

Pacifica Journal

A bi-annual newsletter published by the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i
2020 No. 59, Vol.2

[An excerpt from the forthcoming book
by Ueli Hurter and Justus Wittich,
Perspective and Initiative in the time of the Corona Virus]

The Hidden Sun

Christiane Haid, Dornach, Switzerland



Painting by Christiane Haid

'If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what must be done remains undone; if this remains undone, morality and art will not flourish; if justice goes astray, the people will stand about in helpless confusion. Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said. This matters above everything.' --Confucius

On 18 March, the first day of the 'lockdown' (in Switzerland), I wanted to buy flowers at a garden centre. Just at that moment the flower section was barricaded off with tape. It was then announced to the surrounding customers that from now on only 'essential items' could be sold there. Suddenly there were a large quantity of tulips, daffodils, pansies and other beauties which suddenly had no further purpose. They probably ended upon a compost heap, or simply ploughed in

the ground somewhere. What will now become of creative professionals, philosophers, historians, artists, actors, musicians and other scholars of the humanities? The borders closed, the Goetheanum closed, no more colloquia, no more conferences possible... in one fell swoop. I became aware of the power and abstractness of regulation, one recently created at an office desk –leaving the unanswered question: what is 'essential' or 'vital'? Yes, so what is vital for the life of human beings?

The bare essentials

If, as in the corona crisis, the state is responsible for bare essentials, then culture, literature, music, theatre, eurythmy, all the arts and sciences, which are not defined as the natural sciences, are deprived of being deemed bare essentials. In the crisis, areas of life that do not serve mere bodily survival have been regarded as not 'system relevant' and consequently the spaces and places where they are pursued have all been closed. This was done without first consulting those affected or inviting them to think about the situation and how to deal with it through the resources of their trade/guild. There was no time for this, because terrible news and images conveyed by the media had done their part, leading to the adoption of measures whose range and significance in terms of their consequences were not considered beyond what was considered 'pure medical necessity'. It remains to be seen whether, just as an example, the risk of infection is higher in a bookstore than in a supermarket. All measures were taken on the grounds that they were intended to prevent the health system from being overburdened, and this makes it almost impossible to criticize in terms of their justification and urgency. Of course, no one can or wants to speak out against the value of life or against the collapse of the health system.

Crisis in science

A reality-saturated insight into what the 'new' or 'novel' virus actually is and how to deal with it is in total contrast to the far-reaching measures implemented by all countries of the world. Almost every day, the media communicates new scientific findings that have not yet been further validated within the scientific research community due to time pressure. Thus, scientific findings, not yet validated but nevertheless treated

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as facts, have been determining everyday life. These so-called 'findings' or 'facts' also have a very short half-life or vary in their different interpretations. Contradictory information on mortality, course of disease, risk of infection, transmissibility of the viruses and the necessary and sometimes senseless rules of conduct lead to a serious loss of reality due to their inconsistencies, indifference and non-binding nature. Andreas Laudert writes:

Speculation or extrapolation, arguing within grey areas are the predominant methods here [...]. Again and again it is emphasized that all this is uncharted territory for science, economy and politics, for the whole of society.

Confidence in the credibility of science and the possibility of understanding the reality of the situation has therefore also been paralyzed, leading to growing indifference and a loss of confidence in medicine and, ultimately, in those responsible for government. The intolerance and radicalism with which the results of other researchers and 'third-party' opinions is alarming. These alternative assessments are defamed and discredited, as if a critical scientific discourse is suddenly obsolete. This health crisis is at the same time a crisis of judgment and thus of science itself. This is, however, being concealed by the fact that certain perspectives are understood as undisputed authority, claiming sovereignty of interpretation for themselves, which they efficiently implement with the support of state power. Here, however, a broad scientific theoretical, ethical, sociological and media critical debate is needed that leads to independent conclusions that are not guided by economic interests.

Reality and the danger of reification

During a solar eclipse the moon with its dense blackness obscures the otherwise blazing bright core of the sun. At its edges around the blackness, multicoloured filaments of light are created, which tentatively grope out into space like feelers. Again and again this image comes to my mind when I think about the present situation. The light of knowledge, the centre of the sun is obscured, instead we find ourselves groping in a mist searching for reality. Hilde Domin wrote in an essay in the mid-1970s:

Reality has probably never been as treacherous as the reality we experience. It threatens to destroy the interaction between us and it, to extinguish us, in one way or another. The more subtle danger seems almost the more sinister: It is there and it is not there: Everyone talks about it. No one relates it to themselves. It's as if it's a cold that others get, but you're immune. The danger is called 'reification', metamorphosis into the thing, into something that can be manipulated: loss of ourselves.

Domin's observations are still highly relevant today, because this kind of loss of self and the tendency towards reification has been further increased by our methods of prolonging and sustaining life. With focus purely on the preservation of life,

the flipside of which is the fear of death, the tendency to view humankind primarily as a physical being is intensified, resulting in actions directed only towards this narrowly defined perception. Soul and spiritual needs of people are completely ignored here, which can be illustrated by the closure of all cultural institutions, universities and educational establishments, including places of worship.

Let us take as an example from the field of art - the following example encompasses many of the art forms mentioned above. The outstanding characteristic of art is that it is individual expression in the broadest sense. In encounters with art, the art lover ideally experiences a self-encounter - one could express it in a broader sense from the words of Martin Buber: 'He becomes himself through 'you', as the counterpart to his 'I'; he discovers in confronting the work of art that the being of his individuality has been touched'. Hilde Domin formulates this possibility of self-encounter using poetry as an example, but it applies to all good art:

Poetry invites us to the simplest and most difficult of all encounters, the encounter with ourselves [...] thus the poet's self-encounter is both unique and a model of encounter in general - with others, with reality. The irretrievable moment, time out of time, is the moment the work of art touches the individual. In a poem it is frozen, but thawable. More real than reality: its potential is realizable in a new and different way each time.

The poem, which as it were resurrects as an experience within the reader, makes this self-encounter possible. That which can be taken away from a human being can be made possible, can become reality through a work of art.



Apocalypse Mood by Christiane Haid

Reality and Language - how language shapes thought and thought shapes language

The loss of reality is not only accompanied by a loss or reinterpretation of language in poetry. It affects human life in a broader sense. Since time immemorial, dictators have had a special predilection for using language as a means of manipulation and of seizing power. For whoever masters language soon also masters the thinking of human beings. A 2000-year-old Chinese historical story is sketched here as an example.

The son of the first emperor of China, Qin Er Shi, ruled with the help of his chancellor Zhao Gao. During an audience, the chancellor presented a stag to the assembled ministers and pointing to the stag declared: 'Your majesty, a horse for you.' The emperor, as well as his ministers, was astonished and asked the chancellor how it was possible that the horse had antlers growing out of its skull. The chancellor pointed to the ministers and said: 'If your majesty does not believe me' and looking around said, 'then just ask your ministers.' Some of those present were wise or frightened enough to agree with the chancellor: 'Your majesty, it really is a horse.' Of course, there were those more defiant ministers, who said he had been shown a stag and not a horse. Later Gao arrested and executed those who had called it a deer and those who had kept silent. Ever since, the deer has been a horse and even today in China the expression 'make the deer a horse' is still used.

This may be an extreme example, but at the moment one can experience how in media and in politics language has changed, new meanings have been generated and adapted to 'reality', such as 'social-distancing' as a term for correct behavior. It is a combination of words that a healthy common sense cannot really comprehend, because it means the exact opposite of the word 'social.' With this topos, the other person, who one would usually enjoy meeting as a fellow human being, becomes a potential virus carrier, a danger to life and limb. Thus, the exact opposite is happening, human contact is feigned and fear is sown into the interpersonal interaction. If one does not become attentive to this of one's own accord and think about it, fear of others unconsciously begins to simmer below the surface. A shy and fearful look and a cramped keeping of distance of some people while walking around, documents the effects of 'social distancing.' Daniele Muscionico, cultural editor of the NZZ writes:

Things that make us human as a species are forbidden. Compassion and sympathy that go beyond mere empty words. We are supposed to refrain from touching, neither caressing the face of our old parents nor taking our loved ones in our arms because they live far away. For the state indeed knows: in touching lies the potential of death. Yet we all suspect that holding onto this idea can lead to a form of inner extinction.

Even 'solidarity' has acquired a strangely contradictory connotation: Friends, relatives and even dependents should not be visited out of 'solidarity.' This is a reinvention of what

solidarity meant before 18 March 2020. The focus is solely on the danger of contagion. At the same time, supercharged media almost suggests a death sentence, which is actually devoid of any reality. The possibility, and in the meantime even a researched fact, that the effect of this measure could be just as catastrophic or even worse in the psychosocial sense, has not been included, because the danger of infection has been deemed top priority.

Those most affected by this 'solidarity' have also been declared to be the 'at risk group.' Here too, the phenomenon of reification can be thoroughly examined. All people over the age of 65, regardless of their state of health, are suddenly supposedly living at increased risk. They are denoted as a group that carries a particularly high health risk, a concept that has hitherto been unacceptable because it is immediately suspected of discrimination. The phrase 'risk group' not only implies being at risk, but also implies the requirement for 'special protection' - which is why those affected have to stay at home. The 'protection' here also has a reversal of meaning

– it evolves into 'danger'. Could it not just be that these very people are able to judge the danger for themselves and accordingly shape their own lives responsibly, instead of being locked up at home by legal edict rendering them at risk of other illnesses, such as loneliness, lack of exercise and depression?

Another term, 'herd immunity' has been in use for some time, but when you think about it, it implicitly conveys that humans are part of an animal 'herd' that supposedly develops immunity. There is a fatal misunderstanding in this term, which continues to work subliminally. Where the animal is constrained within an instinctive program that it cannot escape from by itself and is defenseless and at the mercy of human action, the human being with an ability for self-perception adopts an approach, which allots to humanity the same programmed constraints of animals, is a highly questionable stance. Abandoning his special responsibility to shape the created world, he unconsciously surrenders himself to those who would like to shape and determine him, according to their purposes.

One could continue adding to the list. What I am describing here in the glaring light of my critical examination as phenomena of language alteration is possibly only a beginning, which, if not brought to a halt, will soon take hold and subjugate our thinking. Herta Müller writes about this danger in her Nobel Prize speech:

The sound of the words knows that it has no choice but to beguile, because objects deceive with their materials, and feelings mislead with their gestures. The sound of the words, along with the truth this sound invents, resides at the interface, where the deceit of the materials and that of the gestures come together. In writing, it is not a matter of trusting, but rather of the honesty of the deceit.

Where the manipulation of language and thought leads can be demonstrated in a particularly striking way in Chinese

propaganda. Particularly now, when there is constant talk of successful measures in China, it is worth taking a look at what 'successful' methods imply. Kai Strittmatter, a long-time SZ correspondent in China, wrote:

The autocrat who wants to create his own truth must conquer language, the word. Smog has only really existed in China since 2013. For decades before that the word used was mainly 'fog.' Nor is there any repression; there is rather the 'securing of stability' and the vision of a 'harmonious society.' Harmony has been one of the party's favorite words over the past decade. The harmony it has in mind is the harmony between command and obedience. 'Harmony' is when the people are calm.

The counterfeiters do not hope in vain for the effect of their poisoned words. Thought directs speech, yes, but speech also directs, speech also corrupts thought. 'Words can be like tiny cans of arsenic', wrote Viktor Klemperer. In his study LTI 'Notizbuch eines Philologen', he deals with the language of the Third Reich.



Apocalypse by Christiane Haid

Art of freedom and the creative process

If we restrict ourselves solely to the preservation of the 'bare essentials' of life, then those free spaces are missing, which make it possible to thoughtfully as well as emotionally take a view that is independent of it, just free. It is a view that for starters does not have to justify itself before the conclusions of the medical profession, which thinks and acts along lines of necessity or acts under political pressure. It is a view that asks questions from the pure observation of life and may - and, one could also say, must - think other than fixed perspectives, in so far as one does not wish to replace the free human being with the authority of science. In her remarks, Hilde Domin sketches this special perspective of art impressively and precisely:

The poet offers us a pause in which time stands still. All the arts offer this pause. Without this pause for the 'doing' of a different kind, without the pause in which time stands still, art cannot

be embraced, understood, nor made one's own. Through this, art is related to love: Both alter the sense of time. The same but yet not the same is offered to us by the various arts on this island of their own time - an island that is spoken of again and again ... an island that appears in the midst of the maelstrom of activity and that exists only for a few moments, for a few breaths.

The artist does not know in advance what will be created in the pause, in the creative moment. In the creative process we are suspended in uncertainty. All calculability, predictability, replicability, plannability, which we know from scientific knowledge and method, have no meaning in the artistic process. The point is to come into contact with an unknown counterpart, whose essence I may have an inkling of, but whose manifestation is nevertheless unknown to me. How often does the artist stand in front of a canvas with an anxious feeling: perhaps the painting I have just painted is my last painting. We have no power or might over what will appear from the space of the unavailable, the uncertain. It is, as it were, a knowing not-knowing, an involuntary search, which is confirmed or rejected by the artist in its appearance through the sensory.

In this process, it is the 'I' that in the encounter with the unknown counterpart helps it to be born. This happens in the consciousness of working towards a yet unknown wholeness. In the process of realization there is the danger of falling in love with a detail and forgetting the whole. Then the work gets out of balance and often the harmonious conclusion can only be reached if this beloved detail is given up. I describe this process here in such detail because it is paradigmatic for me with regard to artistic creation and the relationship to the artistic world par excellence. The starting point of this relationship is the facing of an uncertainty over which we have no power. So in the beginning, there is a perception, not a conception or a result we want to achieve, although everyone who begins a work does indeed hope for its completion. Dealing with the uncertain presupposes that I am prepared to respond to the being I will encounter, which I do not yet know, in such a way that I may lead it into an adequate embodiment according to the laws that lie within it. All my abilities, my intuitions selflessly place themselves at the disposal of the work of art that wants to be revealed.



Germ, Golgotha, and Michaelic Mood by Christiane Haid

Art and the handling of the uncertain

Herbert Marcuse once formulated in a completely different context what the task of art and the artist is:

The end of art would be a state of the world where people can no longer distinguish between what is and what is possible: in other words, perfect barbarism.

So it is art through which we can learn how to deal with the intangible that so existentially affects us in a crisis. The artist could therefore be called an expert in handling the uncertain.

