for dealing with a difficult problem but a precise characterization of the core of the saga. Orestes shall not necessarily murder his mother, but fight the forces that want to destroy the manly principle, the awakening consciousness and the youthful thinking. This occurs by restricting the attack on the individual by the forces of blood and family. From this perspective the death of Agamemnon was a greater catastrophe than the death of Clytemnestra.

And yet it was necessary that Agamemnon was murdered or that part of his being was destroyed. He had sacrificed his own daughter in Aulis and called out the outrage from the underworld to which Clytemnestra was connected. He had within himself the new possibilities for mankind but in unpurified form. Therefore he was forced to leave the future task to his children.

In the drama *Orestes* we witness Orestes beginning to take the very first steps upon the path of conscience. This occurs in *The Choephoroi* when Orestes asks Pylades if they shall pardon the murderers but Pylades immediately prevents him from falling out of his secondary role by pointing to the true owner of the main role: "Where, then, are the oracles of Apollo uttered at Python and the faithful oaths well plighted? Deem all thine enemies rather than the gods." In other words: Hold yourself to your higher being rather than your lower. This spiritual-soul constellation should very soon undergo a radical transformation in history.

But for now the gods do battle and the human beings are merely passive participants. Described fifty years later by Euripides in a different soul-suffering manner, the battle in the case of Aeschylus occurs at a world level above the human capacity. Orestes explains to Apollo that he *had* to murder his mother. Just before that he asks the Erinyes why they did not persecute Clytemnestra—the very same question Apollo asked the same beings. This question points to the main problem in *Orestes* and also to the projection from the gods to human beings.

The gods experience in advance and work through what human beings are later exposed to once their consciousness is developed to the extent they can work with the challenges. Therefore Apollo accompanies Orestes when he leaves the scene after the judgment is handed down after Athena's decisive vote.

The judges balance each other. Their presence in the play is background; they do not speak nor are they listed in the cast. We approach their world to give them an important task but remain on the supernatural plane.

We are in the world of the gods where Athena remains with the Erinyes, beings of the underworld that she first defeated in their fight for Orestes and which she later transforms in their inner beings so they become the Eumenides, the positive ones who live at her temple at the Acropolis.

The way is paved and the scene is cleared for a game that will soon take place not in the supernatural world, where gods fight with gods while humans are passive participants, but on the inner human plane, where the gods are interested and positive observers or participants from the sidelines. Human beings can now learn in their soul world to fear the inner voice more than “the world’s severe judgments,” where an inner rage slowly replaces the “god’s rage.”

* * *

Henning Andersen deepens our background understanding of consciousness through explaining Odysseus’ experiences, on his ten-year homeward journey from Troy to Ithaca, as stages in the path from atavistic clairvoyance to an awakening in individual thinking that enables the individual to take responsibility for his deeds. The Cyclops represents ancient clairvoyance:

The Cyclops has one eye and with that eye he cannot see sharply, in detail or judge distances. It is the clairvoyant eye and it sits in the middle of the forehead as it did with Goliath. In both cases they were destroyed so the new human with two fixate eyes could emerge. It is a precise description of the transition to the new state when Homer allows Odysseus to call himself Nobody. Then Polyphemus is blinded and described as the being who can no longer judge outer distances: first he throws too far and then too short.

One thing Odysseus and Polyphemus have in common is a lack of conscience. Understandably, Polyphemus does not have it; he has neither the necessary individualization process nor the necessary thinking. He is older than both Apollo and Pallas Athena. He lives in his environment with his lambs and goats. He loves them with the warmth of his blood. His poetic conversation with his dear ram when Odysseus leaves the cave grips our hearts and makes it difficult for us to believe that this is the same creature who earlier smashed Greek skulls against the cliffs, which act did not disturb him. For him the world is simple.

But it is unnatural for Odysseus to have no conscience. Nor is it acceptable that he first blinds Polyphemus and then yells demeaning words from a safe distance. Thinking and reflecting have become active in him and soon he will follow another’s advice because of his conscience.

Odysseus is a person who is in the transition from the old to the new form of existence. His thinking has reached the point where he can carry on conversations with Athena and also make his own decisions. He can move freely from his own world of thoughts to the

gods. Despite his ability to think, he can still see godly beings. This is due to his initiation and the entire *Odyssey* is a detailed description of the path of initiation for an individual who can think and thereby attain separation from the spiritual world while fighting his way back to a reunion with that world as a more highly-developed being.

But Homer (circa 853 BC) lived at an earlier time than Euripides (480 BC), and that is significant:

With Homer we do not reach the concept of conscience, but rather a feeling of shame. This is the decisive difference. To have shame is a reaction in the soul to actions that are not only observed on the outside but also on the inside. We are confronted with a Self that is placed in an environment. But in that moment when the experience is not only *experienced* but also *discovered*, there is the basis for conscience. A consciousness exists with something that is itself.

Just as the Erinyes spoke from the outside to the Ancient Greeks, the laws spoke to the Jewish people and God revealed himself to Moses in the thorn bush. Andersen proposes that the coming of Christ created a new relationship that he called “the Christian internalization.” Conscience is absolutely a part of the development of the Self. It begins speaking from the inside when the Self is strengthened, but the Self finds its full development only when it unites with the Christ impulse. Henning devotes a significant part of the book to St Paul and Judas. Two very different fates are described:

When St Paul acknowledged, from his own experience, that Christ was incarnated in Jesus, he received the most encompassing experience of conscience. He experienced the joining of the highest spiritual with the deepest human. This phenomenon responds to the lower and higher selves in individual human beings that we define as conscience. He experienced the constellation that was prophesized for hundreds of years. These are the forces that worked from the past and created the basis for historic descriptions of conscience, of which we have described a few.

The book gives us a solid description of conscience, which we are happy to receive from a landsman of Søren Kierkegaard’s.

Endnote

1. Henning Andersen, *The Odyssey of Conscience*, Copenhagen: Hernov Forlag Denmark. 1996.

WAR AND PEACE AND MORAL IMAGINATION

by

Oskar Borgman Hansen

translated by Ted Warren

War was once an instrument for deciding important disagreements between sovereign states. War was not considered a very practical method, but it did provide legitimate evidence for both parties, even the losing one. The loser, considering the loss merely a temporary decision, could seek revenge, merely. Within the surrender there was also a physical necessity. Despite the devastation, war was carried out with a certain decorum, a respect for the enemy. Parties seldom fought to annihilate the enemy. They fought to achieve particular goals: conquer a city, a harbor, or land, or carry out a demand for inheritance or to enjoy trade advantages. The victor had no motivation to continue the fight once his goal was reached. There were not wars that were concluded as World War II was, with the overreaching demand by the Allies that the Germans surrender unconditionally, a demand that struck at the German government, itself a non-Nazi government.

An example of mutual respect despite bitterness is the War of 1864 between Denmark and Prussia and Austria. The prize to the victors was the duchies—and solely the duchies. As Prussia's war goals did not include parts of the kingdom, for practical reasons they were willing to pay reparations to Denmark for the areas added to the peace agreement. The reparations included eight areas near Kolding just south of the old border between the kingdom and the duchies.

Few people understand the message of peace in the Gospels that calls for an immediate end to war as a means for deciding disagreements between states. Instead, they find religious justification for war, and the warring parties are mutually convinced that the final outcome will be blessed by God, that His *will* will be revealed in the historical changes of victory and defeat for the people. However, today war between civilized countries is meaningless as a means to achieve limited goals or decide matters of religion.