The attempts to cope with the current crisis show a strongly reductionist approach. The virus and the risk of infection is the focus of attention. The fight against it has even escalated into a declaration of war. Focusing on this central aspect is like staring at the black shadow of the moon's disk that has obscured the sun. The phenomenon or one could also say the riddle that the appearance of this virus is posing to us as a comprehensive whole - which can be compared in its complexity to the entire spectrum of colors - cannot be deciphered in this way. Therefore, I would like to raise the question whether the approaches of the artistic process might not be helpful here in learning how to deal with the uncertainty. The virus itself is not a purely material phenomenon; it is constantly transforming. So, as far as forms of cognition are concerned, a way of cognition would also be needed that is capable of grasping the living.

When Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote in his IX volume, *Tame Xenia*, 'He who has both science and art also has religion; he who does not possess both needs religion' - the combination of art and science is not without significance here. The comprehensiveness of reality is greater than can be grasped by a reductionist scientific methodology alone. In the sense of the above, this motif can be used to further understand why Rudolf Steiner wanted to develop medicine into an art of healing, education into an art of education, the society into a social art, and so on.

The opportunity of the present situation is that one recognizes from the lack, what the power and necessity for art and culture encompasses. That we see how fundamental it is to meet people directly in order to form and share intuitions with them in a breathing and communicating space, which thereby creates free space. The conversation with the intangible makes us attentive to a greater unity, to a bigger picture, to the cosmos. Silently the changing scenery of the firmament watches us in our struggle, the stars twinkle down from infinite vastness. Being in conversation with the invisible, with the cosmos - that is art.



Take

Take my words
that are of the earth

I have them from the golden
wreath of the sun taken in
consciousness

They are bold and want
to live.

--Rose Ausländer



Circle of Twelve by Christiane Haid

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Endnotes

1 Andreas Laudert: Das Unsichtbare und das Denkbare, Zeitschrift Das Goetheanum, Nr. 14, 3.4.2020.

2 Hilde Domin: Wozu Lyrik heute? Dichtung und Leser in der gesteuerten Gesellschaft, Frankfurt 1981, p.

3 Ibid., p.14

4 Nach Kai Strittmatter: Die Neuerfindung der Diktatur, München 2018.

5 Daniele Muscionico: Die Macht der Berührung. Ich berühre, also bin ich, NZZ, 11. Mai 2020.

6 See Peter Selg: A Medicated Society, an article in this book.

7 Herta Müller: Every word knows something of a vicious circle, Nobel Prize speech 7.12.2009, online at: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2009/muller/25729-herta-muller-nobel-lecture-2009/>

8 Kai Strittmatter: Die Neuerfindung der Diktatur, München 2018, p. 24f.

9 Notebook of a philologist, Viktor Klemperer LTI, Leipzig 2018 (German only)

10 Herbert Marcuse, zitiert nach Hilde Domin: Wozu Lyrik heute? Dichtung und Leser in der gesteuerten Gesellschaft, Frankfurt 1981, S. III

Facing Evil, Standing Tall (an Excerpt)

Benjamin Cherry, Ilan, Taiwan

The following is an excerpt from a larger article, called Facing Evil, Standing Tall, which is being published in full in the Autumn Edition of New View. Printed here are the last three sections out of seven in total. The preceding ones are titled: Doing one's own Research - What is Real and How do we Make Decisions? - A Fork in the Road - Is a Virus Inevitably an Enemy or Can it Help us See Ourselves in New Ways?

Readers are asked to bear this in mind and realize that what is discussed in these final sections has been prepared for in what comes before. We recognize that it is somewhat confronting to begin straightaway with the assumption that what we are facing can be called Evil, but so long as it is realized that a lot has been said about this earlier in the piece, we feel that this last part can stand on its own feet. It leads to a picture of the kind of inner attitude that might be needed for a Michael Festival appropriate for our time.



The Courage to Look Evil in the Face...

In the summer edition of *New View* three writers independently quoted words from Christopher Fry's play, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, published after the end of the second world war, which included the following astonishing statement about the world situation: 'The enterprise is exploration into God.'¹ Whatever Fry meant by 'God', could one say now that, as part of our ongoing journey of self-discovery and world evolution,

we are standing before the specter of Evil and that we will progress no further until we summon up the courage to face it? Not to kill it or simply declare it to be an enemy, but to recognize it, look into it, get to know it - and maybe, in time, even begin to transform it.

I ask myself: What is it in human beings which makes it so difficult to acknowledge this reality of Evil, especially now? In saying this, I am not saying 'evil human beings' but Evil, in itself. On our individual pathways towards whatever we see as the source of Goodness in world existence or in our own human essence, do we not have to learn to stand tall against this powerful 'opponent', face to face, *being to being*, both inwardly and outwardly? And is it not challenging us to *wake up to what we truly are as human beings*?

So far in this article, we have been looking at some of the outer and inner effects of Evil in today's world. Let us now try to get a sense of what it is. One can begin by asking a question: When a human being thinks or acts in an evil way, is that person, in that moment, an authentic human being? In other words, is Evil part of what I am as a human being or are there times when 'it' takes me over and I do things which normally I would never do?

Let us observe what is happening with such a question. When one voices the word 'evil' (or any other word) one is directing one's focus to concepts, which at the same time bring up feelings, pictures and perhaps memories. These feelings and pictures are personal and are different in different people. They belong to our subjective life. But, through refining one's relationship to concepts and sharpening one's focus through practice - in other words, through thinking - one has the possibility of connecting with a level of conscious activity which is no longer subjective, for one can watch oneself while doing it.

Of course, we can be deluded and make all kinds of mistakes by connecting with concepts which are inappropriate, but so it is with any other skill or art form. One learns through practice and experience.

If one looks at Evil in this way, striving to find concepts which come closer to its reality, one can perhaps also recognize that Evil *in itself* is not the action or the person performing it but is something that works into or through that person. In other words, it is a *spiritual* power. But, just like the power of Goodness, it can be used deliberately in this earthly world.

In an article in the Summer Edition of *New View*, I suggested that what is taking place at this time is a '*spiritual battle*', a battle between different ideas (or concepts) about the nature of reality, of humanity and of death, life, illness and health.² I dare to suggest now that in this time of great trial, human hearts are crying out for a way of seeing things that one can trust *through one's own authentic experience*, a way of understanding what is taking place in our midst behind the outer appearance of things. It is a search for Truth in the lie-infested environment to which we have become all too acclimatized in our modern times, just as we have had to adapt to breathing

in toxins and eating poisoned food.³

We are in a time not just of physical degradation and toxicity but of deep soul pollution, of systemic cruelty and lies. We are becoming so used to it that many barely notice it. Perhaps we even *expect* it and get a kind of unholy thrill from it, as we switch on the daily high drama of world news, with its sequence of terrible events, one after another! Do I notice, however, how it also corrodes my own soul, no less insidiously than acid and alkali on a physical level? I witness this suffering, but from a distance, and it can harden my sensitivity and, because there *seems to be* nothing I can do, it may also weaken my will.

... And the Courage to Think

Where is the power to change this, to bring healing, not only to our bodies, but our souls, our inner worlds of fear, suspicion, anger, hatred, envy and despair? I do not profess to have all the answers but from life experience I can name at least one quality that is essential: *Courage! The courage to think!* For in thinking we have an instrument that has the possibility of going beyond one's personal emotions and inclinations, but only for as long as it is sustained by one's full presence in it.

This is far more than intellectual reasoning. It is a level of conscious activity (or active consciousness) in which 'head', 'heart' and 'will' are all actively involved, but which is at the same time a fully spiritual activity, taking place entirely within a level of reality beyond the physical. It is a living manifestation of the existence of spirit within wide-awake, human consciousness. And we can apply its fruits within this plane of physical reality.

This 'pure' thinking, as it was called by Rudolf Steiner, who developed it to a high degree – a thinking that is not fettered by memories of sense perceptions, but holds itself by its own power of presence, like an eagle high in the air. Is this not an instrument capable of looking into and through Evil, while retaining one's own humanity? I leave this as a question, but of thinking's power to go towards the truth I have no doubt.⁴

And in courage, do we not have a soul power that can make the seemingly impossible possible?

We are used to the idea of 'light-warriors' fighting the powers of darkness in *Star Wars* and many other films and video games which have been spawned through it, but this *human presence in pure thinking* is more real than any science fiction. We can gain courage through knowing, as Steiner himself experienced, that Evil itself, in its current form in our time, *fears this human spirit power*. For it is characteristic of this most pernicious evil today that it does not want to be seen. It wants to hide in shadowy unclarity, in pretence, far from the penetrating gaze of human spirit-thinking-seeing.⁵

Let us suppose for a moment, therefore, that there is at least some truth in what I have written, and that (as thousands of people, from all walks of life, have been saying) the pandemic is a vehicle for bringing fear, chaos and despair into the world population, so we become more open to being manipulated. If this is true, can one dare to enter, with one's active and

peaceful thinking, into the mindset of people who could carry out such a plan?

How is it for *them*? Are they haunted by conscience or have they managed to eradicate such 'weaknesses' in the soul? Do they believe in the rightness of what they are bringing on humanity? After all, if we are indeed only biological machines or higher animals in an ongoing struggle for existence, as millions of people have been indoctrinated to believe since early childhood, why should 'they' not do whatever they can do to increase their own power? And do many others even envy and admire them for their ability to do so?

Evil is certainly no newcomer in the human story, but it seems to be 'showing its hand' like never before, as the 20th century has unequivocally revealed. In the twenty years of this century, too, there is ample evidence that the events of 9/11 and the financial crisis of 2008 were deliberately planned, in the same way that it is now known as a fact that the shelling of a US naval ship in the Gulf of Tonkin, which was the pretext for the US entering full-scale into the Vietnam War in 1967, was planned and executed by the American secret service. How many people's lives were ruined through that dreadful *war against an ideology*, how much of nature and culture were destroyed and how much trauma, hatred and bitterness were inoculated into human souls, which still suffer now!⁶

Many books have been written about the psychological state of tyrannical leaders (such as Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and others) and the temptation is to put such people into boxes and say, 'Well, that was how *they* were, but I am not like that.' It is precisely at this point, however, where courage is most needed, the courage to see that in every human being the *possibility* of evil exists, even in oneself. One can ask oneself: If I had had to go through the violence and other extreme traumas, the physical and mental disturbances, the complete lack of love from any human being that some others have experienced in childhood, would I have been able to lift myself to even the smallest amount of love and kindness?

It is important to know that in the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal hearings, at the end of the second world war, the plea made by Nazi officers that they were just following orders and did not realise they were being misled was not accepted by the judges. History has made hard judgments on the German nation for what happened and it is worth being aware of how future generations will judge us for how we are responding to what is taking place now, for it is radically affecting the world into which they will be born.⁷

My purpose in writing this is to highlight the courage that is needed to enter into the mindset of criminal activity on a large scale, for the simple reason that in doing so one is *meeting the face of Evil itself*. In my view, it is the lack of courage to confront this *reality* of Evil which holds people back from looking, with open minds, at the current situation and from doing their own research and thinking and coming to their own independent judgments and resolutions.



Drawing by a fourth-grade student from the New York City Rudolf Steiner School just following 9/11.

The Power of 'I'

Ultimately, everything has to be decided individually. There is no other way at this stage of modern consciousness. This is the 'eye of the needle' through which we each have to pass, not once, but over and again, in order to reach inwards and upwards to the real human being, filled with light and being created out of love through aeons of time.

Our struggles on earth now are a birthing of this genuine human being. It is a time for recognition and decision. If I follow blindly, then that is my choice. If I resist with violence, that also is my choice. And if I seek a way between, not as a compromise, but out of courage and faith in the reality of the human spirit, then that too is my choice.⁸

Many are the shining examples in history of such a way of being – in the courage of people in the resistance movements in occupied countries during the second world war and in the suffering and resilience of those who remained behind at home, after saying perhaps a final farewell to loved ones who were going to war. In the courage to fight and in the courage to 'turn the other cheek' and choose the unconquerable power of non-violence, as was so powerfully pioneered by such people as Mahatma Gandhi.

But there is something different now. This time the battle lines are not at all clear and the 'enemy' is somehow intangible, invisible, working in the background. Also, the likely consequences for those who do not obediently 'toe the line' in this time of rapidly developing, universal surveillance are much

more subtle and individual.

Yet that is how it is and the choices are still my own. For each of us, as an individual at this extraordinary stage of the human journey, is called upon to become one's own master. That is why this world-whipped fear is so pernicious, because it is undermining responsibility for one's own self-determined path through life and for one's own physical health and inner moral stability.

Our bodies and souls will become the property of others, unless we actively and inwardly reclaim them, own them, look after and develop them ourselves and help others to do the same. But there is a radiant lining to this very dark cloud, such as one can see at sunset when the sun's power shines from behind dark clouds near the horizon, searing burning gold onto their edges. The radiance in human consciousness to which I refer in different ways in this article arises from the strange reality that it is precisely when opposition is greatest that a new courage and stature can awaken within.

Truly facing up to the gravity of the dangers which confront us today can either paralyse us or stimulate a power to take steps in one's own development and, in the process, recognize, with deepest gratitude, what is coming to birth in others at the same time.

'The enterprise', my dear companions on this phenomenal world journey – far richer, more terrifying and wonderful than any kind of fiction – 'is exploration into what I am and can become as a Human Being and what every other Human Being can become too!'

The lies, the pollution, the cruelty, the cowardice, the relentless hatred, fear and violence, the selfishness and willful, meaningless trashing of all that has ever been held sacred or divine – this is the writhing underbelly of humanity, the ages-long evil shadow, the world dragon that coils within the depths of unredeemed human nature. And where is the dragon-slayer, within each one of us, who can look this Vast Thing of Scheming Misery and Evil in the eye and not flinch, but stand tall and, when the moment is here, strike through those shimmering surfaces of pretence and deception?

And where is the 'knife' that can do this surgical deed, penetrating into the depths of our world illness and bringing healing? Belief is not enough, nor superstition or intellectual know-how. Even faith must give way before something that is greater in our modern times. It is Knowledge - pure and clean and wrought from the wounds of a thousand different trials - Knowledge of the Eternal Reality of the Human Spirit! This is the 'sword' that can cut to the quick, newly forged in the fire of commitment, decision and will.⁹

Our time is now. We are in this alone and we are in it together!

Ben Cherry lives in Taiwan and has been a teacher and educator, as well as a world-traveler and writer, for most of his life.

Notes

1. Published in 1951, *A Sleep of Prisoners* tells the story of four English prisoners of war locked in a church overnight and the powerful visions that arose in them: ISBN 01921131
2. *The Medicine of Love* (within the *Pandemic of Fear*): Page 73, New View Summer Edition.
3. This, of course, leads us into the huge question of GM food and unclear labelling about what the processes have been in food production generally.
4. This level of thinking, which is at every moment aware of its own activity, was demonstrated and explored in detail in the central book of Rudolf Steiner's life - most recently published in English under the title of *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*. In an addendum to the eighth chapter he wrote: *'No other activity of the human soul is so easily misunderstood as thinking. Will and feeling warm the human soul even in recollection; thinking all too easily leaves us cold, as if the life of the soul had dried out. This is, however, only due to the powerful shadow cast by its warm, luminous reality, which dives down into the world's phenomena. This diving-down is done by a power that flows through the thinking activity itself - the power of spiritual love.'*
5. See, for example, the excellent editorial article by Thomas Meyer in the current edition of *The Present Age*: www.perseus.ch/the-present-age
6. Here is what Wikipedia, a comparatively balanced source of world information, has to say: *The Gulf of Tonkin incident, also known as the USS Maddox incident, was an international confrontation that led to the United States engaging more directly in the Vietnam War. It involved confrontation between ships of North Vietnam and the United States in the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. The original American report blamed North Vietnam for both incidents, but the Pentagon Papers, the memoirs of Robert McNamara and NSA publications from 2005, proved that the US government lied to justify a war against Vietnam.* This is widely known now, as are also the subversive activities of NSA itself (National Security Agency). Yet, even knowing this - and knowing too of similar activities by secret agencies in other nations - how is it that there is so little recognition that evil is revealing itself *in what is taking place right now?*
7. See, for example: theintercept.com/2018/03/15/washington-breaks... The United Nations International Law Commission later codified the **underlying principle** from Nuremberg as "the fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him." This will have very real implications when the time comes, as it must, when government officials who are imposing heavy restrictions on human rights on the pretext of health security are challenged in courts of law. This will include officials who use their power to force vaccinations on people who refuse to submit to them.
8. Many great souls from the past, like Angelus Silesius and Wolfgang von Goethe, have recognised that one has to go through a kind of 'death during life' in order to find and create one's true self. Dr Steiner also spoke of this many times. Realisation of this can bring new energy and hope in connection with the death process (on all levels of human culture and society) that is taking place at this time. But the new life that can arise must nevertheless be created out of one's own inner forces. It will not be done for us.
9. I trust that readers will understand that in this final picture I am calling on the archetypal image of Michael (known by many different names in different cultures), battling with the 'double' or 'shadow' or 'evil counterpart' of world humanity and our individual selves. These mythological-psychological pictures, which have been raised to the level of cosmic and personal deed by Rudolf Steiner's incisive spiritual-scientific research, can speak to that part of the soul which is eternally youthful and will never surrender in the spiritual battle with Evil. It is significant to note, too, that in traditional paintings of Michael, his eyes are not looking at the dragon but beyond into the future. See, for example, the lectures gathered together in the publication *The Archangel Michael: His Mission and Ours*, ISBN 0-88010-378-7. It should also be noted that this is a different 'dragon' from the ones in the East which are generally portrayed as elemental powers which must be respected and kept at a distance, but whose energy can be used - so long as one has wisdom - to help mankind.



The Corona-Virus and Our Human, Health-Giving Forces

*An Interview with Dr. Med. Michaela Glöckler
conducted by Yair Atala*



Campus A: Greetings, on behalf of Campus A and the Freies Jugendseminar, Stuttgart. I myself attended the Jugendseminar, and I am now working for Campus A, Stuttgart. We are grateful that you always accept our invitations to visit or speak to us, such as at our previous “Bildungsart” conference.

Currently we find ourselves in times of much change, and it is taking place at a rapid pace. Which is why we find it important to be able to speak to you again now. Three weeks ago we conducted an interview. However, the situation is constantly changing and the circumstances are now quite different.

We are wondering what is currently happening with us. Why are we so taken by surprise by this virus, individually and as a society, and why are we reacting in such an unprecedented way?

Dr. Glöckler: I can understand your question very well. Because, on one hand we are already familiar with the flu viruses, which recur each year. And we are apt to ask ourselves what makes the Corona pandemic so unique. We have known about viral strains since the 1960s. Their detection required extremely high-definition electron microscopes. But in the mean time the virus research has made enormous advances. And we know that the Corona viruses are a whole family or group of viruses. Up until now, the SARS virus has been become particularly well-known. And even back then (2003) everyone was fearful, given that it is also an acute respiratory infection, that it would take on similar forms to that which we are currently experiencing with the Corona Virus. This was what we feared during the SARS epidemic. However, this did not occur at that time. Which is also quite interesting.

In any case, the reason we are experiencing such a unique situation now (with Covid-19) is due to certain complications that arise. As was the case with SARS, most of the people who become infected are not even aware of it, while others have light flu-like symptoms. And then there is a certain number of people from the “high-risk-group”, but also other individual cases, who develop a very dangerous lung infection. It is so dangerous

because the fine connective tissue between the alveoli (in the lungs/bronchial tubes) becomes swollen and inflamed, and this restricts breathing capacity, so that a person feels as if they are suffocating due to lack of air.

Of course, this also creates panic. Even the conception that people now have - “I could fall into panic due to lack of air... I could suffocate” - frightens many people. Which is why I can very well understand why, worldwide, there is a somewhat panic-fueled reaction and all social interaction is being shut down.

On the other hand, it is known that we can only come to terms with a virus by means of so-called herd immunity, whereby a great majority of people have been infected by the virus without becoming ill and have thus acquired immunity - we humans as a herd, so to speak, would need to acquire immunity. And by means of a specific vaccine, which we, as of yet, do not have.

Insofar, I hope that as soon as the spread of the virus slows, we will rely on herd-immunity and power up the public social life and the economy, while, at the same time, making an attempt to financially prioritize -which we’ve started doing world-wide in the past few weeks - putting money into emergency medical care and everything that goes along with it, rather than subsidizing the economy.

Campus A: Of course - I believe it is all about priorities.

This time around it is so unique because although we are certainly fearful and in panic, we are, above all, compelled to have a sense of solidarity with our fellow human beings, especially with the high-risk

group.

Dr. Glöckler: Yes, but we are capable of protecting the high-risk group in a targeted way.

Acquiring, herd immunity, does not mean infecting the high-risk group. On the contrary. The high-risk group should be unbelievably well-protected. However, the so-called healthy people who do not belong to the high-risk group, they should return to work, and meet each other, etc. and thereby, with light symptoms to no symptoms, immunize themselves against the virus. For if a certain percentage - 70 to 80% - of the population has been immunized, that protects the rest of the population. And if people who have acquired immunity then interact with the high-risk group it is no longer dangerous. This is, so to speak, a different way of thinking, a different strategy. And I find it so important because particularly elderly people, lonely people, or sick people who are in the hospital or in a nursing home - if they can’t receive any more visitors - will also die, suffer or develop depression. We must be incredibly careful in considering how many people, especially elderly people, are being harmed tremendously by the banning visitation rights, with the goal of perhaps saving a few others. I see massive ethical issues that arise in consequence of the visitation bans. That is why I advocate: protect the high-risk groups, intensively support health care -we should not spare any costs in health care - and, otherwise, allow young people who have a good immune system to become immunized.

Campus A: By means of ever day social intercourse?

Dr. Glöckler: By being together, by working together, by

socializing, by participating in cultural life, attending events, by dancing, and so on. Yes, precisely!

Campus A: Many of us are asking about the significance, from a spiritual point of view, of the fact that Covid-19 is an illness affecting the lungs and that it is a pandemic.

Dr. Glöckler: Well, the lung is a very wonderful organ that connects us with the entire atmosphere of the earth. It is the most social, most communicative organ that we have. For example, when people are in a room together they mutually breathe in the air that the other just breathed out. We rarely make ourselves conscious of this. Via the air we are not only connected with our fellow men and with all of humanity, but we are also connected with all of our sins and offenses, in view of environmental pollution. We must not forget that the majority of lung complications have arisen in the most polluted metropolises - not in the countryside. We are ruining the air we breathe and should not wonder that the lung is less and less able to cope with the bad air we are producing. What I am trying to say is that, if the lung is increasingly confronted with air-pollution, deriving from our industrial way of life, there comes a point when the lung is no longer able to cope. At this point the lung becomes more susceptible. And I certainly do see a correlation.

Although we have done much to improve the air in the past few decades worldwide, it is not enough by far. Furthermore, the air we breathe has not only a physical aspect. We experience - by way of speech, music, light - everything that the air bestows upon us. Sunlight is only visible due to the atmosphere. The air makes the light visible. And the air is vitally essential for life, and the air transports speech, music and all sorts of wonderful things.

But it also transports the sounds of the animals - the tormented sounds coming from our agonizing industrial livestock farming. This is also carried in the air and we take it in with our breath - the suffering of animals. I also find there is a link between how we treat animals and the fact that the viruses that are most prevalent in the animal kingdom have developed the ability of cross-species boundary between animal and human... in order to call our attention to the animal kingdom - I cannot say it in any other way! We live and breathe with the animals in the same, shared natural environment, and yet we handle them in such an unworthy, undignified manner - we could not conduct ourselves any more disgracefully.

- With only a few praiseworthy exceptions!

Campus A: We belong to the same ecosystem.

Dr. Glöckler: Yes.

Campus A: And now I have another question that came to me rather spontaneously: Let us say I

belong to the high-risk group. What can I do to build up my resistance to this new virus that we, as of yet, know so little about?

Dr. Glöckler: Well, if we think along the lines of integrative medicine, there are different levels we can consider: First of all, the physical level, which is now being practiced worldwide. We call such preventative measures "exposition prophylaxis" - this includes: social distancing, (hygienic rules), etc. Basically it means that one exposes oneself to the virus as little as possible. For example by wearing a face mask when interacting with people

in the high-risk group, such as in hospitals. Basically, certain physical measures can be taken, by means of avoidance.

However, I find it most important to look at which factors come into consideration when it comes to strengthening the immune system in general. And here it is first of all very, very essential to have sufficient sleep - but also a healthy diet and a good work-life balance, which includes getting enough physical movement. It has been found that even a half-and-hour of deliberate, brisk walking outdoors immediately stimulates the immune system - joyful walking... not slinking around depressingly! We must not allow ourselves to underestimate these completely everyday activities - sleeping, eating, moving.

Then, there are also some very good eurythmy exercises. Eurythmy is very beneficial for those who are familiar with it. Meanwhile there are also video clips on how to learn certain eurythmy exercises that can be of help.

Then, most crucially, (beyond the the physical) we must consider building up resistance on the level of the soul (the mental-emotional level). Then, most crucially, (beyond the the physical) we must consider building up resistance on the level of the soul (the mental-emotional level).

Campus A: The Psychosomatic

Dr. Glöckler: - Psycho-neuro-immunologisch. Since the 1970s, it has been well established that our immune system reacts positively to positive, good feelings, such as: joy, devotion, humor, thankfulness appreciation. Positive feelings in human relations have a immediate, stimulating effect on the immune system. Whereas, fear and depression impair the immune system, as does hate and any negative feelings.

However, one more very important thing just came to my mind, regarding the physical level of building resistance to a virus: a good treatment of fevers, "fever management", is often neglected when people get the flu. This not only pertains to prevention, as you asked about, but already regards treatment. Of utmost importance in the treatment of viral infections is that the fever symptoms are handled correctly. Because fever in the body's only weapon for killing off viruses. But many people do not know this. And fever-sinking drugs and antibiotics suppress this natural immunological reaction of the body, thereby harming the immune system.

Campus A: For example Ibuprofen?

Dr. Glöckler: Yes, for example. Meanwhile, there is evidence that one should substitute Ibuprofen with other products, because it has been shown to be harmful. But, the thing is that none of these other products are good either. And as a doctor I would only recommend the use of such products if the body is unable to control the fever! Otherwise, one should use physical means to practice healthy fever management.

Campus A: Super.

Dr. Glöckler: But there is one more important point regarding prevention, on the soul level (mental-emotional level). Some people ask: well how can I generate positive feelings now while I am sitting alone at home? One can pray and one can meditate. Thus arises devotion, and such things put us in a good mood. We can light a candle. We can read something that connects us

with spirituality, with our notion of God, with higher beings, with eternal thoughts, or of dear loved ones who have passed away. Because, although we cannot see thoughts with our eyes, they are precisely our invisible bridges into the spiritual world. And to renew a connection with the realm of our thoughts - I find that so important.

Campus A: And perhaps, through meditation and a connection with the spiritual world, one can

receive something in the spiritual world during these times that will help one to discover new chances in the world... Which brings me to my next question: How will this crisis affect us - not only regarding the outer consequences, but regarding new chances that could arise?



Dr. Glöckler: Well, I hope very much, along with very many other people, that when this is all over, we do not think that our way-of-life prior to Corona was super and that we can now just continue along in the same fashion. I sincerely hope that economically, in the way we do business, and ecologically, in the way we treat nature, something changes. I hope that we do not simply relapse back into the way things were before. That is actually my greatest wish. And even though many things are now functioning digitally and, due to isolation, digitization has gained major impetus, it is very important that we make it clear to ourselves that digital technology is not healthy for the neurological development of children and adolescents. They need to spend their developmental years in the real world before they accustomed themselves to the virtual one.

And I am very actively engaged in this area (see ELIANT), because the ability to think independently requires 16 years of healthy brain development. In fact, the frontal lobe needs 15 to 16 years to develop to the point where one possesses the capability for self-control and independent thinking. In order not to lose sight of this, we will have to think carefully and pay much attention when the current lockdown comes to an end. We mustn't allow ourselves to suppose: "we no longer have a need for many of the things in the real-world. Now one can induct children and youth straightaway into the online world." - That would be very bad.

And last but not least, in the name of pandemic-management, the move towards a total surveillance is currently being rehearsed - this is simply a fact - up to the point of enforced lockdown and monitoring us via our cellphones. Whether this

takes place anonymously or not, everyone knows the gravity of such a policy statement. We must be very vigilant regarding our free, democratic values, so that, with this pandemic, they don't go down the drain.

Without wanting to stoke fear, there is one thing that I do wish to emphasize. It is something that

Joseph Weizenbaum - who helped build up practically the entire computer industry in the USA, and who played a pivotal role in the development of the computer - said in 1984 (Orwell year) in an interview in Germany. It is printed in a small book that is still very relevant today, entitled "Kurs auf den Eisberg" (On course for the Iceberg - the responsibility of the individual under the dictatorship of technology, 1993) And even back then in 1984, the interviewer asks whether or not computerization and digitalization is an enormous facilitator of the surveillance state, the Orwellian State. And Weizenbaum answers: of course it is. We've been working systematically towards this goal, for only with the computer is total surveillance possible. Then Weizenbaum says: but - and this is the big but - we should realize that mankind has managed to create the most appalling surveillance states even without a computer. He says that he would not be concerned about the future of computers and the surveillance state, if humans were to have sufficient morality. Because, then they would be able to employ the technology in a good way and use it to defend democratic values. Weizenbaum says very succinctly: the appalling form of the computer-driven surveillance state will primarily be a consequence of human beings who no longer wish to defend their freedoms and no longer take any interest in their freedom.