A German war propaganda phrase used during World War I was: "God punish England." An empty phrase—just as empty as the Allies' attempt to disguise their true goal by claiming that they had to protect Belgium's neutrality. Today a war would have to be fought based on an inner lie. We can ask: For which goals do we fight wars today, to protect territory or rights?

At the beginning of World War II, the Allies watched Hitler take over Czechoslovakia. After a year of allowing him to expand his kingdom at the expense of smaller kingdoms, the Allies were extremely anxious when they realized they needed a total crusade to remove the danger Hitler brought to mankind. Yes, Nazism was a threat to mankind, an expression of barbarism

the likes of which we had never seen before. Had the Western countries acted with this conviction sooner, as early as 1933, there never would have been a second World War.

After many mistakes we have learned that dictatorship must be stopped by military action. There is no point in further discussion about what to do, what needs to be done once a situation has reached such a crisis. No other course seems possible, only military action remains. But to prevent such a situation from developing in the first place, moral attitudes are essential. Here is where communism differs from Nazism: Its followers do not try to take over power by attacking new countries; rather, they occupy them from within.

All responsible people and almost all responsible politicians in every country want peace today and if we doubt that, we do not trust their motives. We do not know which conditions they will eventually accept for choosing war in a crisis, and we have every reason to doubt that they have the ability to sustain everlasting peace. Therefore their actions are greatly influenced by fear as well as “national egotistical” or “regional egotistical” interests.

Peace can be accomplished when we understand how to fight spiritual battles with spiritual resources and when we have a perspective that views mankind’s interests at large, not merely our own personal or group interests. True peace, not just the condition where there is no war. Three hundred years ago Baruch Spinoza, Dutch rationalist and philosopher (1632–1677), wrote: “If a state and its people refrain to take to arms because they are afraid, one must rather say that they are ‘without war’ rather than say they are ‘in peace.’ For peace is not merely a condition without war; it is a virtue that springs from spiritual power.” More critical than any other consideration, when it comes to keeping peace and strengthening freedom, is to know the essence of the spiritual power Spinoza describes and then strive to obtain it.

Spiritual power is a capacity within every individual human being. A folk or nationality can possess it only insofar as the individual members possess it. And of what does it consist? It consists of (1) the ability to know thyself to be a spiritual being and thereby able to meet other people without fear for losing one’s self even if the other is a different spiritual being, and (2) the doing so without repressing or suppressing the other when he asserts himself, nor does the other need to fear losing himself in the meeting. If I recognize the eternal being within me, I know that it cannot be destroyed by anything that comes from the outside—not by catastrophe or violence—and I know that threats will not set me off track. To the contrary, I can obtain inner peace that can nourish peace in others and remove the spike of their aggression. If we mature in an atmosphere of mutual respect, we can search for solutions to our problems as a community. Is it necessary to believe in order to obtain peace? When I overcome fear and when others realize they have nothing to gain by using threats or violence, then peace can stream from me. If I become nervous or lose my head, I am susceptible to threats, for this cues the worst, most aggressive part of the other. If I am steadfast, the consequent ability of spiritual power appears to sustain freedom, namely respect for others.

Let us consider myself and another in conflict. I must acknowledge that the other has the right to existence, for everyone exists “with the highest

natural right,” as Spinoza wrote. Therefore it is my duty to be interested in and responsible for the other’s legitimate rights. If I know myself as a spiritual being and know that I can find a source of power that streams through spiritual knowledge, I may have the magnanimity to take care of the other’s interests. This brings us to the third and most important capacity—living thinking that allows us to find the possibilities and ways when he who has blinders before his eyes sees battle as the only way. The participants in a battle may ask, “Why did the conflict end in open battle?” The answer is often, “Because we did not have the moral imagination that allowed us to see the right solution.” If we ask further, “How can the battle end?” the answer is, “When one of us finds the solution to which we can both agree.” Mechanistic thinking and lack of imagination are probably the main reasons for the conflicts that rage all over the world still today.

The materialistic way of thinking creates the fear and spiritual rigidity within which irreconcilability appears and war ensues. Alternatively, spiritual thinking can create empowered, peaceful, inner certainty and spiritual mobility. We can see other perspectives and can speak about something that has significance for social life, at the very least within large international circles. Therefore the issue of war and peace is not a question that can be answered by politicians alone, by those who are directly involved in the great decisions. Rather, these decisions belong to everyone, not simply because they affect everyone, but because every human being creates an atmosphere that surrounds him and works upon his environment as a person from whom either a benevolent activity exudes or a nervous, unpeaceful atmosphere. Or where passivity and bluntness enable us to be bricks in the wall and we suffer a result we do not wish.

Peace in the world depends not merely on the actions of leading personalities within two or three power blocks. Peace springs from the spiritual power in every human being. It is essential for everyone to know that he or she is not merely a member of a society or a power block but also an individuality, an independent personality. At the very least it is necessary to overcome thinking collectively, thinking within power blocks. If we believe there are two or three power blocks in the world, we accept that we must be loyal to the one in which we belong. Then limited conflicts are impossible. For, no matter what is happening across the world, I belong to it, I must take side, I must work for peace by contributing so the just side can triumph.

And we feel morally responsible for engaging in the conflicts all over the world, and all peace-loving nations must send peacekeeping troops to the little nations where war is played out by the rest of the world that fights on their territories. For all the peace-loving nations choose sides and send their troops to fight.

No, if one thing is clear concerning idealism it is that no nation can send its sons and daughters to battle in a foreign land. Thinking should be developed out of idealism, from which peace springs. In the battles fought on the soil of small nations, the interests of huge power blocks have infiltrated. Even though they want world peace secured, they are cynical enough to allow small wars to rage for their own interests on other nation’s territories. Perhaps *cynical*

is not the right word here. Perhaps it is better to use *misfortunate humanity*. Perhaps good will is also present here. For what prevented such an unfortunate war as the Vietnam War from ending is also a result of the materialism that brings about rigid thinking, thinking not able to lead the way to lasting and true social solutions.

Each human being is an individuality, and it is his duty to develop his judgment. No one must blindly align with his government's worldview, it is no one's duty to offer solidarity to a power block that promotes egotistical interests. One of the greatest dangers for peace is the belief in our duty towards international solidarity. That belief arises from corrupted thinking, for such solidarity will make every conflict a thousand times more devastating than it would be without it. Solidarity is an empty phrase. It is used by leaders who, for their own interests, exercise influence over those who do not understand that they are merely bricks in a dishonest game.

War is no longer a legitimate instrument for deciding important disagreements between power blocks. At this point in history, every war will tend toward a World War. The time for nation states is over. Small states allowed themselves be used by the power blocks during the Cold War. They gave up their independence for a false solidarity. By surrendering their own way of life for security, it is now an open question whether they can find and reestablish their independence. Dividing the world into power blocks is a threatening gesture. Therefore the path to true peace begins by dissolving the idea of a state and focusing on individuals who are free of the state's influence, who are working and striving as free people within the economic, political, and religious spheres of life without alliance to any group's interests.

THE POWER OF MORAL EDUCATION – GEOGRAPHY¹

by

Christof Goepfer

translated by Ted Warren

If we ask how we can create opportunities for children to form their own moral values, we assume that our pedagogy in Waldorf education can achieve more than merely the transfer of information. We also assume it provides more than support and impulses to the new generation as they take their steps upon the path of knowledge. Must not a school also help children develop a basis for their morality?

These questions set unparalleled expectations of Waldorf teachers, and the teacher's preparations therefore must take on a deeper dimension. It is no longer enough to learn the facts that will be taught; the teacher must somehow deepen meditatively his understanding of the subject. He must become one with the subject over time and experience it inwardly. Then a teacher will notice how the subject is transformed and comes alive, giving his teaching a new power. Upon this starting point the entire consequence of our task as educators is based. We can reflect upon our true goal on many levels:

- The child shall be educated to become a sovereign individual, a human being that can stand on his or her own feet.
- The child shall be creative and retain the ability to learn and change his whole life long.
- We want adults who are not caught in a one-sided world perspective.
- The highest goal is for our children to become sensitive human beings who later have the opportunity to realize spiritual development if they choose to do so.
- We want to educate children to be open for moral ideas, especially at a time when moral values are increasingly being slighted.

The Roots of Morality

In order to provide a basis for morality, it is important to know where morality originates. An ancient proverb states: "Look to the stars and keep your eye on the path." Human morality goes back to "the world of the stars' relationship to the human being and the human being's relationship to the world of the stars." In a lecture series on the origins of morality, Rudolf Steiner taught us that morality is a reflection of our relationship to the hierarchies in the time before birth.² Morality belongs to neither social conventions nor unconscious feelings in the soul. By remembering the time before their birth,

people will know what is correct and good. Steiner placed great emphasis on the need for teachers to know these spiritual relationships and, in addition to their teaching, to work with spiritual scientific content of this type even if it at first appears foreign. The supersensible world that spiritual science describes is the world morality.³

Opportunities at School

If a school can at all work morally invigoratingly, these are intimate processes. We can look first at the curriculum Steiner created based on the spiritual laws found within the process of a child's development. Actual demands such as accelerating intellectual development disturb the spiritual laws in the curriculum and hinder the students in receiving the age-appropriate support they need in each grade.

Secondly, the spiritual laws that work indirectly within the curriculum help support the students. Let us look specifically at these opportunities as Steiner addressed them in relation to the study of geography.⁴ Developing an ability to observe correctly as learned in geography lessons will help children direct their soul forces in the direction of the earth. "We provide a certain consolidation of the human being in himself when we teach geography in the proper, observable way. We especially develop the person's interest for the world." Such children relate "more lovingly with their fellow human beings than those who have not learned what it means that everything exists side by side in space.... These things work powerfully on the development of moral forces, and the disregard for geography appears elsewhere as the aversion for loving others, something that is also disregarded in our times."

Thus geography lessons work directly into the human being. "The remittance of good geography lessons is responsible for that which is the great sickness of our times." Steiner did not name precisely what that sickness is, but it is reasonable to assume it is even more prevalent today.

Indirect Effects

The approach in this article is not to cover the particular content in various subjects that directly support the themes of morality or religion, nor to try to grasp the hidden spiritual and moral reasons and the indirect effects that may arise from them. For in lessons in geography—and in all natural scientific subjects—we observe the earth's phenomena not as wasteful products of material processes but inquire as to the meaningful, higher laws that live in them. This can provide the basis for the stability of soul and thereby create responsiveness for moral laws, in other words, bring forth the moral attitudes concerning nature's cosmic laws!

An example from history is the knights of King Arthur. For hundreds of years mankind observed the phenomena of nature—the rhythms of the seasons, the elements of water, air and earth in the rivers' rapids, in waves, wind and weather, in mountain formations and plant growth. The knights not only placed their castles according to such realities. From the cosmic-based laws of nature they created the principles of their social order that

they needed for their spiritual tasks in the transition between pre-Christian and Christian times. The stories of King Arthur are pictures of how fulfilled this made them.

The question is whether such an observation of natural forces is possible today. Are we able to bring this sort of study to our pupils? One method may be found in Goethe's article on granite:

With this attitude I approach you, greatest, most honorable monuments of time. Sitting on a high bare summit and overlooking a wide landscape, I can say to myself: Here you are, resting without intermediary on a ground which reaches down to the deepest recesses of the earth; no more recent layer, no heaped-up, conglomerate debris have laid themselves between you and the firm foundation of the primeval world; you do not walk over a continuous grave as in those fair fruitful valleys; these summits have not brought forth anything living nor have they devoured anything living; they are before all life and above all life. At this moment when the inner attracting and moving forces of the earth have, so to speak, an immediate effect on me, when the influences of the sky hover nearer to me, my mood is raised to higher contemplation of nature and, as the spirit of man brings life to everything, a comparison comes alive in me the loftiness of which I cannot resist. So, lonely, I tell myself, gazing down from this entirely bare summit, and hardly seeing in the distance at its foot a scantily growing bit of moss, so lonely, I say, is the mood of a man who desires to open his soul only to the oldest, first, deepest feelings of truth. Indeed, he can say to himself: here, on the oldest, eternal Altar, built directly on the depth of creation, I offer a sacrifice to the Being of all Beings. I feel the first, firmest beginnings of our existence; I overlook the world, her rockier and her gentler valleys, and her distant, fertile pastures; my soul is lifted above itself and above everything, and longs for the closer sky.⁵

Alone-ness and the enlightened atmosphere Goethe perceives on the granite mountaintop opened his soul for the deepest feelings of truth; the soul longs for "the closer sky." He does not mean the physical sky but one in the world of morality. Goethe speaks of the sacrifice that grips him.

In this direction we see Steiner's understanding of the teacher's role: To awaken in our children true feelings of devotion for nature. In each grade the teacher should have these feelings as a good example for the children. A teacher must work his way into a "geology that is sensitive," an attitude that can be expressed in other subjects as well. Especially in the seventh grade when we learn the types of rocks and observe granite, limestone and slate in relation to life-giving processes on earth, we can provide a good foundation in this direction. Goethe and his colleagues C.G. Carus and Henrik Steffens formulated fruitful thoughts for this.

Inner Prerequisites

To have such thoughts assumes that one does not view the physical-sensory world as the sole and final reality of creative forces and their beings. Steiner presented vast amounts of information and details for this based on his spiritual-scientific research. His shared knowledge has broadened the traditional studies of science and provided enrichment for everyone, especially those who teach and educate children. This is true even if one does not agree that the supersensible world is the world of morality.

Steiner gave simple exercises to lift the individual beyond the level of sensory observation using thoughts that perceive the world as moral. He stated that if we deepen meditatively the blue sky, we can feel some of the godly mercy, and a feeling of “devotion” can appear. By experiencing the green of the plants, we can gain an understanding of the meaning of the phenomena in the world. The white of the snow reveals some of the quality of being in the substances of the world. Especially class teachers can carefully awaken such feelings in their children. In summary: “In this way we come to something deeper than usual. Nature’s outer veil is brushed aside and we enter a world that lies behind the outer veil.”⁶

For the highest goal for education—that the child shall be creative and retain the ability to learn and change his whole life long—Steiner also provided guidance: We shall remove all impressions, feelings of soul and time from the home where we grew up. For all of the events in our childhood influence us in a certain, limiting way, in our view the world, an attitude we must overcome, and instead develop an element of freedom.