And I find this to be the most important point for the post-Corona times: that we reflect upon our core values of freedom and dignity, that we apply the surveillance state in a good manner, and that we only employ it for the security and protection of the population - and not to expand the government's power and authority.

Campus A:?.... Technology and Digitization can sometimes lead us to us become less responsible; isolation also has such effects. And on the part of the State, there is also not the proper feeling of responsibility towards human beings and towards its citizens, but just a pure desire for power. I totally agree. And it is such a pleasure to hear your thoughts on these issues.

Dr. Glöckler, we thank you very much for your time. Perhaps you have few parting words for us at Campus A and for those listening?

Dr. Glöckler: Yes, of course I wish you all the best for the times that will come post-Corona. I myself belong to the high-risk group - my life time is limited. So naturally I am thinking primarily about the young, and I am always glad to do what I can to encourage them to become engaged in their unique future challenges. Each and every person is needed who has a vertical backbone and for whom truth, love and freedom are essential human values.

Campus A: Wonderful! Thank you very much indeed, Dr. Glöckler!

Dr. Glöckler: With pleasure! Goodbye!



Proved for the first time – the negative influence of screen media on a child's ability to form mental images

Dear Friends of ELIANT,

Sebastian P. Suggate and Philipp Martzog professors of school education at the University of Regensburg, have researched and been able to prove that the capacity of children to form mental images is negatively influenced by the use of screen media. The [results](#) were published in the April 2020 edition of Developmental Science, the leading journal in the field of developmental psychology/educational psychology. They demonstrated the extent to which the development of a healthy thinking capacity in children is dependent on learning through sensorimotor activity. 266 children aged between three and nine years were investigated at an interval of ten months.

‘Mental imagery’ or the capacity to form mental images was significantly reduced by dependency on screen time. The researchers found that the ability to form mental images which is so fundamental to thinking, rests on two pillars – the active forming of images and a richness of sensorimotor experience. Because screen media provides them ready made, children have no need to form their own mental images. The capacity to form their own concepts is thereby repressed. There is in addition virtually no sensorimotor activity involved in sitting before a screen. These highly significant results show that the more screen time a child is subjected to the less able it is to form mental images.

Since screen time has been massively increased as a result of the Corona pandemic and not only at home but also in the school context, we need urgently to reflect on the burden we are placing on our children – particularly during their first nine years. This is the period when the sensorimotor skills and the accompanying brain capacities are developed.

ELIANT together with a group of parents, has produced a [new Flyer](#). Its aim to make the much appreciated guide and its key research – as well as that referred to here – more widely known and to support the campaign for screen-free kindergartens and primary schools. We would be most grateful if as many of you as possible could circulate this flyer around social networks and also to print and pass it on to interested people.

And one thing more, please help us to gather 100,000 signatures in support of our [Petition](#) by the end of the year. It is about retaining the options of choice in Europe. Those responsible for kindergartens and primary schools need to make a conscious decision in favor of live teaching to ensure that the healthy brain development of their children – most of whom will already have had too much screen time at home – is not endangered.

Many thanks and warm greetings on behalf the ELIANT team
Michaela Glöckler

www.eliant.eu/en/privacy-policy/

What are Epidemics?

Dr. Philip Incao, Crestone, Arizona, USA
<http://philipincao.crestonecolorado.com/>

“The strongest passion is fear.”
La Fontaine (1621-1695)

The current Corona virus epidemic is the latest iteration of what Rudolf Steiner predicted would be recurring crises in our global society until an adequate number of people acting as a kind of “critical mass” of humanity, developed the insight, courage and will to work in the world from, and for, a totally new spiritual worldview. How and why does a worldview embodied in a small number of people become capable of changing the world?

Because such a worldview builds a living conduit between humanity and the spiritual world, flowing in both directions, ultimately allowing wisdom, power and love to flow from their source in the spiritual world into human hearts and wills, at first in a small number of people, then gradually spreading through humanity like a beneficial contagion.

The current crisis and others that will surely follow challenge us to radically revise our thinking about health, illness and infection. An excellent guide to the healing thinking so greatly needed now is the 2011 66-page book from Rudolf Steiner Press, On Epidemics: Spiritual Perspectives from the Work of Rudolf Steiner, compiled by Taja Gut. (It is in print and can be ordered online. There is also its companion volume, entitled On Fear!) The recurrent theme of all the excerpts of Steiner’s healing wisdom on epidemics assembled in this little book is that every infectious illness is caused not by the virus or bacterium which physically identifies the illness, but by its accompanying dark spirituality, which is the infectious, active reality of the illness and which has critically disturbed and distorted the balance and harmony of the patient’s spiritual members of being.

Here is a quote from p. 21 of the book: “... if one can educate human beings in ways which befit their nature so that they can ... come closer once more to the spiritual element—then it would be quite possible to work against the unconscious thought: ‘Here comes a smallpox epidemic!’

If it were possible instead to be completely aware ‘Here comes something spiritual, something spiritual which is undesirable against which I must remain firm.’—then this would be just as effective [as a vaccine] in making people strong in opposition to such influences.”

The 2009 article below was my response to the Swine Flu epidemic occurring at that time:

An epidemic, say of influenza, like many things in life, seems at first easy to understand, but on deeper examination becomes surprisingly complex.

We think of an epidemic as a contagious infection, that is, a contamination of our inner bodily environment with

an outer disease germ, that takes hold of one or more people and then spreads widely by human contact throughout a larger population. A pandemic is an epidemic that spreads over the entire world.

The great epidemic of black plague in the 1300’s is estimated to have killed more than half the population of Europe. The great flu pandemic of 1918-1919 killed over 40 million people worldwide, including a half million deaths in the U.S.

In 1976, a soldier at Fort Dix, New Jersey died of a respiratory infection and was found to have had a new type of swine flu virus to which the U.S. population had not been exposed but which was very similar to the Spanish Flu pandemic virus of 1918- 1919. The flu experts, who had been worrying for some time about the next great flu pandemic, thought this new swine flu virus was an excellent candidate for a major twentieth century pandemic. Medical experts convened urgent meetings, studied the virus from every angle, and consulted with the U.S. president Gerald Ford. It was decided to recommend the new hastily prepared swine flu vaccine for every man, woman and child in the U.S. At that time, I was the medical director of Camphill Village in Copake, New York. The staff members could decide for themselves to take the vaccine or not, but what about the mentally handicapped residents?

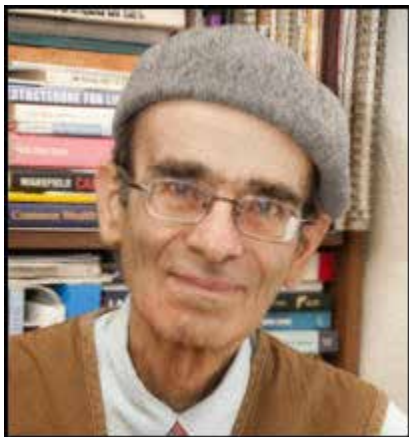
I wrote a letter to the parents of all the residents explaining that I had studied the issue and did not recommend the vaccine, but that I would honor the parents’ decision. So it turned out that about half of the residents received the vaccine from the local health department. As I recall, none of the residents caught the flu and none suffered any adverse effect from the vaccine. The rest of the country was less fortunate. The vaccine producers had agreed to release the vaccine for distribution only under the condition that all liability for any adverse effects would be insured by the U.S. government.

A minority of the U.S. population chose to be vaccinated, the predicted swine flu outbreak never appeared, and many cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a sometimes fatal nerve paralysis, were caused by the vaccine and millions of dollars of taxpayers’ money was paid to the victims by the Federal Government. This episode has since been referred to in the medical literature and in the press as the “Swine Flu Fiasco” of 1976.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that the current 2009 swine flu has reached a global (pandemic) extent, which could result in the 2009 swine flu vaccine, when it’s ready, becoming mandatory for one and all. Health freedom groups are up in arms, protesting in advance against the real possibility of forced vaccination.

In these situations, the underlying powerful fears that live in the shadow side of our human nature and that pervade modern society rise strongly to the surface.

Some believe that fear of illness, epidemics and bio-terrorism is deliberately provoked and disseminated by those who stand to profit from a passive, frightened, obedient populace who lack the knowledge and will to take charge of their own health. In the words of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), "Of all the anti-social vested interests, the worst is the vested interest in ill-health." In 2005 a book by Marc Siegel, a New York physician and medical professor, was published entitled False Alarm: The Truth About the Epidemic of Fear. One of the book's reviewers stated, "Those who think for themselves will find useful guidance here."



Dr. Philip Incao

Yes, clear, unbiased thinking is greatly needed today for individuals and for society to be healthy. But even the most penetrating thinking will fall short unless it has access to all the facts. Our medical, healthcare, media and government institutions, in intransparent and paternalistic fashion, have always had the tendency to control and manage the facts, rather than allowing them to flow freely into the public consciousness.

Physicians very commonly, from motives they believe altruistic, provoke fear in their patients to convince them to follow the doctor's advice. On the website of the crusading physician Joseph Mercola one can read the article "Researchers Find U.S. Media Keeps People Uneducated About Health Issues." Even in a democracy, the people are disempowered if they are denied access to the truth. One can also find on the internet, at nwotruth.com, a very enlightening interview with flu expert Dr. Tom Jefferson, titled "A Whole Industry is Waiting for a Pandemic."

In 1920, in his lecture "Healthcare as a Social Issue," Rudolf Steiner warned that if knowledge of the spiritual and holistic aspects of health and illness were not widely and democratically spread among all people, then medicine and healthcare would become excessively powerful and autocratic mega-industries. This has come to pass, and now a trillion-dollar healthcare plan is being debated in the U.S. government. Nowhere in this debate do we find the

notion that it's the modern medical way of thinking itself which is so astronomically expensive. No matter how we slice, administer, or insure it, the cost of health care and the power and scope of the healthcare and drug industries will continue to grow until medical knowledge opens up from its narrow focus on the physical mechanisms of illness that are assumed to be identical in everyone (a "one-size-fits-all" approach that is perfect for the mass healthcare market), and begins to appreciate and understand the all-important role of the individual human soul and spirit in health and illness. When this rational and straightforward understanding of the spiritual basis of physical illness becomes accessible to everyone (it's not rocket science!), then people will be empowered with the knowledge necessary to prevent and manage their illnesses, and dependence on doctors, tests and drugs will diminish.

Until that distant day, many of us will be as helpless children in the face of the threatening epidemic of the moment, relying on a paternalistic and hugely powerful healthcare and drug industry to protect us.

But knowledge is power, and very few lay people and even doctors today know that medical research over the past twenty years is challenging the firm grip held by the germ theory for the past century on our everyday understanding of infectious diseases. This new knowledge, called the cytokine theory of disease, relegates germs to a secondary role in illness, and boldly states that cytokines, the chemical messengers produced by our own overreacting immune system, are the direct cause of all of our infectious disease symptoms like fever, weakness, acute headache, muscle pain, vomiting and diarrhea. More importantly, cytokines also directly cause the organ damage and are responsible for the lethal outcome, when these occur, in an infectious or septic illness.

In such severe cases, it is the overreaction of our own immune system, sometimes even in the absence of infection, which can kill us. Yes, multiplication of a virus or bacteria within us can make us sick, but only if our immune system reacts to these germs with a vigorous outpouring of its cytokines into our circulation. During any epidemic a great many of those exposed, even the majority, are found to be infected yet not ill. This has been known since the early twentieth century, but has been ignored because it couldn't be explained. Knowledge of the illness-producing effects of our own cytokines sheds new light on why many of the infected remain well, but it also raises more questions than it answers. The all-important question is: why does the immune system overreact and cause illness only in some infected people and not in all infected people?

I once asked a leading cytokine researcher why this revolutionary knowledge of how our own immune system makes us ill is missing from the health reports of the popular media. He replied tellingly that it was "difficult to

explain” to the public because a drug or vaccine had not yet been found to block the illness-producing effects of our own cytokines. I took that to mean that while it’s customary to greatly exaggerate the danger of “killer flus” and other diseases for which drugs and vaccines exist, and to imply that all other preventions or treatments are ineffective, it would be counterproductive to alarm the public and create a demand for a cure before medical science is able to supply that cure. There you have it! In modern medicine the necessity of meeting a public (economic) demand and of maintaining the dependence of the populace on the healthcare and drug industries clearly trumps the free dissemination of knowledge that might rouse people to ask questions, to seek the answers on their own and to become self-reliant and healthier in the process.

Scholars who today study the great plagues of medieval times have said that the power and authority of the church maintained itself through keeping the populace in a state of ignorance, fear and passivity. Today the power and authority of our medical institutions and healthcare industries have replaced the church. When people become disempowered, frightened and apathetic, they become more vulnerable to illness and epidemics, whether of medieval plague or 21st century swine flu. So what precautions should be taken against the “killer” epidemics that will no doubt continue to threaten us? Here was Rudolf Steiner’s comment on the subject: “If fear of illness is the only thing created [during an epidemic] and one goes to sleep at night with that thought, it produces afterimages, imaginations impregnated with fear. That is a good method of cultivating and nurturing germs. If this fear can be reduced even a little by, for example, active love and, while tending the sick, forgetting for a time that one might also be infected, the [inner] conditions are less favorable for the germs.”

For those desiring to have remedies on hand for the prevention and treatment of flu, I recommend contacting the Weleda pharmacy, or the Uriel pharmacy or the True Botanica remedy and supplement company.

Avoidance of protein foods and stimulating elimination and detoxification with herbal laxatives or magnesium is also very helpful for acute flu. In all cases I recommend avoiding Tylenol, as it only suppresses symptoms temporarily, it does nothing to draw out and heal the illness, and it is toxic to the liver, being the number one cause of acute liver failure in the U.S. Ibuprofen and aspirin are also liable to cause complications and should also be avoided. The great majority of flu-like illness will self heal with the time-honored methods of warmth, clear fluids, rest, quiet and sweating and bowel cleansing to eliminate the flu toxins. There is little or no evidence that Tamiflu or other anti-viral drugs are truly helpful, and they can have bad side effects.