From this perspective we can now see that geography lessons are key. Children learn about other parts of the world, other life circumstances and ways of thinking. The curriculum for geography is built upon what the children first experience in their own homes. Then the perspective of their home is overlaid with learning about the entire continent they live upon, and then further, other parts of the world. That liberation from one’s home is critical for higher development. Spiritual development in earlier times was actually described as being “homeless” as a prerequisite for initiation to the mysteries, in being free to attain a real relationship with a spiritual world. From that perspective we can wonder what the extensive “homelessness” all over the world means for mankind in our times.

The Spiritual View of Nature

Until the Middle Ages, all over Europe, humanity had an instinctive knowledge that living behind natural phenomena, behind the mountains, rivers, clouds, and trees, and so forth, were supersensible beings. Among nature people that knowledge still lives. Modern ethnography has surprising statements about this. Therefore it is meaningful to also include Steiner’s presentations. He described in much detail the elemental beings that the wisdom of natural peoples also presents: gnomes, sylphs and others. But Steiner described how certain water, air and warmth phenomena serve as the bodies for higher beings, namely angels, archangels and archai. The

hierarchical beings live in the world of morality. That means that in our rivers, seas, waterfalls and sea currents—in all formations within the earth’s hydrosphere—angelic beings are manifest. In the great wind formations, within the wandering low pressures, in cyclones, archangelic beings are weaving. (Meteorologists still give human names to high and low pressure areas, and Goethe allows the archangels to call the storms their life element in his “Prologue in Heaven” in Faust.)

Warm air formations that are created over certain areas of the earth are the homes of beings from the archai’s hierarchy. What an amazing mental image Steiner gives us. Of course this does not belong in any lessons at school! Together with our students we study the observable elements in the hydro- and atmospheres, and the teacher can know that he speaks indirectly about the bodies of hierarchical beings. Although we can leave these mental images as working hypotheses, we must observe phenomena such as the hole in the ozone layer and other operations in the earth’s water and climate with greater seriousness than when we merely think of outer damage. From a spiritual perspective these operations are within the world from which morality appears.

The Inner Construction of the Curriculum in the Upper School

The development of moral capacities through the Waldorf curriculum that we considered at the beginning of this article is especially pertinent for the upper school. While preparing for life our students are guided through all four spheres of the earth’s organism: geology, the stream organisms of water and air. And when we teach economic geography and ecology, the subjects are all related to meeting the human being’s physical and soul needs. In the final year of school we teach how multi-cultural initiatives appear based on the human Self. In the diversity of cultures, the earth mirrors its ability to carry the Self. Knowledge of the world, the earth and the human being illustrates the constant changes which challenge our students to act ever more responsibly.

ESCAPING

While escaping
What a grand reception
Along the way –

Embedded
in the wind's clothes
feet in the prayers of the sand
that can never say amen
for it must
from the falls to the wings
and beyond –

The sick butterfly
knows once again from the sea –
This stone
With the fly's words
Has been laid in my hands –
Rather than my home
I have the transformation of the world.⁷
– Nelly Sachs

IN DER FLUCHT

In der Flucht
Welch grosser Empfang
unterwegs –

Eingehuellt
In der Winde Tuch
Fuesse im Gebet des Sandes
Der niemals Amen sagen kann
Denn er muss
Von der Flosse in den Fluegel
Un weiter –

Der kranke Schmetterling
Weiss bald wieder vom Meer –
Dieser Stein
mit der Inschrift der Fliege
hat sich mir in die Hand gegeben –
An Stelle von Heimat
halte ich die Verwandlungen der Welt.

Endnotes

1. This article was printed originally in *Steinerskolen*, Number 34, March 2004.
2. Steiner, Rudolf. *Man and the World of the Stars*, GA 219, Anthroposophic Press, p. 62.
3. _____. *Theosophy* (GA 9) and *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, GA 10, both available from SteinerBooks (www.steinerbooks.org).
4. Steiner, Rudolf. *Education for Adolescents* (GA 302), NY: SteinerBooks, 1996.
5. “Granite” by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1784. This essay is available from AWSNA Publications (www.whywaldorfworks.org/publications).
6. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Kingdom of Nature* (GA 136), lecture 1, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1967.
7. Nelly Sachs, “In Der Flucht,” see *O, the Chimneys: Selected Poems*, translated by Michael Hamburger, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967. Nelly Sachs (1891–1970) was a German poet and dramatist whose Nazi experience transformed her into a poignant spokesperson for the grief and yearnings of her fellow Jews. She was awarded the 1966 Nobel Prize for Literature.

ETHICS AND THE PERSPECTIVE ON NATURE

by

Oskar Borgman Hansen

translated by Ted Warren

From observations on the developments over the past four hundred years in natural science, I have defined a path for the renewal of scientific research that includes significant cultural consequences. We all experience as a very serious social problem the cultural divide between science and ethics. These very important aspects of our lives are not in harmony. Many people want scientific research to be subjected to ethical control, and thus, for example, the establishment of Denmark's Ethical Council. Why should research not have its own innate direction such that control from outside is unnecessary? There is a conflicting, dualistic relationship between research and ethics.

Another important dualism, not discussed as often as the one of research and ethics, is the dualism between nature and spirit. The human being is part of the kingdom of nature. We take in nature's substances through food and breath and we release them once they have served our organs. In a certain way we also stand outside of nature: we observe her, we judge her and we make theories about her. Everything that belongs to our comprehension of nature takes place in our inner life, and the process of comprehension has nothing to do with nature. Therefore we often talk about ourselves in relationship to nature rather than as part of nature. This points to a form of duality that is similar to that between research and ethics. Strange as it may be, our distance from the world of nature makes us want to subject her. The goal of science is to make nature subservient to man. This conclusion brings us back to the dualism between research and ethics, for we must ask: Why is it legitimate to control nature?

An old conviction about the goals of studying the natural sciences is that we want to create power over nature. Knowledge is power, not only that one person can have power, but it lies in the essence of knowledge, in its definition, that it brings power. This definition is rooted in the desire for power. We find this desire in the perspective on nature created by the English natural philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626). This perspective has defined the very understanding that has brought us to the point where we now have directly contrasting relationships between human beings and nature. People are so antagonistic to nature that they wish to subject it to the point where our exercise of power may well bring about the destruction of nature.

The Finnish-Swedish philosopher Georg Henrik von Wright (1916–2003) published *Science and Reason* in 1986. This book provoked a strong debate before it was soon forgotten. An analytical philosopher his whole life, he began his career in research as a follower of logical positivism, a direction that

includes a sharp difference between ethics and knowledge. It argues that we can never reach scientific statements on ethical questions. All reflections are subjective. For example, he who says we should not lie clearly expresses that he does not appreciate lying. From this point of view nothing is considered to work against nature or destroy it. If one says that mankind destroys nature when his agriculture creates erosion, this means, from the logical positivism perspective, that one does not want erosion.

People cannot live in Antarctica and they can barely live on the Sahara. But a desert is merely a landscape among other landscapes. If we achieve a short-term advantage in nature, there is merely one question to be answered: Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages? No matter what the answer may be, the point of view is always purely subjective and human.

Von Wright wrote that his scientific understanding was shaken when he learned that in America certain industries were forced to pay for cleaning up liquid wastes. He considered this unfair because technology will soon be able to make fish that can live in polluted water and still be edible. There must be something fundamentally wrong with a philosophy that can lead someone to think this way. Yet this way of thinking is not the expression of something out of control, it is a consequence of our last three century's understanding of science. Von Wright tells us to search for reason, but he does not tell us how to find it. Yet he maintains hope that we will find it. This article is an attempt to search for the new reason von Wright longed for, and, when we find it, that reason will guide us to a new relationship with nature.

If we search for something new, it is wise to know what is old, what once was new and considered progressive when first established. One example of this is the mechanical world perspective prevalent in Bacon's time and for which Galileo (1564–1642) became famous. With sharp polemics during the Middle Ages against the understanding of science and nature, these two carried scientific research a step further.

Aristotle (384–322 BC) created a preliminary understanding of science in the fourth pre-Christian century. Yet by the time of the first generation of Christians, there was very little interest in scientific thinking. After centuries of development, by the time of the Middle Ages, a synthesis was found between science and the Christian world perspective. This was done in such way that reconciliation was reached between Aristotle's world perspective and the Jewish-Christian understanding of the relationship between God and the world. Both perspectives entail the conviction that the world was set up pre-conditionally. This pervades the creation stories in the book of Moses, in which God created a good world wherein each phenomenon served the greater whole. For example, God placed the sun in the heavens so there would be light. Further, Aristotle points to an earth created for the reasonable and the good so that everything on the earth has God in its center and as its ultimate goal. It is good that celestial bodies move across the sky. That heavy objects fall is an example that the world is set up for the good.

This was rightfully contested in the seventeenth century. The new goal was to observe how the world really is. No matter how well aligned it was

with Christian concepts, Aristotle's perspective explained nothing. It is certainly valuable for people to see with the help of the sun, but would it not be more valuable to have light twenty-four hours a day? When we leave the old explanations behind and begin researching, the laws of nature are discovered. Astronomical laws explain the movement of heavy objects better than the explanation that it is God's plan for creation. Thus the concept of natural laws was established.

Galileo said, "I want to describe, not explain." Galileo understood the explanations of the direction of falling objects to be the "search for their rightful place." When they fall, it is better that they fall than if they do not fall. Instead he wanted to find the mathematical formula that determines everything in their fall.

As theoretical as these statements appear, they are extremely important for understanding the development of science even today. This change of mind has led to modern science and its results on one side and to the estrangement from nature on the other. The latter is largely responsible for our pollution of the environment and dangers related to our relationship with nature. If we can see what the relationship is between the exploitation of nature that includes unwanted, environmental byproducts and dangers on one side and modern scientific research on the other side, we will certainly arrive on the path to the new reason for which we must strive.

Theories are created in human minds. Whenever we think about something, we add something to it that is revealed to us by our senses. For example, our senses reveal to us that things fall. Thinking brings the laws of gravity with mathematical formulas to the experience in our senses as proof. This concept would not have even been conceived in the Middle Ages. Rather, at that time they would have said, "We read the book of nature."

What we add to our theories is nothing more than that which was already there from the beginning. The picture image that we read in "nature's book" is adequate. If you put a book in front of me, the first thing I see are the letters. If the book is published in an unfamiliar language with an alphabet I do not know, then I can see everything but understand nothing. Once I learn the foreign alphabet and language, I can understand. The understanding is something new that I add to the sensory experience, but it has nothing to do with the letters. I now understand only that which was there all along.

As obvious as that may seem, there are few scientific theorists today who will agree. Instead they say that with our theories we are adding something to that which our senses show us, especially through experiments. They do not believe that what we think we are adding was already there. Our senses shall show us the surface, and we do not know what reality hides behind the surface, if indeed there is something hidden there. We must be content with relating to things on the surface. Their essence remains hidden forever. And this shall be true for all areas of being with one exception. If we base our reflections for a moment on Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who has expressed that the essence of things remains hidden, the exception can be characterized as follows:

With scientific knowledge, we remain outside of the objects and describe merely the outer laws for what we experience on the surface. But human beings are not merely natural beings. They have a consciousness of themselves as morally responsible beings. Nature does not explain the realities of morality. Kant mentions that no one can or wants to refute this statement, for we all know that there are some things that are allowed and some things that are not allowed and, further, that these allowances are not merely according to outer norms but according to individual conscience. That conscience provides, in its reality, the proof that human beings are not merely natural beings but also spiritual beings. Yet we cannot actually grasp mankind's duality as a natural being and a moral being. Nature is such that it locks out morality. In nature the law of cause and effect can explain everything. Morality does not fit into such patterns. Therefore we cannot explain morality from a psychological perspective. You can say that when Kant wrote his works at the end of the eighteenth century, the Godlike realities were driven out of all walks of life and replaced with a scientific way of thinking with morality as the only and last exception.

Perhaps it is easiest to see how the mechanical world perspective falls short when we observe the human being. According to its world perspective scientific psychology asks the following methodological question: As the human being is a part of nature, can we find the laws that allow us to know how people react under certain conditions?

If we know that, we can, for example, design education based on a scientific understanding that allows us to calculate the best conditions to help children develop certain skills. By systematically observing children, we find that the most effective learning process is when the teaching happens for so many minutes or hours and then a break is given. We can also learn that this relationship varies according to the age of the children. The method of obtaining this knowledge is called *experimental psychology*. It is no longer dominant but consequent representatives remain. American psychologist B.F. Skinner (1904–1990) argued this perspective in his much-read book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, that entrenched belief in the moral autonomy of the individual (“dignity”) hindered the prospect of using scientific methods to modify behavior for the purpose of building a happier and better organized society.

It is important for us to acknowledge the basic questions of this work: How do people react under certain conditions? How do we influence them based on our knowledge of these reactions? Yet, if we have no previous expectations for how to ask such questions, we might ask another question: Which form of education most benefits children? One may consider it simple to say that the last question is the most fundamental question for education. But in order to ask that question, we must have a new understanding of what science is. We must have a science on the child's being, not merely a science of its reaction patterns.

In all of its different manifestations, psychoanalysis has acknowledged that we must differentiate between the surface and the being. On the surface,

different people perform actions that appear identical. In the being, one acts from force or convention, the other acts as a free expression of being. The task of psychology is to teach people to be themselves, something they not always are. If one is able to speak that way, which many people can, then one has already broken from the form of science that is connected to the mechanical world view which has been developed since Bacon and Galileo's time. Yet psychoanalysis, in particular from Sigmund Freud's point of view concerning the human being, has not fully broken off consequently. For Freud (1856–1939) it was a reality that no matter what else human beings are, they are beings of nature; i.e., that the nature of human beings unfolds within the needs that are given by the psychological-biological structure. But Freud did not pursue this because it was so obvious to him.

Today we should be able to see the limitations of such a materialistic understanding of the human being. Anyone who understands the human being does so in the power of something that goes beyond, that reaches beyond everything that is based in the biological aspects of human life. To be a good teacher one needs to have an intuitive ability to love. This is where the understanding of what science is plays a role. He who asks only how one might best teach children certain desired skills misses out on asking, more importantly, what might best serve the child and help develop the child's ability to ask the essential questions. When I use the phrase "certain desired skills," we must be clear that I speak of what is desired by society, how the environment wants children to be. Today we witness people asking whether children can meet the demands of college admission and successful careers. To understand is to exercise power, says Bacon. His way of thinking still has followers today, even in regards to the understanding of the human being. To those who say I draw too sharp a line, I would reply that it is necessary in order to clearly define the essential, even when it can be hard to find consequent followers of the sharp opinions.