Fear may be catching, but so are knowledge and courage!

THE ART OF ATMOSPHERE: PART ONE

Archetypal atmospheres as balancing forces for our time

Looking at one of our human capacities:

the ability to create atmosphere

David Anderson, Ilan, Taiwan

“To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.”

- Henry David Thoreau

“Atmosphere is the soul of the theater.”

- Michael Chekhov



Photo credit: David Anderson and Yuanrong Liao

We live in a unique time where most of the world is united in an atmosphere or mood. In some parts of the world this atmosphere presence may be more colored in fear and anxiety, in other parts more strongly colored with uncertainty. But this collective experience works on all of us, even if we do not feel directly affected. We may wake up in the morning and feel a quality of uncertainty or anxiety in our bodies that does not belong to us personally but feels connected to what lives in the collective consciousness of the world just now.

Children pick up on the atmosphere in their community even if they never see an image or hear a word about what is happening. They absorb what is present in their space, in their community, in their world.

Because an atmosphere is invisible, it is easy to overlook its presence, and the impact of this presence - how it informs what we think, what we feel, and how we act. In turn, this thinking, these feelings, these actions empower the atmosphere, or they create a field of invitation for the highest possible future that

wants to emerge (to borrow a phrase from Otto Scharmer). They can build an invisible garden bed for the seeds of the future.

If we are in a smoke-filled room and we don't like breathing in smoke, we might leave the room, open a window, or see where the smoke was coming from. An atmosphere can work just as deeply into us as smoke. We breathe it in through our senses. It can color our experience, obscure our vision, or be a holding space for incubating our vision. One aspect of atmosphere is its ability to unify all within it.

At this time, creating health-supporting atmospheres can help balance, harmonize, or mitigate the effects our current world situation is having on us and especially on our children. For a child, a healthy atmosphere can be as powerful and nutrition-giving as the food they eat. Forces work through the atmosphere and feed the child's relationship to themselves and to the world. These forces can work like an antidote or remedy for an imbalance or sense of overwhelm. A healthy atmosphere can act like a second skin, a buffer or safe holding space for their learning and growing. Spending more time inside, we now have an opportunity to cultivate new life in our spaces (our inner space and the spaces we share). We might understand our current situation as inviting us to do this.

The archetypal world, or the world of forces that work with the human being and into human experience, manifests or expresses itself in different ways. In drama we look at archetypal gestures, sounds, and colors, for example. We engage them in order to connect with universal creative forces, with a power that transcends the personal experience; to create a bridge to that divine world. Another way we can invite this world to stream its strength and support into our experience and into our spaces is through working with atmospheres.

The space between us can veil a sense of divine presence or can illuminate it. As human beings we have an unique power to create these possibilities through how we engage with atmosphere.

What are the archetypal atmospheres a developing human being is hungry for? How does my personal atmosphere contribute to the collective atmosphere and to a child's experiences? How can we cultivate atmosphere?

Atmosphere is the soul of a space or the enveloping mood garment of a person, space, or situation

I once went to a performance of *Twelfth Night* on Broadway. Before the play the audience stood in line, joined the hustle and crunch to enter the theater, found our seats, and sat down. We were all strangers sitting together in a dark room facing the same direction. The curtains opened and light, warmth, sound, and energy filled the stage and poured over us and into our attending senses.

Hours later the last word was spoken, we sat in silence a

moment, reluctant to move, as if to drink deep from this mysterious well of life, and then gradually began to applaud. We were all filled with a similar sensation that felt beyond words. I looked at the stranger next to me, who no longer felt like a stranger, and, though we did not say a word to each other, we knew: we are united in this shared experience. We were reminded of our shared humanity, on this earth, at this time. We have created a community together. As we all began to leave the theater, the tempo was different: slower, more solemn, digesting, as if after a large feast or a religious rite. Our eyes had a steadiness and stillness. I didn't hear any of the chatting or commotion we entered with.

As we slowly spilled back out into New York City, I could feel this invisible membrane that we had formed together stretch out over the city and get thinner and thinner as it began to weave the light of this community into the fabric of the city. On the subway, moments later, we could still recognize each other. Our luminosity was obvious to each other. We could even nod our heads in knowing.

Of course, we owe some of this mysterious and alchemical happening to the quality of the performance, the beauty of the language, the naked human speech, the live music, even the candlelight they used. But our attendance also contributed to what revealed itself in the space. The atmosphere we shared was beyond any one person's personal contribution. It was born out of our collective attention.

A "sense" of atmosphere

If we look at our experience of atmosphere as a sense or sensation, where is its organ of perception? From where in us do we perceive it? When we open our eyes, we see, and the colors of the world appear to us. We touch something and the texture of the world touches us. Some of these experiences are archetypal. The color red or blue, for example, speaks to a part of us where that color lives. Though I may have a personal association with red or blue, they also have a universal,



Photo credit: David Anderson and Yuanrong Liao

archetypal quality which has a counterpart in me. Beyond my likes and dislikes or any association of red as being connected to love or anger or passion, it has its own objective force. I can live in my experience of my projection upon red or I can also attune to its universal power. When I do, the archetypal force wakes up its counterpart within me and they resonate together. The archetypal world comes to consciousness within the human being and works into the world. We feel enlarged by this eternal presence.

With atmosphere, the organ of perception is harder to locate and the clarity of its experience may be harder to assess than with other senses. Yet we can recognize the presence of an atmosphere. When it is strong in a space, say in a place of grief, in a community living in fear, in a graveyard, or in the reverential wonder of a kindergarten, its presence is obvious and easy to feel. Other atmospheres may be more subtle.

An atmosphere can be seen as the enveloping soul or invisible garment of a space that our other senses grow and breathe within. Though its qualities resonate in our body and in our soul - they can induce sweating, agitate or calm our breathing, create a feeling of heaviness or lightness in the body - our senses perceive it around our body. It can appear to have a life of its own but, as it lives in the air around us, we are connected to it and it unites us within it.

Like all senses, the sense of atmosphere is a breathing organ. We breathe it in and enhance it with our out-breath. It may be possible to breathe in an atmosphere, especially if it is a destabilizing or shadow atmosphere, and begin a process of transforming it through what and how we breathe out into it; by how we move and speak and think within it (as forms of out-breath).

Events can generate atmosphere. A wedding, a funeral, a birth, a death, an accident, a conflict, inspire atmospheres that have an infectious influence on our feelings and our perceptions. They can color how we perceive the world and our relationship with it.

Nature offers perhaps the most harmonizing atmospheres for feeding the soul, if we can open our senses to them. Its archetypal power can work on us only if we can enter its influence and breathe it in through our senses. Perhaps you have had the experience of walking into a forest and feeling as if the invisible hand of the atmosphere were reaching out to welcome you into it. "Let the healing begin."

Different times of the day reveal different qualities or moods. Perhaps the most outspoken or profound "voices" of the day are at dawn and at sunset, two powerful transitions. When we turn our senses over to these presences, we can feel there is a quality of energy emanating through the play of color and light. We feel a corresponding movement in our soul.

When we offer our senses to an atmosphere, we can perceive tempo, thickness, weight, temperature, smell, tone, qualities of

harmony or discord, of texture and light, and even taste. Every sense can tune into the unique expression of the atmosphere of a space. This perceiving awakens a sense for its qualities. These qualities create a kind of "voice" or presence, a sense of its wholeness.

All that we perceive through the senses is a kind of light. Our perception enlightens it. In experiencing atmosphere, we recognize qualities of light, even when the atmosphere is heavy or dark. A willingness to perceive it - not to resist it - allows qualities of its light to be revealed. These qualities have a corresponding force within us. We can move in harmony with that force, we can resist its presence, or we can bring a transforming gesture or intention to it.

Although children are remarkably vulnerable to experiences of atmosphere (our four-month-old will instantly reflect a new atmosphere with a body and soul response), adults, in moments of openness and attention, can also experience this soul language. But as adults, we can filter, protect ourselves, or engage inwardly with balancing forces in order to navigate and make sense of what is happening to us and around us. Children are not able to filter out or buffer what their senses ingest. Like a sponge, everything goes directly into them. In times of intensity or confusion or sensory overload, it becomes more necessary than ever to create spaces where children can digest what they have taken in.

Babies are such powerful creators of atmosphere because they so purely reflect the atmosphere around them. As their consciousness is not completely in their body yet, we can experience this magical aura of light and warmth in the space around them. They highlight or awaken awareness for the presence of the divine in their space.

When we tune to or connect to the presence of a healthy atmosphere, our soul connects to an archetypal soul language. Connecting to a universal principle in this way unites the soul with forces beyond the personal. These forces expand a sense of who we are and what we are a part of. We transcend our personal experience and open ourselves for the enlivening presence of the archetypal world.

Atmospheres for the actor

Michael Chekhov, who created the Chekhov method of acting, describes two kinds of atmospheres: a character or personal atmosphere (with subjective individual feelings), which is particularly revealed in the space around a character, and an objective atmosphere (with objective feelings), which all characters live in. In drama we create atmospheres to enhance an artistic picture or experience. It adds dimension and depth to a character or a scene. Both kinds of atmospheres are sources of inspiration.

My character may have the personal atmosphere of a dark heavy cloud but then step into the objective atmosphere of a



Photo credit: Mattijs Vormer

busy train station or a quiet library. Both have a presence with us. Their interplay can create dynamic and complexity. If we can radiate these sensations or reflect these presences through our sensing, then the audience wakes up to their presence. The archetypal power works into their experience as well.

Every play has an atmosphere and every scene has an atmosphere within a play's larger atmosphere. Each scene layering atmosphere upon atmosphere until the larger feeling of the play's atmosphere is created. Although objective atmosphere unites all within it, we all contribute to it, even adding dimension to it, consciously or unconsciously with our personal atmosphere.

Atmospheres can inspire feelings. We may all have a different personal feeling in a busy train station, but it doesn't take away the reality of its atmosphere and the possibility of our experience of it. A character with a bright personal atmosphere may move into feelings that do not align with their personal atmosphere but still maintain a connection to their personal atmosphere.

Similar places can reveal different qualities of atmosphere. We have all seen a seedy mechanic's shop and a mechanic's shop that was meticulously clean, or the messy, full bookshop and the open-space socially-buzzing bookshop.

Because atmospheres are space-derived, they have an objective power. They surround and inform us with qualities and, potentially, archetypal presence.

*"But atmospheres are limitless and to be found everywhere. Every landscape, every street, house, room; a library, a hospital, a cathedral, a noisy restaurant, a museum; morning, noon, twilight, night; spring, summer, fall, winter - every phenomenon and event has its own particular atmosphere."**

- Michael Chekhov

Personal Atmosphere

We are mostly unaware of our personal atmosphere. Although people who seem to live in a heavy, serious tone, for example, may be aware of how they impact others with their

presence. A light or funny person may be aware of how others become brighter when they are around. It can feel like the air around them has a different color.

Artistically, this is fun to work with, as we can add imaginations to our personal atmosphere. We can imagine a sphere just around our body filled with dark clouds, full of effervescent little bubbles, or with little tickling feathers floating within it. This can engender a wonderful sensation that can enhance our experience of a character and our relationship to the scene.

In a busy and full life, we do not see our personal atmosphere as contributing to the life of a space. However, when we come home with a strong personal atmosphere, our children become aware of it right away. They immediately tune into what we bring into their environment. If this personal space is a deep habit or a fixed reflection of our personality, the children are already inwardly shaped by its presence and respond accordingly. If it is light-filled, they are attracted to it. If it has a more shadow-like quality, they learn how to protect, hide, negotiate or work with it. Some children seem to present a gesture of healing toward such personal atmospheres. Such children never tire to try and bring light into the presence of darkness.

This is not necessarily the same thing as a soul mood, although they can work together. My habit personal atmosphere may be humming with active, busy energy but on a day when I experience a serious conflict at work, my mood may change, though my personal atmosphere is still there.

Many factors contribute to our personal atmosphere. Parents, background, life circumstances, biography, attitude, the nature of our work all shape what we present to the world. Generally, a personal atmosphere tends toward a polarity or one-sidedness, as it is in this unique expression of our humanness that we can recognize the freedom to transform it out of ourselves - to bring it to balance. Artistically, we might call this striving toward neutrality, so we can be available to inspiration. A strong personal atmosphere, like a strong personality, can be an obstacle to new experiences.

If we can recognize what is our unique expression of personal atmosphere, we can already begin to sense what kind of balancing or harmonizing gesture we can bring to it. For the hustle and bustle atmosphere, perhaps doing things slowly and deliberately or consciously. Or introducing moments of physical stillness where I allow my "aura of busy-ness" to become still and quiet. Or it could be a soothing bath, a camomile compress, or applying a lavender massage oil. Any moment given to such home remedies contributes significantly to atmosphere.

If we can see this contribution we make to a space, it already begins to change. The light of our awareness acts like a yeast in the dough. If we take up working with it, a sense of freedom follows closely behind. We are not stuck in one expression but can create a context for something different.

Virtues create their own personal atmosphere and can influ-



Photo credit: David Anderson and Yuanrong Liao

ence the collective atmosphere. We all recognize the quality of kindness, humbleness, or generosity in the air around people who have developed these virtues.

Objective Atmosphere

It can be fun to go for a walk and, while strolling along, glimpse into the windows of houses - how different each living room seems to be! In our neighborhood here in Taiwan, the living rooms may all have similar kinds of furniture or wall decorations or a similar kind of shrine, but, often, there is a quality that can be very different. It could be a kind of darkness, or chaos, or luminosity, or warmth, or gentleness, or goodness. The objects may be similar but the space surrounding them is different.

We know archetypal atmospheres in a temple, an emergency room, a baby's room, a restaurant's kitchen, a meadow, a forest, a seaside. Even the mention of them may produce a little familiar movement in you - a sense memory. Even if you haven't had a profound experience of these atmospheres, your body knows the experience. As with all archetypal experiences, they reflect a quality that exists in the human being. As every human being has all archetypal characters in them as potential, every objective atmosphere has a soul counterpart. This correspondence may light up as a feeling or a physical sensation. We all recognize the inner experience of a desert, even if we have never been in one.

At this moment in our time we can recognize a collective objective atmosphere in the world. It is fed by media reports, gossip, social network feeds, and all the little inner and outer movements we bring to it. The spaces we live in can be colored by this presence, as the collective environment can work into all spaces, like weather. And, like weather, we can receive it, move

with it, react to it, or we can bring a counter gesture toward it. When it gets very cold, we can light a fire or turn on a heater. In the heat of the summer, we seek the comfort of shade.