Today it is common to speak about civil rights. Human rights are something that appear for those who observe human life superficially. As sensory beings we have no human rights. As beings in this world we have rights that our society give us, for example the right to vacation for a certain number of days. Rights are always concrete when considering the human being as a being in the sensory world. In contrast to the actual rights given by society, "human rights" is an idea, something supersensible, something merely thought. But that which is "merely thought" must be in line with the human being. Everyone who is able to think something rationally about the concept of "human rights" must have broken with the mechanical world perspective and thereby has already found some of that new rationality for which von Wright was searching.

The human being is a spiritual being who develops from within that which is independent of the biological laws. Just the fact that we can speak about "human rights" points to this. If we could not admit this, we should refrain from speaking about them, for both belong together. And in addition we must have found a new science to be able to speak that way. What gives

us this ability? It is the fact that thinking does not strive for power, but rather for understanding. Thinking carries people beyond the merely subjective to that which we all can understand. We could call it trans-subjective. In the sensory world we are introduced to the outer realities of objects. In thinking we meet their being. We may not believe this because this is a departure from our usual way of thinking, but we live in a certain confidence that we can be understood by other people. How else could we speak with them? Many speak with people to influence them or convince them of something. But they know themselves that it is better to be understood and have their points of view accepted on their own merits rather than having them imposed through authority or indoctrination. Yet it is the trans-subjective in thinking that makes free understanding possible. We can say that love is the core of thinking.

The new science demands that we see again that an idea is a reality. There are good reasons for being expelled from the world of science. In the mechanical sciences the assumption that an idea is a reality no doubt suppressed the first stages of research. But the criticism went too far and the unfortunate result was dualism, which is most clearly defined in Kant's philosophy: there are two worlds and we cannot understand how they relate to each other. We assume that ethics belongs to the human being, that is, in the life of mankind. But we cannot understand how ethics relates to nature. Notice the prejudice in the previous statement. The person who acts ethically is also part of the world. What a person experiences in his thinking belongs either to reality or to nature. The human being is part of nature and we can understand our fellow man by thinking. If the idea shall be seriously reintroduced to our thinking about the human being and the world, there are two conditions that shall be fulfilled: We shall reach totalities and we shall see the idea in a concrete situation. If we fulfill both conditions we reach something fruitful.

The idea of human rights is used with every human being. If we remove one person from it we fail what it is all about. Another idea that plays a large role in our thinking, especially after the fall of communism, is the idea of liberal economy, of the meaning of competition for the economy. This idea is abstract and distant from reality. If it were concrete we would not have regulating fixed prices for agricultural products while limiting production to prevent prices from sinking too low. The idea of liberalism does not fit in reality. We also need to ask if liberalism benefits *everyone*? The idea of human rights includes everyone.

An extension of human rights, if we want our economy to strive for brotherhood, is to remove competition in order to help each other. Agriculture must move in new directions. A new form of land ownership can liberate agriculture from the burden of debt, which in reality is not necessary. For example, if we observe biology, we cannot avoid removing the materialistic explanations whenever they are absolute. An animal's organs are determined by particular functions; all animals are determined by the construction of their limbs for certain actions. The human body, most particularly the human hand, demonstrates that people are free beings. Humans can use their hands

to hit or to caress, they can write their signatures on a threatening letter or on a gift certificate. The hand obeys the spirit's instruction. But the human being has not created his own body. While the body is the spirit's expression, there must be an active spirit in nature that has built this body during a long evolution.

As the human is a being that unfolds from within, so are all living organisms. But whereas animals and plants are partially or totally unconscious beings, within the human being a conscious spirit works. There are no complete, mechanistic explanations that plants and animals unfold rhythmically. One can ask humorously whether the chicken or the egg came first; they belong together in a development that stretches through time; they demand a development of man's spiritual efforts to understand the living forces. One must build relationships inside in order to be able to hold the moment that unfolds in time.

Kant stated that biology would never be a science in the context of understanding the mission of living beings. At the same time as Kant made this prediction, Goethe was developing a totally new perspective on living nature. Nature can be understood but requires the development of new organs of understanding. We can understand nature in its totality when we observe the phases of development in the natural kingdoms. Goethe (1749–1832) wanted to develop a science in this direction; we call it Goethean science, and Austrian scientist Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) developed it further. It has grown into a positive direction of scientific research.

A person receives the answer to the questions he asks. Those who research in nature define the direction of their research and subsequent answers by the questions they ask. The question is: Which light do people who search direct towards reality? If we ask what the point is and how we can gain power over nature, we will place ourselves outside of nature and will never escape the unwelcome consequences of our actions. If we ask how we can support life-giving processes, we will enter paths of thinking that will bring forth cultural renewal within a perspective on life that brings the relationship between social and natural scientific thinking into our daily lives.

THE BEING OF THE INTERNET

by

Sergei Prokofieff

Sub-Nature has to be understood as such.

– Rudolf Steiner, March 1925

The Being of the Internet is esoterically best understood on the basis of Rudolf Steiner's Dornach lecture of May 13, 1921.¹ In this lecture Steiner described how the further development of today's abstract intellect will slowly produce a kind of new nature kingdom. This intellect which is merely of a "shadowlike character" can only function "automatically" and can only comprehend the material as such, and never the etheric and to an even lesser degree the soul world or spirit world. This ghostly nature kingdom will be formed between the mineral and the plant kingdoms and come alive following the reunion of the moon with the earth in the Seventh to Eighth Millennium.

The Imagination of the Spider Web

It is frightening how poignantly Steiner described this spirit world in comparison with the world situation of today:

And from the earth will well up terrible creations of beings who in their character stand between the mineral kingdom and the plant kingdom as automative beings with super-natural intellect, an immense intellect. When this development takes hold, the earth will be covered, as with a web, a web of terrible spiders, spiders of enormous wisdom, which however, in their organization don't even reach the plant status. Terrible spiders which will interlock with each other, which will imitate in their movements all that which humanity has thought of with their shadowlike intellect that was not inspired by a new imagination, through that which is to come through Spiritual Science. All man's thoughts of this kind, which are unreal, will come alive. The earth will be covered ... with terrible mineral-plant-like spiders, which will link up with empathy but evil intention. And man ... will have to unite with these terrible mineral-plant-like spider creatures.²

These spider creatures will be of a distinct ahrimanic character. When one reads these prophetic words of the spiritual scientist today, in an era of world-wide connections via computer and the Internet, one may be disheartened

to find how quickly this prophecy has become a reality on earth. It is as if Steiner, with his spiritual gaze, described today's Internet from beyond the threshold, categorically warning humanity that in a not too distant future, with the unification of moon and earth, this whole Internet-computer-web, and in fact everything connected with the development of the artificial intellect, will suddenly come alive and humans "will have to unit his life with these terrible mineral-plant-like spider creatures." If one considers how many people, in particular young people, have become computer addicted and spend most of their time in front of the screen without sufficient will to get away from it, then one can imagine how endlessly greater the dependence on this spider kingdom will be if in the future this whole net comes alive. Mankind will hardly have a chance to disconnect from it. The frightening picture of an insect caught in the net of a huge and ravenous spider, trying in vain to free itself, is an appropriate picture of this future for mankind. And it will be a very special task of white magic to free such people from their bond to these beings.

Created with Intent

In this lecture Steiner also pointed to the fact that there are certain occult circles which are well aware of this approaching danger and who are intent on advancing it by deliberately keeping this secret.

"There are those [human beings] who are quite consciously allies of the intention to en-web human existence."³

If one takes Steiner's words seriously, there can be no doubt that these occult circles, which know of the above mentioned secrets and yet push mankind in this forlorn direction, have also found a suitable name for the internet, the most appropriate instrument to achieve this future, and spread it like a secret code: www = world wide web.

In my opinion these occult circles belong to those secret brotherhoods of the English-speaking West about whose occult-political endeavors Steiner advised us in his lectures during World War I.⁴ That does not mean however, that those who have given the Internet its name themselves belong to these occult circles. They usually are more or less figures outside who are being used and do not know about it. This begs the question whether some of the other labels in the world have arisen from the same source e.g. the hotel chain in Germany called "Sorat" (the largest hotel and in the center of Berlin), and the satellite aerals which in the center of the dish display in big red letter the name "SatAn," and the latest computer system in which one finds demonic pictures and words such as the Internet browser "Mozilla" which portrays the head of a red dragon, and so forth.⁵ At the end of the lecture Steiner reiterated, as if in anticipation of criticisms from some anthroposophists: "Mankind may close its eyes to such things; they may say: Well, this is reading too much into it. But the signs are really there and the signs should be understood by humanity."⁶ And to such signs,

which can be seen clearly today and must be understood, in particular by anthroposophists, also belongs the following.

The Number of the Beast

According to the occult teachings of the Kabala all Hebrew letters have a numeric equivalent. Steiner spoke about this in detail in his cycle on the Apocalypse concerning the revelation of the name of the sun demon *Sorat*.⁷ On this occasion Steiner pointed out that the numeric equivalent of the letter *W* (Hebrew *waw*) is 6, the number 6. It follows that the occult meaning of “www” is “666,” the number of the beast of which the apocalypse says: “Here wisdom itself speaks. Whoever has the ability to think it, let him seek the meaning of the number of the beast. It is the number of Man. And its number is six hundred and sixty-six.”⁸ The indication of the “number of Man” means that the beast, which is not of human nature, will use something coming from man himself for its attacks against humanity. In my opinion the Internet and everything connected to artificial intelligence are part of this.

In conclusion, the aims of the above mentioned occult circles not only relate to the spiritual en-webbing of humanity but ultimately to the endeavor to put the whole undertaking into the service of *Sorat*. Because the latter is the prime opponent of the Ego-principle within mankind, the en-webbing of humanity through the artificial intelligence that has come alive will lead ultimately to the loss of the Ego.

Connecting to Sub-Nature

It is clear to see that today’s digital industry is being driven exactly in this direction. At present chips are produced as the basis for computers in which predominantly electricity is used as the information carrier or store. However, the next generation of chips is already at the door, chips which use not only electricity but also light as a transmitter. This means that a chip of the same size can contain a thousandfold more information. And this is not by far the pinnacle of development in this field, as there are already large companies in the West which are experimenting with chips that will no longer be based on light but on microbiological elements as information carriers. These new “biological chips” will again increase the capacity for information they can hold compared to “light chips” a thousandfold. Since the biochips are infiltrated with electricity, they are united with sub-nature from the start. Thus the whole development undoubtedly moves closer towards Steiner’s imagination of an earth covered and later enlivened by a spider web.

Electronically Compressed

Something similar, although in a different format, happens with a compact disc (CD), digital versatile disc (DVD), or an external hard drive. To understand what this actually means, one has to remember that when the cosmic intelligence guarded by Michael descended from the sun to the earth

in order to become human intelligence there,⁹ it went through a massive process of compression or contraction. This intelligence, if not seized by Ahriman in the human being, only becomes “naturally” free after death during the expansion of the ether body in the cosmos, i.e., during the process which forms the polarity to its compression. Only a modern schooling path which has the development of living thought as its root can bring about this expansion into the spiritual world already during earthly life and hence ensure a new, conscious connection of mankind with the cosmos and there with Michael himself. The ahrimanic powers serving Sorat work in opposition to this, especially after 1998 (3 x 666).¹⁰ Ahriman—making use of the forces of sub-nature—wants to penetrate the Michaelic intelligence with the artificial intelligence created by him, which includes the digitization of thought. For him this is one of the ways in which he can gain power of earthly intelligence. This started with the fixation of human thoughts through the process of printing and continues now through digitization.

“What does Ahriman intend to gain from Michael through print?” He wants—and you can see that appear everywhere today—to conquer intelligence, that conquest of intelligence which is particularly easy to attain, where conditions are favorable.”¹¹ And Ahriman finds such favorable conditions especially in the world of artificial intelligence and digital industry.

Anthroposophical Material

Thus it is possible to grasp with both hands the process of “compression” of anthroposophical material in an ahrimanic sense. The entire collection of Steiner’s works today encompasses nearly 350 volumes; digitally collated on CD-ROM, this still means a fair number of CDs. With the use of the latest DVD technology, all 350 volumes can be compressed onto two or three disks. On a hard disk drive there will be sufficient space left for the artistic legacy. If one has some feeling for a spiritual perspective, one can experience a physical pain simply by thinking about this. At the same time this incredible fixation and compression of spiritual material is achieved by dragging the CD/DVD and computer industry even further into the sub-nature—in contrast to print media which already bears Ahriman’s imprint, but because of the way it was originally discovered and to a certain degree it is still connected to the natural world through its mechanical process. There, however, the ahrimanic forces possess extraordinary powers with which they will devise even bigger technical wonders in future than is the case so far.

One must not fall prey to the illusion that it is possible to “redeem” the Internet or CD/DVD in the way Steiner indicated for printing. In the realm of sub-nature the obstacles are far greater. One of the reasons for this is the main condition Steiner gives for the redemption of print: “We have to redeem print through reverent feeling for what lives in Michaelic wisdom.”¹² In contrast the Internet or DVD puts everything on the level of purely abstract information that in addition comes in “bytes” (this brings up the picture of Osiris cut into pieces by Set) and thus is spread amongst mankind in a way towards which no “reverent feeling” is possible.

The Delusion of the Duad

If one looks behind the being of the computer on this basis, i.e., to the way information is processed and stored, then one discovers that everything is built on the duad which can endlessly and quantitatively be multiplied through repetition and differing compositions. Steiner called this fundamental principle, which forms the basis for computers worldwide the “delusion of the duad.”¹³ It also connects directly to that force within humanity that in our time fights most ardently against the Michaelic impulse, which is always linked to the number “three.” “It is contained in this new consciousness of mankind the delusion of the duad and it veils the truth of the number three.”¹⁴ And then Steiner described how everything that arises out of Michaelic inspiration is always threefold: The Threefold Social Order, the three figures in the Representative of Man, the rhythm of the Foundation Stone Meditation, and so forth. Here the Anthroposophical Society and in particular the School of Spiritual Science have a special task: to consciously oppose the ahrimanic principle of the duad, which has spread worldwide—in particular through computers—with the threefold Michaelic principle as the most important foundation stone for a future spiritual culture and to implement it in all areas of human life and activities.

Ahriman’s Incarnation

In the same lecture Steiner spoke further about the duad: “Everything that is active in this illusory conception is the creation of the ahrimanic influence, of that influence which in the future will concentrate in the incarnation of Ahriman of which I have already spoken.”¹⁵ It follows that the whole computer and Internet industry is today the most effective way to prepare for the imminent incarnation of Ahriman, or at the least to allow his earthly task to run as smoothly as possible for him. The net of ahrimanic spider beings developing out of the internet around the earth stands right from the beginning in a direct relationship to Ahriman appearing in a physical body and will serve him particularly effectively and offer him extremely favorable potential to work.