Objective atmospheres affect our experience of the world, how we experience ourselves within it, and how we relate to it. An atmosphere full of chaos may close me off and I may be less likely to unfold myself within it. Whatever lives in me is held back and cannot come to expression. If it is an embracing, supportive atmosphere, filled with soul warmth and holding and care and attention, what lives in me is invited into it. Whatever gifts or contributions I have come with can work into the world.

For children, atmospheres create the environment not only for their learning but also for their growth and development. A child that lives in a chaotic atmosphere will often reflect the atmosphere in their movement, behavior, attitude, and even in the quality of their skin and the light in their eyes. An atmosphere with a lot of pressure, stress, or conflict can likewise impact how the child enters their body and trusts the world around them.

Atmospheres create gestures in the space

We have all been in atmospheres that seem to make a gesture toward us. Whether it suffocates, stifles, pushes, opens, lifts, or buoys us, we can feel this presence *do* something to us. We experience the will of an atmosphere - it wants to contract or expand us, lift or suppress us, for example. A reaction to this gesture can make the presence more intense and powerful. Our reaction and the atmosphere come into conflict. Like in many conflicts, both sides can step in more strongly when challenged. If we can meet an unpleasant atmosphere out of as much recognition, even appreciation, for it as possible, perceive its qualities, see the value in its presence and the lesson it is imparting, it can more easily come into movement and possibly move toward transformation.

We have all experienced how Feng Shui principles build powerful atmospheres. Every object carefully contributes a gesture or sense of movement or balance to the space. We may have also experienced an outwardly perfect Feng Shui environment, like a business lobby, that was devoid of an atmosphere that should match its physical appearance. Because it is a *used* space - a space for passing through, not for filling with life - and other gestures have dominated the space, it feels soul-less. Its gesture feels empty.

In our striving to create atmospheres in our spaces, we are supporting a gesture of holding or embracing in the invisible field around the developing human being. This gesture enables the life and light that seeks that space more freely to enter.

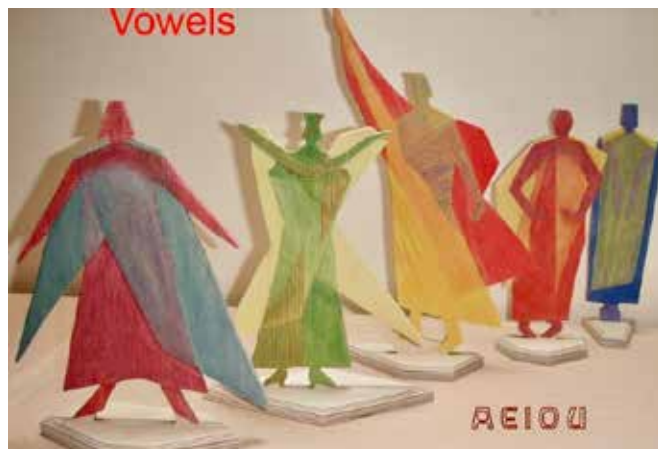
What is the gesture your spaces are making toward you?

Annotation:

* Michael Chekhov, *To The Actor*.

Creating and Supporting Salutogenesis*

Michael Hughes, Makawao, Maui, Hawai'i



**Salutogenesis—focuses on factors that support human health and well-being.*

It is widely acknowledged in our times that sources of health need to embrace not just physical well-being, but also psychic (soul) and spiritual health. How do we do this? We know that in our 'inner landscape,' how we engage our thinking activity, our carrying of inquisitive contemplative reflections, and feelings such as wonder, thankfulness and gratitude put us on the right path.

Having a good rhythm in our life, exercise, experiences in nature, good food, socializing, laughter and enough healing sleep are all ways to nourish our lives. So put in the simplest terms, can we find ways to positively support ourselves and others in the realms of thinking, feeling and willing? A powerful activity toward human health, engaging us both inwardly and outwardly, is an artistic activity.

Strengthening the Soul Qualities of Wonder, Hope and Love through Eurythmy

Eurythmy is a movement which addresses our physical, soul and spiritual well-being. We will consider three eurythmy sequences which are well known in some circles as a 'preventative, or prophylactic sequence,' in that they 'make sturdy' our whole being. These are part of a series of exercises known as soul exercises. This is because each of these exercises

call for creating a 'soul mood,' enhanced through specific gestures, which are then complimented or contrasted with a vowel. Each of these sequences are performed a number of times, which help one experience the results.

Love - Ae

The first sequence we will refer to is known as 'Love - Ae' (vowel sound A as in the word 'gate'). Calling forth a mood of love, or



of embracing the world in our heart, we open our arms wide, curving slightly forward, and let a feeling of loving warmth flow from our hearts through our arms, fingers and beyond. Having established this, the arms then swing inward, crossing firmly in front of our heart (the vowel 'Ae'). We then relax and continue the sequence a number of times. One knows you are on the right track when you experience the warmth flowing in your arms, hand, fingers and further, for this exercise works strongly on warming our blood flow and circulation.



Ah - Veneration

The next sequence we will describe starts with a vowel, and then the soul mood is expressed in movement. It is called 'Ah - Veneration' (vowel sound Ah as in the word 'father'). One creates the 'ah' gesture with both arms streaming out at an angle in front of the body. One is active in the arm muscles, but they are not 'locked.' Having created this gesture, one allows the soul mood of wonder and reverence find expression in the next movement. This movement is a great release which starts behind in the shoulders, then gently lifts the arms over the head and slowly streams downward behind one. Again, one relaxes and proceeds to do these movements a number of times. One can perhaps express it as being filled with wonder, veneration for the world of the spirit which stands behind all of our sensory experiences. This is a 'tonic' for our whole organization, strengthening us. This sequence is also very helpful if one is having trouble 'releasing from the day' and to more easily fall asleep.



Hope - U

The third sequence we are considering, 'Hope - U' begins with the soul gesture followed by the movement for the vowel 'u' ('oo' as in 'through'). Here we start by creating a mood for our Great Wishes or Hopes. Our feet, as in the other sequences, are comfortably close together (they are creating a strong pillar for us in our legs and feet, grounding us with the strength of the earth). Here, in filling the soul mood we slightly lean back, with the weight bearing more on our heels, so the toes are actually lifted from the ground, while our arms which are at the sides of our body are turned outward, curving upward in our hands. In a sense we could say that in creating this posture, filled with the soul content, we form a 'vessel' of our body. From here, holding this gesture filled with our soul content, the arms slowly rise, still on our sides, and then come together in front of us, close to your body. In the coming together, the back of the hands meet each other and move downwards in the middle in front of us,

through a full extension of the arms which are held as closely together (hands still 'back to back') as comfortably as possible. The sense is as of a response, a filling, of the vessel we created. Holding the hands and arms briefly in this full extension downward, we then again release, relax and proceed with the sequence a number of times. This exercise works beneficially on our breathing system. One can perhaps characterize this sequence as a trust in the Divine, that moves into the ground of our existence. Through this we can experience 'the father ground of existence,' which gives us support. We need such confidence for life!

These are sequences that all therapeutic eurythmists know and would be happy to share with you. I wish you well in your practice of salutogenesis! Here is a health giving meditative poem given by Rudolf Steiner (translation by Ernst Katz):

'O Spirit of God – abide in me,
Fill my I within my soul,
On my soul bestow a strengthening force,
Strengthening force too for my heart,
For my heart that seeks Thee,
Seeks Thee with deepest longing,
Deepest longing for good health,
For good health and trust in life,
Trust in life which through my body streams,
Streams as a precious gift divine,
Gift divine from Thee, O Spirit of God,
O Spirit of God – fill me.'

Michael Hughes is a eurythmist and therapeutic eurythmist living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

Overcome the Darkness

Aban Bana, Mumbai, India

[First printed in *Anthroposophy Worldwide*, 6/2020.

Photo: Sebastian Jüngel]



India has a population of 1.3 billion, and it's growing rapidly. Any problem is thus magnified manifold. Spiritual work helps to purify the environment.

Because of the fear that the present situation of the Covid-19 pandemic could get out of control, the Indian government has introduced very stringent measures to ensure that the rules of the lockdown are far worse than getting infected by the virus itself.

In my city of Mumbai, with its population of 25 million, there are crowded slums where the people live very close to one another and there is no question of social distancing. Also, the daily wage earners and migrant labourers from other states, who have come to Mumbai in search of work, now find themselves without any money and are keen to get back to their homes far away, mostly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. However, that is easier said than done. The trains are filled to capacity, the inter-state buses are limited and the poor find no way out but either to walk hundreds of kilometres without proper food and drinking water, or to hitch rides on the highways in order to get back to their homes and families. Often they meet with police brutality. Many have died in traffic accidents on their way to their villages – and most recently sixteen workers were run over by a train near Aurangabad.

No doubt help is also forthcoming and there are ngos and kind-hearted individuals who do what they can to ease the situation, but the sheer magnitude of the problem and the apathy of those in power make the entire picture bleak.

One does what one can to purify the environment. Eurythmy exercises like Halleluiah, walking the form of the Crown, certain meditations and lectures by Rudolf Steiner and a lot of singing help to overcome the darkness. On the other hand, every cloud has a silver lining. Skies are clearer, nature is more vibrant and the air is less polluted. The incessant noise of the traffic is also lessened, making one more aware of the environment.

Anthroposophy Online

Van James, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA



Sarita and Shashwat of Nurturer's Studio, India (courtesy photo)

This year of the pandemic will be remembered in part for how Zoom, Skype, Facetime and other internet sites dealing with group communication have soared in popularity and general use. Considering the attitudes that many of us may have held in the past concerning the internet's influence it is remarkable to see how this technology has been embraced by anthroposophists during this time of lockdowns, quarantines and stay-at-home/work-at-home orders. With a lack of face-to-face gatherings the anthroposophical movement has shown a determination to make use of and humanize a medium that is essentially counter-human in nature. Steiner-Waldorf school classes, anthroposophical study groups, forums and discussion groups, Society conferences, Section council meetings, and all kinds of online lectures, seminars, workshops and demonstrations have exploded across the world by way of the worldwide web.

Online platforms, including the Front Range Anthroposophical Café, RudolfSteiner.org, EduCareDo, Rosenkreutz, Millennialchild, Meetup, Gradalis.edu, InnerWorkPath and many, many other venues, are now available. Some charge a fee and some are free to participants. Some have been around awhile, but many are the direct result of the 2020 pandemic.

One such example is Nurturer's Studio, started by a mother and son team in India. Sarita Sanghai, a Waldorf teacher and founder of Kathmandu Waldorf Kindergarten, and Shashwat Agawhal, a Waldorf school alum unable to return to university, started their online platform in order to help parents, teachers, therapists, doctors, artists and other "nurturers" of children to connect with each other and continue their own development. Their first 2-hour presentation, "Pictures of the Transformation of Humanity: Art as the Language of Human Development," drew 200 participants from 16 countries. Plans for more sessions on the arts, health, Waldorf education, and self-development by presenters from India, Israel, Australia, Europe and the US are in the works.

It will be interesting to see if this growth area of online classes continues to flourish once the world situation returns to normal—if it returns to *normal*. However, it is likely that this medium will remain a large part of the way we meet and carry-on our communications. The question will more and more be how we use this technology in a way that it can be humanized as much as possible and does not cause an even further descent into the "dark matter" of web technologies.

Many Tasks to Work On...

Eunhwa Lee, Seoul, South Korea

[First printed in Anthroposophy Worldwide, 7-8/2020]



Preventative measures against Covid-19 have been continually developed in Korea and are observed worldwide. While for some the serious situation has been overcome, others are constantly wearing their mask. Teaching in Waldorf Schools has also been resumed and anthroposophical working groups are working again.

The South Korean government has tried hard to support and care for the vulnerable as well as those confirmed with Covid-19, providing mental help together with financial support. Now the whole society is putting in efforts to get back to norm which we try eagerly to summon but which still seems quite far away.

In early May, the policy changed again from strong social distancing to physical distancing in daily life. Since then schools have been reopening step by step and society as a whole is more visible again. All Waldorf schools as well as most of the state schools in Korea are welcoming students back. However, hundreds of schools have unfortunately been forced to close just days after they reopened, due to a new spike in virus cases. In our school, in the meantime, several Anthroposophical study groups and other gatherings have begun again outside the school buildings.

As time goes on, regardless of the dimming of our hope of getting rid of the masks sooner or later and unconfirmed information that virus cases would diminish in hot weather, wearing a mask can be really tough and even make breathing more difficult with approaching early hot and humid summer which arrives earlier every year.

For some people, this serious situation is already finished and they don't even care about the minimum preventative measures anymore, but for others it is still an acute situation, wearing masks all the time and keeping not only physical but also inner distances towards most people. Some students hesitate to take off masks even when keeping distance outside. Some parents don't want to send their children to schools until it is 'completely' safe. The silent transmission, in particular, has brought a huge fear in our minds, to instigate 'untact', as much as possible, among people.

This pandemic situation, however, has given us a chance to look back on our lives, especially family lives which are, I would say, rather broken and dissolved nowadays. Ironically, Covid-19 has made us stop working, breathe out, and think what is more precious in life – a question no one would have dared to ask in our performance-based society. We have ultimately come to realize that we've inhaled way too much in almost all areas of life and society to make the best achievements.

We already worry about the recurrence of this disease when the weather gets cold. We are unsure about what other catastrophic situations we are going to meet shortly. The South Korean government is aggressively promoting its model of disease control ('K-Quarantine'), each time working out new preventative measures and recommendations, which have sparked considerable international interest. More discussions are yet to happen as to the real causes of this pandemic and its social and environmental impact. The emphasis should also shift from the technological approach of tracing and of preventative programs towards understanding the cause and meaning of this pandemic in more depth.

We realize again that the whole world is connected: one whole organism. We come to know ultimately, with warm interest in each other, that we shall be receiving and we will be giving. I guess we have become smart enough to realize this simple principle and will hopefully remember it in the long term.

Helping Children Learn at Home: Recent Experiences from China

Zewu Li, Chengdu, China

[First printed at <https://www.goetheanum-paedagogik.ch/homeschooling/07/04/2020-zewu>]





The coronavirus pandemic began in China and has now spread over most of the world. Now the number of cases of the infection has risen to over a million with more than 50,000 deaths! And the tragedies continue. I write with deep sympathy towards those who have died, or who have experienced the loss of loved ones. And we signal our high respect towards doctors and nurses everywhere.

It is a strange phenomenon that billions of people all over the world are asked to keep a 'social distance' from each other, to isolate from each other and to stay at home. Many countries have locked themselves down. Many schools are shut down and billions of children are staying at home during this coronavirus. And, as far as we can see, this will be a lengthy period.

How, then, to help the children pass through this critical phase and how to help them with their learning? These have become urgent issues in many parts of the world. Below, I share some limited, recent experiences from China.

Our last winter semester ended on 16th January 2020. Following the tradition of the lunar calendar, we had our 'Spring Festival' holiday and everyone was happy to end the school year and then, people travelled home or went abroad as holidaymakers. After about a week, it was announced that Wuhan was in lock-down due to a virus. My wife and I were in Ho Chi Min City on holiday. Then, soon after, the questions began. Schoolteachers in public school and private schools, were asked to gather lots of information about the pupils and students from their parents: Where they are now? How is the family situation? Has any family member returned from Wuhan? Has anyone in the home had the infection, or the virus? Along with the demand for information, came directions and suggestions: STAY AT HOME! DO NOT GO OUT! WEAR A MASK! WASH YOUR HANDS! And also, the authorities asked: 'What kind of help do you need?'



Collecting all this data and statistics was a huge amount of work, and very tedious. Our schoolteachers at the Chengdu Waldorf School worked alongside the members of the administration team to collect this information. So they did in public schools too. Imagine, there are 276 million school students in China (2018). Class teachers had to make an immediate response. In Chengdu Waldorf School, once the information had been collected, it was sent to educational bureau of Jinjiang district. There are about 200,000 school students in the district where Chengdu Waldorf school is located and 1.7 million children in the city of Chengdu.

By the 2nd of February, my wife and I were back in Chengdu and the entire country entered a phase of 'lock down'. Keeping one's distance is a very effective way of stopping the virus spreading, although it does make life inconvenient, with a loss of freedom in the activities that you can do. People were counting the days and hoping, in sadness, suffering and warmth, for a return to normal life.

The 17th February 2020 was the last day of the month-long holiday, but return to school, was not possible due to the virus. About the 7th February, 10 days before the re-start, we were notified by the authorities that the holiday would continue.



After one month, some parents were already heart broken. The prospect of two months filled some with despair. And three months? Oh My! After one month, some were rather happy to have longer holidays and then some play-fighting and bickering began between father and mother, and between parents and children. But, yes, the general message was that people needed to take it easy. Obviously, we – the schools and the teachers - needed to do something. There were three things on which we focused:

1. Suggestions for children staying at home
2. Learning at home and studying online.
3. Preparation for when school re-opens

Besides taking protection measures against the virus, there were several points to address.

To cherish and enjoy family time.

It is sad what is happening in the world because of the virus and we have to be in isolation, but also it provides great opportunities to improve the relationships between parents and children.

To keep up good mood.

What is happening in the world is sorrowful. This is a kind of Pandora story. But in that story is still a hope. Find the positives and do not complain.

To create possibilities for parents to show a positive influence.

Now there are many possibilities for parents to influence their children. The offspring can learn from their parents' lifestyle, what parents are interested in, how we do things, what is valuable for life from our perspective and so on. But do not think that these parents were meant to be teachers every day. And don't think, parents, that you must talk all the time. You can show by doing. To maintain a good rhythm at home. Healthy rhythms shape good living and strengthen not only the body, but also our energy levels.

To do things together.

Find something interesting and do it together: cooking, cleaning, exercise, watching the news, reading. Reading is a very good past-time, of course, making things together too. Better communication, collaboration, and a growth in shared understanding will happen through doing things together. To re-call something together can be fun!

To maintain communication with others. With Grandma, cousins, teachers, friends. Keep the warmth flowing between each other. The Chengdu school has a community of nearly 1000 students and teachers. We held several online talks about supporting parents and supportive parenting and had some interesting question and answer sessions. We offered parents a range of perspectives to help us understand the situation, to gain knowledge of the virus, we responded to questions regarding hygiene and psychological problems. Other more concrete questions were tackled: How to deal with internet? How to tell stories? How to read, or read together? How to calm children down when they saw lots of death or heard things that were sad or ugly?

We got some very positive feedback. The school and teachers kept in communication with the parents. People helped each other not only with information and methods, but also regarding materials.



The lock-down situation in China continued. There are about 80 Waldorf schools and near 400 Waldorf kindergartens in China and by now, all were facing the prospect of the coronavirus in their communities. Some Waldorf organizations organized a range of activities for the China Waldorf community. The China Waldorf Forum (CWF), China Early Childhood Education World Forum (CECEF) and Shan Hai Yuan Charity Foundation have organized a series of 12 online courses for the public. The topics included parenting, daily routines in holiday time, art, indoor activities, psychological health during Coronavirus, reading, and housework.

Governmental and educational authorities at different levels also issued restrictions, requirements, suggestions, and help to the public. Following and collaborating with that guidance was also important.

2. Learning at home or online study

The words 'Web Sensation' or 'Web Celebrity' took on an air of reality when online learning was put into real action. If I ask, who were the internet celebrities in these days, the answer would be: TEACHERS, who got to grips with online teaching approaches, like video broadcasts. No matter who they were and what kind of environment they were in, they had to be present and dressed to present video casts as they began teaching online. There were lots of jokes about that due to the technical problems and rudimentary skills in using the equipment. Many teachers and children spent the first lessons doing nothing but adjusting the equipment. One teacher presented a big face on the screen and talked for 20 minutes and finally found the speaker was 'off' and his children were looking at his mime show! Or, while another male teacher was talking, his wife showed up and did some funny things. And for one teacher, her class began with everyone there, but more than half fled during the first half of the lesson without her noticing. But, all in all, children had to learn at home or online because the virus is not a one-day business but will go on for quite a while and people saw no hope of re-starting actual school.

So, how do we do online learning?

Our online learning is based on different levels of classes. And different schools have been doing it differently. Also, Waldorf schools did it differently from public schools.

In general, physical activities, arts, reading, and practical work in the family all went ahead. Regarding academic studies, we did not do anything at kindergarten level. We focused on providing advice online for the parents.

For Classes 1-3, we recommended no online academic studies. Teachers made some audio recordings of rhymes, poems and songs and shared them with the parents, who were invited to learn them with their children at home.



In Classes 4-6, some schools gave two online classes each day. Some schools did not do this, but made online interview, or chatting with individual children once a week, but no lessons online.

In Classes 7 and 8, students of some schools had regular lessons each day. Some did project-based learning. Some schools in certain regions used public online learning course.

As for the high school, students had regular sessions of online learning, dealing with assignments. Also, they did some artistic work at home. Actually, they were quite busy!

In some schools, in Classes 9 and 10, teachers designed project groups with several students in each group. They reported and communicated with each other every day at 8am. Teachers gave about 40 minutes of online guidance. The whole class met through video conferences every Monday through the 'Zoom' platform.

In Chengdu Waldorf School, from February 17th on, teachers set up a daily working rhythm with children. This was mainly conducted by class teachers, with the support of subject teachers. Subject teachers mainly provided class teachers with video clips they made for the parents of the lower classes and the students of the upper classes. Support offerings included the steps and stages of a handcraft project, or a piece of music, or, tongue twisters in foreign languages.

Gradually, once the working rhythms were established, the class teachers invited subject teachers to work directly with parents and children online at certain times. This strengthened the connections between the subject teachers and the individual families and the children.

School will be re-open again in a week's time. The "online teaching" will end. But teachers will do follow-up research work based on their experiences and observations during the 6-week phase of working online with parents and children. Each school will need to consider a variety of factors such as regional health, curriculum continuity, individual class situations and individual student attitudes. In response, the teachers will need to find appropriate teaching methods and materials for their own classes.

Class teachers have played a big role in all of this. They maintained good communication with students and their families. They assigned homework tasks, with appropriate standards and criteria, including completion times. This information was designed to be shared with parents and students. In some schools, before implementation, each class teacher submitted the homework tasks and planning to the teachers' committee.

Subject teachers also had roles to play. It is difficult to teach some subjects online, like sports, arts, or indeed, the sciences which need laboratories and practical demonstrations. But they tried their best to do what they could.

My wife is a Class 4 teacher in a nearby public school. I often watch her teaching 'at home' in the morning. Her work is mostly to ask or answer questions online. Most of the time, if she wants to see the children's face, she can use 'Zoom'. General governmental teaching guidance is provided: not more than 20 minutes for one lesson; curriculum content is recorded by very experienced teachers for children to watch. But teachers can do teaching themselves as well. There are certain worksheets that the children must undertake. Besides teaching, my wife fills out many forms. This part is very heavy.

How is virtual teaching?

There is a debate in China about 'virtual' teaching. It is not just Waldorf colleagues who discuss and question about ('Ahrimanic') materialism and controlling the nature of the digital medium; the public does too. People worry about the negative effects of the internet: whether children should be free to access the internet; whether there should be limits placed on virtual games; the question of physical and psychological problems; the harmful and troubling information from cyberspace and so forth.

As an educator, I keep close eyes on these phenomena. I would say we must hold in mind the different development stages of the children and young people and we need to notice this very carefully. For many younger school children, it is better to say "foster good habits" rather than 'learn' material. And children need to fill the time well! But for upper classes, it is one way of learning, amongst others.

3. Preparation for School re-open again

After about two months of lock down, from 23rd of January to the end of March, this horrible virus is beginning to fade away. It seems that things are returning to normal. You can go with your friends to see peach flowers in the valley; children can play together with their friends in the park; you can have face-to-face meetings with your colleagues; traffic-jams have appeared; in the fields, you can hear the sounds of tractors; restaurants are opening their doors again and people can have decent food. But, as yet, no cinema, nor karaoke, no school. And of course, there are still masks everywhere.





Chengdu is the capital city of Sichuan province. The province is famous for hot food. Very recently, one of my friends, who is a principal at a very large school, participated in a high level, inner circle provincial meeting and told me that schools would re-open again on certain dates. Then, the provincial government announced that Class 12 students will be entered for the Gaokao, (the national exam, coming in July, one month postponed this year), would go back to school and face-to-face classes on 1st of April. Students in Class 9, who sit the standard tests at age 15 will return to school on 7th April and other classes of primary, middle and high school will go back on 13th of April. Adult training and education will not return until the 18th April. As for Kindergarten children, we are waiting for official notification.

The whole strategy for preparing to re-open school is step by step. There are lots of regulations to consider: temperature check equipment, sterilizing of materials, facial masks, of course and quarantine spaces; how to go to school, the seating formation, how to play and be social, how to eat and so on. It is complicated and there is much to plan. I think the government, the schools themselves, teachers and families all worry about the virus, but we do what we can do and how to do our best. It will work for sure.

Recently, we gathered a group of people to give readings and offer guidance to parents and children on how to read and what kind of books and stories to choose from. We have to provide food to nourish the soul. We got some very good feedback and we are happy. I told stories of ancient Greek myths online. The story of Epimetheus is probably familiar to many. Epimetheus, the person with hindsight, was the brother of Prometheus, the person of foresight. He was granted a beautiful wife from Zeus. Her name was Pandora. She opened her box and bad things came out: illness, pandemics, hatred, catastrophe. Then, the world became evil-like. Now, it is a really difficult time for the whole world. But one thing remains - Hope. Yes, we never ever lost our hope! And our hope will be fulfilled when we are fully conscious of the nature of reality, when we connect with each other and with the whole world.

Teaching off-line: Connecting differently in the time of Corona

Michaël Merle, Hillcrest, South Africa

This article is not aimed at making suggestions as to what to do if one chooses not to go on-line with Waldorf teaching in the time of Covid-19 social distancing. There are some very good suggestions that have been made in this regard by others in recent articles. This article is aimed at raising questions about whether one should go on-line with teaching and why Waldorf teachers and schools might choose to teach and keep contact with their children off-line.

With “stay at home” orders and lockdowns around the globe during this time of the worldwide effort to contain the spread of Covid-19 (Corona virus), many school children not in Waldorf schools are receiving instruction digitally (accessing their teachers and learning on a variety of on-line platforms).

How might a Waldorf school respond, given that the children and young people are “stranded” at home, as it were, and unable to come to school for a time?

Many prominent Waldorf teachers and parents have rightly identified that “Waldorf pedagogy ... is always based on two primary factors: the developmental tasks of the pupils in the given situation and the anthroposophical understandings of the developing human being” (Martyn Rawson, *Distance Learning from the perspective of Waldorf learning theory*, 02/04/2020, Pedagogical Section, Special issue 2: *Thoughts on Schooling in times of Corona*, 03/04/2020). Many have gone on to describe the conditions that would minimise the negative health implications of spending a lot of time on screen if one is going to teach digitally. These have included suggestions such as having short stretch breaks every 15 minutes, having a glass water on hand, establishing a reasonable distance from the screen and keeping the material presented simple and quickly accessible. They have also indicated how one might mitigate emotion disconnection with helpful suggestions for ways to share one’s location, the asking of caring questions and how to involve the participants (students) in a variety of engaged ways. All of these suggestions and proposed guidelines are useful if one is going to go on-line to teach (and may be of true value to all those teachers from non-Waldorf schools who are navigating the digital classroom).

But why decide to go on-line in the first place? The position is mostly explained in terms of the need to keep contact with students and provide routine, along with a feeling of safety and an assurance of care and concern from the teacher (a well loved and significant individual in the child’s life), as well as ensuring that good practice and new learning can continue to take place. It is stated that this is not undertaken due to pressure from parents, who are aware that students at other schools are receiving digital teaching and, therefore, expect the same for

their children, nor from the societal pressure to conform to what we are now conditioned to regard as at best “the lesser of two evils”: no schooling vs digital schooling.

Have we come to the conclusion that seeing the teacher on a screen and being instructed digitally, is after all, not so bad; and, if done well, not incompatible with the principles of Waldorf pedagogy?

Let us explore the idea that Waldorf pedagogy is based on the developmental stages of the child and young person in the light of an anthroposophical understanding of the human being and her/his development.

In a document that drew heavily from work done by the Pedagogical Section in Dornach: *Guidelines and Principles of the Waldorf Curriculum in South Africa* (South African Federation of Waldorf Schools, 2005), we read the following:

The basis of the Waldorf curriculum is the developing human being.

It is necessary for us to take our start from pedagogical principles that are rooted in what life in the present demands of us. Our children are to be educated to become people who are prepared for a life that corresponds to these demands, which are ones that anyone can support...

It is accepted that teenagers should have a comprehensive and well-balanced media curriculum. Young people do need to be prepared for the world such as it is. Adults negotiate and navigate media as part of their working and social life. As adults, video conferencing and computer-based work, social media platforms and film and television programmes form part of daily life. These have to be managed and interpreted by adults, who have the where-with-all to do so.