Already today one can find on the Internet the most awful and defamatory attacks on Steiner, anthroposophy, Waldorf schools and other institutions connected with anthroposophy. This widespread effect far exceeds that of print. There is no doubt that this will increase in the future, particularly with the posting of the collective works on the Internet and DVD because then all alleged “vulnerable passages” in the collective works will be easily and quickly accessible.

Management of the Computer

What has been said does not mean, however, that one should therefore refrain from using a computer or the Internet. They belong to our civilization and at the same time to the greatest ahrimanic provocations which mankind faces and will have to face increasingly in the future. What is crucial however, as with many similar challenges, which we are faced with in

today's civilization, is whether the human being controls the computer and the Internet or they the human being. The latter is the easier when we are inclined not to take what Steiner has communicated seriously, or worse ignore it and because of this not notice what in reality is happening. If the human being wants to maintain his autonomy/authority over the world of the computer, then he has to differentiate between what objectively offers pure technical aid for his work and where he oversteps the mark behind which, at first unnoticeable, the ahrimanic seduction will start to take control. In the latter case, without being aware of it, the human being will increasingly become an instrument for alien purposes and slowly slide into the sub-nature himself.¹⁶

Reading in the Astral Light

In his lecture of January 13, 1924, Steiner pointed to the most important ahrimanic impulses at that time: everything connected to heredity, all forms of nationalism, mechanical thinking in words and finally our train of writing.¹⁷ The latter in particular can effectively apprehend the human being's ascension to reading in the astral light and through this come close to Michael. Therefore, Steiner mentioned that in certain Rosicrucian schools learning to write was prohibited until the fourteenth or fifteenth year of age so that the form, the mechanism that comes to expression in writing, did not enter the human organism. For the same reason letters are taught in Waldorf schools first through drawing and then writing.

Print with its ahrimanic tendencies was inspired through the subterranean "ahrimanic counter/school" of Michael. "Although a spiritual power has to be recognized in the art of printing, it is the spiritual power which Ahriman set opposite Michael."¹⁸ This ahrimanic tendency finds its continuation, if not indeed its culmination, in today's digital forms of print in order to reach its aim even more effectively: to cut man off from his ability to read in the astral light and thereby encounter Michael in the spiritual world.

The New Imaginations

That the Internet not only stands in polarity to the sphere of Michael in the spiritual world but that it is its ahrimanic counterpart can be seen in the way Steiner described the being of cosmic intelligence: "Intelligence forms the mutual law of conduct amongst the higher hierarchies. What they do and how they interact, how they relate to one another, that is cosmic intelligence."¹⁹ The Internet increasingly takes on a similar function among human beings. Here the attempt is made in purely ahrimanic form to create a worldwide web that connects as many people as possible but in a way that mankind becomes increasingly separated from the cosmos and the hierarchies and thus is bound up in an ahrimanic spider web. The Michaelic intelligence came to earth from the spiritual world in order for man to achieve freedom through insight. The above-mentioned addiction to the computer however, leads to the exact opposite.

Through the continued separation of man from the spiritual world, the "human intellect will become increasingly shadowy."²⁰ Precisely with the

introduction of the computer worldwide this process has been enhanced. To counteract this one has to include the “new imaginations” of Spiritual Science into today’s “shadowy concepts and intellectual ideas.”²¹ However, through imprinting their contents onto DVD, the exact opposite is achieved. As purely intellectual “information” on the World Wide Web, the living imaginations of anthroposophy are being put into an occult prison.

The Exceptionality of the Class Texts

The publication of the class texts (as well as the ritual of other esoteric texts by Steiner) on the Internet can be experienced as particularly tragic. Especially in this respect Steiner differentiated between the contents of the class and his other occult lectures. The latter are given to mankind as thoughts and ideas, and appear therefore right from the beginning as if protected by a sheath. (Thus was Steiner able to agree to general publication after the Christmas Conference.)

Concerning the contents of the class, it is a different matter. Here we have a substance, which comes directly from Michael himself (out of the Michael-School) and therefore contains imaginations in their original form, which demand a totally different handling. Steiner pointed to this character of the class contents as follows: “Therefore it will generally have to be thus, that man gets to know the spiritual world first of all in the form of ideas. This is the way Spiritual Science will be cultivated within the General Anthroposophical Society. However, there will be those who wish to go a step further in the descriptions of the spiritual world, from ideas to expressions which themselves are received from the spiritual world. ... It will be for them that the three classes of the ‘school’ will be available. There the work will achieve an ever-increasing degree of esotericism. The ‘school’ will lead the participant into regions of the spiritual world which cannot be revealed through ideas. Here the necessity will arise to find expressions for imagination, inspiration and intuition.”²² Hence the way we treat the class contents has to differ fundamentally from the way we treat Steiner’s general lecture contents. He demanded quite clearly a different relationship to the contents of the class than one has to the publication of this lectures.

Dangers and Tasks

During a private conversation Steiner once pointed towards the greatest future danger of anthroposophy—its increasingly intellectualization through which it will be handed to Ahriman, the Master of Death. The posting of Steiner’s complete works on the Internet enhances this danger and with it takes a further step towards the intellectualization and cutting up of anthroposophy.

This event has to be countered with an increased and conscious intensification of esoteric work within the School of Spiritual Science as well as meticulous and free from intellectualization study of Steiner’s texts. He himself expected this way of working with the texts—not with abstract and increasingly shadowlike intellect, but with the “hearts” which, in the

Michaelic sense “start to have thoughts”²³ and are therefore enabled to reach real imaginations. Only in this way will a place be created within the human being and for future mankind where anthroposophical wisdom is protected from Sorat and the ahrimanic powers serving him. Such care for anthroposophy must be a primary task for all groups within the Anthroposophical Society.

Endnotes:

1. Steiner, Rudolf. *Perspective on Humanity's Development* (out of print).
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. For example, Rudolf Steiner's *Karma of Untruthfulness*, Vol. 1, New York: Anthroposophic Press (SteinerBooks), 2001.
5. The Bible, New Testament, The Apocolypse of St. John, Chapter 12.3.
6. Op. cit., Steiner. *Perspective*.
7. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Apocolypse of St. John*, New York: Anthroposophic Press (SteinerBooks), 1993.
8. Op. cit., The Bible, Chapters 13 and 18.
9. Steiner, Rudolf. *Karmic Relationships VI*, lecture of July 19, 1924, New York: Anthroposophic Press (SteinerBooks), 1999.
10. Concerning the special relationship of Sorat to the ahrimanic spirits, see Rudolf Steiner's *Three Streams of Evolution of Mankind*, see <http://www.kheper.net/topics/Anthroposophy/Steiner-3streams.htm>.
11. See above.
12. See above.
13. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Mission of the Archangel Michael, the Revelation of the Secrets of Man's Being* (GA 194), lecture held on November 14, 1919, New York: Anthroposophic Press (SteinerBooks), 1998.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Steiner, Rudolf. *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* (GA 26) “From Nature to Sub-Nature,” New York: Anthroposophic Press (SteinerBooks), 1998.
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19. Steiner, Rudolf. *Karmic Relationships III*, lecture of August 8, 1924, New York: Anthroposophic Press (SteinerBooks), 2002.
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21. Ibid.
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23. Op. cit., Steiner. *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*.

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