We also know that young children show a natural capacity and curiosity for modern forms of media. This aptitude, however, needs careful guidance and care, so that it is matched with cognition and an appropriate sense of responsibility and awareness of all the implications of media use. Hence, a good question might be: when is it appropriate to use digital media in order to teach, no matter the perceived urgency of the situation?

The *Guidelines and Principles of the Waldorf Curriculum in South Africa* document continues:

The term *Waldorf curriculum* implies a description of the whole teaching approach, method and content, what we teach and how it is taught. Curriculum means the whole educational approach.

How we choose to relay information, the medium we choose to connect with children and young people is important and needs to be fully evaluated before it is used.

We do not teach content, we use content to teach children: This principle indicates that subject matter is chosen because it enables children to have certain experiences that help them at a particular stage of their development. The important point is, that the learning areas help awaken new

abilities and levels of consciousness in the child that help structure inner development processes. The curriculum is designed to allow for a progressive growth of understanding and skills...

Learning is process-orientated and seeks to generate both purpose and development as the teacher works with the creativity within the child which forms, shapes and gives expression to who they are.

It may be very challenging to accomplish this in a digital classroom.

Long term health depends on children developing a sense of coherence. This has three components: the feeling of comprehensibility, the feeling of being able to manage in every situation and the feeling that everything has meaning. It is the task of education to foster the sense of coherence.

How do we effectively manage to foster coherence in a digital experience of learning, especially for children below the age of 12, for example, before a more precise experience of learning (working with a set of compasses, for example) has begun unfolding?

So much of our education, from early childhood all the way to Class 12 is based on face-to-face human interaction and engagement which works with a full twelve sense system. How much of this is not possible when working digitally? How good is it for us to use a digital form of communication with children and young people who have not yet developed the where-with-all to negotiate and navigate all the incoherence of digital media?

The following short exploration of the use of media: short, largely due to the urgency of communicating this, is based on the articles in the reader (booklet): *Media competency and Waldorf education*, a publication of Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen, August 2015, edited by Henning Kullack-Ublick). The interpretation and perspectives drawn from the articles are the writer's own.

Waldorf education places a particular value on children and adolescents being able to develop within realms of experience which take account of their physical, emotional and intellectual degree of maturity. Such a balancing act between doing things too early or too late demands that teachers keep the development of each individual child as well as the class community constantly in mind. (Henning Kullack-Ublick)

In the article: *Media education in the light of our understanding of the human being*, Kullack-Ublick points out the importance of real, physical experience for the early childhood years where children find themselves in their body and:

successively develops it as an instrument with which to experience the world and through which they can establish a *direct and sensory* [emphasis added] relationship with their environment.

It seems clear that very few have suggested any form of digital presentation or sharing with Waldorf kindergarten aged children.

Further on in the article the following point is made:

This signature of learning through discovery must underlie the curricula ... Here the consistent motif in the encounter with the world, constitutive in the first years of school, is that the children experience connections. Not individual chunks of knowledge but conceptual landscapes or chronological processes should be experienced and understood. When children in their second year at school draw reflections in a circle and in Class 12 mathematically investigate inversion in a circle, they encounter the same phenomenon through activity on the one hand and then cognitively on the other. If children in class 3 experience for a whole year what is involved in making a roll (of bread), from ploughing to baking, they will have a thoroughly real relationship with global economic questions, ecology, the chemical effect of fire and much else than if they had to do without such a basis in experience.

The question remains how digital teaching can provide such a hands-on experience and develop the qualities that Kullak-Ublick describes in terms of social relationships: attachment, relationship and encounter (with the teacher, the peer group, and the world)? Most of what can be achieved through a digital lesson is on screen instructions for activities to be completed remotely. It allows for individual chunks of knowledge to be shared. This clearly makes sense in terms of an intellectual soul approach to education (where the child is seen as needing to be shown information that is clearly explained in order for them to absorb it and hold it and then reflect it in good memory for a formal assessment).

If we believe that we are facilitating a learning process in a consciousness soul way, (where learning is a path of self-discovery and discovering for one's self through the facilitation of the teacher, whose method of teaching, and the content taught, is secondary to the way of being human that is displayed in the teacher's authority, mastery and process) then how is this effectively achieved digitally? The position that all this digital teaching is only temporary and to keep contact alive, ignores the usual long six week summer holiday in which children are encouraged to forget and to rest, and to return after this time to learning within the context of a classroom (indoor or outdoor) with a teacher and with the peer group. It also assumes that the "on-line" experience will be abandoned once lockdowns are lifted. This may not always be the case.

How do we account for the principal characteristic of all media which can be described as "fragmentation" or "atomisation"?

This signature of atomisation inherent to media technology also has an effect on content. It is a basic characteristic of all media types that they separate out and hold fast details

from living reality which thus lose their relationship with the totality of life. The media world surrounding us gives us a fragmented world of individual pieces of information which in themselves no longer have a context ... Facing this is the individual person who has to find their way around a world presented in this way. They need the ability to orientate themselves in this cosmos of fragmented scraps of information and embed them again in some kind of context. They can only do this if they have acquired a certain level of background knowledge. Education has to support the growing young person in this. It has to give them the ability once again to work out a context for themselves in a world of disjointed bits of information. (Dr Edwin Hübner, *Indirect and direct media education*).

In an earlier article (*Clarification of concepts*), Hübner writes,

If we try to determine phenomenologically what human beings encounter in their environment, there are essentially three key aspects:

- Writing
- Transmitted or preserved speech or music
- Still or moving images

The same content can be transmitted by all three forms of media but the activity of a person in engaging with each medium is qualitatively different ...

We therefore have to differentiate between two aspects when we look at the relationship between a person and media: on the one hand the transmitted content (ideas and thoughts) to which the individual directs their attention, and on the other hand the aspect of the activity, what people do physically while they are dealing with the technical artefact or device. People are engaged in different activities in relation to the same photographic image depending on whether they look at it on photographic paper, on a computer screen or projected on to a wall with a projector.

How we chose to present an image to a class or an individual student is not insignificant. Why do we teach blackboard drawing to class teachers when printed posters could convey the same image more efficiently? Why do we not use a well-illustrated textbook in our schools throughout the primary school years – and in some cases, successfully throughout the high school years? Do these questions have a role to play in our assessment of going digital in the teaching practice?

The article continues:

The way people interact with media therefore takes place in the context of the tension which exists between the way they relate with their ideas and with their activity to the respective medium.

A distinction has to be made between media type as a procedure, a technical process, and the "material" in which this process takes place. Text can be written on stone, a papyrus roll or paper, but it can also appear in print in

books, ebooks, newspapers, magazines or on the screen of a computer. Writing as a media type remains the same in all those instances. But the carrier by means of which it is made accessible to people is a different one in each case and people have a different relationship to the respective carrier with the whole of their sensory organism and that influences in a subtle way how people deal the media type of writing.

We therefore have to distinguish between three layers when looking at media:

1. Media content – what people take in as content (e.g. the content of a novel)
2. Media type – the process by which something is communicated or presented (text or sound)
3. Media carrier – the material basis on or within which the communication or presentational process occurs (book, ebook, smartphone, MP3 player, etc.).

...But education must not just be guided by the abilities which people need to select content, handle devices and deal with media types but also has to take the physical and emotional development of children and adolescents into account. That is why it is indispensable that reflections on media education are preceded by considerations of developmental psychology and our understanding of the human being.

Should our approach to digital teaching not also be preceded by an understanding of how digital platforms work and the way in which human beings (and children, in particular), respond to these platforms?

If we take our tasks seriously, is our consideration of how we engage with our pupils not of great significance?

Many wonderful ideas and suggestions abound at present on how to engage with children and avoid going on-line. How do we teach off-line at this time? This challenge raises serious questions about how we choose to engage with children. It would seem quite reasonable that in the third part of the third septennium (14 to 21), from around 18 years and eight months (Class 13, or the examination preparation year). At this stage we are focused on teaching thinking through thinking (before that we focus on thinking through willing, 14 years to just over 16 years, and then thinking through feeling, from over 16 years to 18 years), so presenting work in a digital format would be quite appropriate, as it would be for adult education.

It may be deemed that from Class 9 or 10, some form of digital teaching would be possible. This would follow the view of development from an anthroposophical perspective, but what are we achieving, in truth, doing it any earlier? These questions live for many Waldorf teachers who have worked hard at establishing a different connection to their children – and to the work they do. The connection we hold in relationship to the children through our meditations and through our clear and loving holding of them in good thought has real significance.

There is another very real problem of going on-line: it is not possible for certain schools whose impoverished circumstances have not been held them back for a truly rich and rewarding educational experience at the hand of dedicated and committed Waldorf teachers, to go digital. At this time how do they hold and carry their classes?

It is possible that this exploration of the choices we are now needing to make in regard to how we connect coherently with our students may be an over-reaction to the cautious and caring approach that has been suggested for Waldorf digital teaching and interaction. We do live in a world that has conditioned us to consider working from home (using a computer) as the new normal. How far are we from considering that all children need is a computer (and saving so much on building schools and organising school life) in order to be educated?

It is very important that I stress that keeping contact with students and finding interesting, engaging and appropriate work for the students is not in question. The question is what is the most appropriate media carrier to use for the media type and content we wish to share?

This perspective is incomplete and offered in good faith so as to raise the questions that live for many and that may reveal the essence of our understanding again, thereby strengthening a resolve to connect in line with a human approach.

To My Dearest Mirasol Class

Trina Galvez, Acacia Waldorf School, Manila, Philippines



Congratulations! I am not sure when we will have a chance to have your graduation so I decided to write my message to you now. I hope this letter finds you all well and in good health and spirits.

What a significant year to have completed your high school education. This is truly a historical year when the world literally stopped dead on its tracks. Who would have thought this would ever be possible? In a sense, the whole world accom-

panies you as you embark on a new beginning. This global lockdown has given us all a chance to pause and take stock, to reflect on our lives, our lifestyle, our priorities, our attitudes and how all this has had an impact on our world. And as we now slowly begin to reopen our doors to this fresh new page, we hope to bring to it renewed Courage to be more kind and human, an abundance of Gratitude for this beautiful life, for all that we have, for our families and loved ones, for all our opportunities and for all the people who have made these possible, for so much we have simply taken for granted. And most importantly, we will bring to this fresh new page genuine Awe and Wonder at the beauty of this world that has passed our senses unnoticed.

Your Senior year has been an amazing, turbulent but gratifying journey. It was not always easy. It was a year of tears, hurt, healing and growth. And it required forgiveness and often a call to look at the bigger picture. There were individual challenges as well as social challenges. It was LIFE to the fullest, and thankfully not without a profusion of fun, laughter and deep friendships that were forged.

Looking back, I am so grateful that you were able to experience the 2 major activities of your senior year -- the Senior Play and the Senior Project Presentation, memorable events that I hope you will carry with you as you look back to your years in high school. Both these activities mark your culminating year because they represent two essential aspects of our humanity. I liken these two aspects to the image of a cross, this ancient sacred symbol that has existed even way before Christianity, as we learned in our History through Art. It is made up of two straight lines that intersect in the center. One line is vertical with an up and down gesture and the other is horizontal with a gesture that points to two opposite sides.

The Senior Project Presentation was an activity that represented this vertical gesture, the quality of the "I", our Uprightness, with our ability to reach to the heavens with our feet grounded firmly on earth. For this project, you worked individually with your mentors to bring it to fruition. You walked up that "stage" on your own. You were grilled and had to defend your presentations on your own. With no one to fall back on, your "I" had to be fully awake and extremely alert. Through your uprightness, you were able to tap into a source from above, a source that provided you the clarity of thought you needed to present your projects. And they were all brilliant, unique and inspiring, with all your different styles.

The class play however had a totally different quality. You had to work as a team. This activity represented the horizontal gesture, like arms reaching out to the side, reaching out to your neighbor. This gesture is the Social aspect of our humanity. For the play, you were asked to quiet your personalities and sometimes silence your egos in order to be able to work harmoniously. It was a relationship of giving and taking, of patience, understanding and of constantly sensing the other person or people in the group. It was a beautiful though sometimes pain-

ful and confusing dance as the dance of relationships often is. This time, the success of the project hinged on the ability to work together as a social unit, to stay strong and focused not only for yourself but for the other. And no doubt, you were able to accomplish this. The memories of the residents of the Cloister and the Savages themselves are etched in my mind. You brought pure joy to people out of your working together.

So now, as you embark on a new phase of your life, I ask that you take the symbol of the cross as a reminder of these 2 movements. As upright individuals, we are grounded on earth with our head towards the heavens, beings that reach to the stars for Imagination, Intuition and Inspiration. But we also have the capacity to reach out to our neighbor and the world with outstretched arms. This is what it means to be truly human, to not just exist but to truly live a meaningful life. And our life will only find meaning when our connection to the heavens and all that we acquire translates to our capacity to Love on this earth. As we learned both in Parzival and in Faust, only Unconditional Love is the answer to our redemption. We cannot do it alone.

We are citizens of two worlds, the Spiritual world and the Physical world, and we have access to both. And the way to access one world is to go through the other.

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour."

I pray that your Waldorf Education of the head, heart and hands has prepared you for what I know will be an amazing journey. You are all talented, creative and determined individuals that have so much to bring to the world.

"Mira Sol!" Look to the Sun! It would be good to note that the Celtic Cross has a circle in the middle where the two lines, these two aspects of our humanity, intersect. This circle could signify our inner sun, our Heart, our Light within. Through the ups and downs that you may encounter in your lives, remember to keep looking to this Sun, this Light that we each carry, a light that we can share with the world, a light that provides guidance, positivity and optimism, hope and trust, knowing that you are never alone.

You have enriched our lives so much, Dearest Mirasol. We will truly miss you. Know that you will always have a place to come home to in Acacia.

All my love, Teacher Trina.





*Bali biodynamic seminar participants, October 2019.
Photo: Paul Ong*

BIODYNAMICS IN INDONESIA

BLOSSOMING IN BALI

By Octavius Tjiantoro

Through the boundless generosity and energy of Hans and Ineke Mulder of New Zealand, biodynamic agriculture has recently been introduced to the people of Bali, Indonesia.

Over two separate weekends in October 2019, Hans and Ineke gave biodynamic training to some 35 seminar attendees. These attendees included both local people and expatriates who live and work in Bali, as well as some people who travelled from other parts of Indonesia including Jakarta, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Balikpapan (in Borneo), Aceh and Batam (in Sumatra) and Surabaya (in East Java). There were also some people from Malaysia who came to the seminar so that they could meet with Hans and Ineke again, after having initially met them at a recent IPMT course. One person (an organic chef) from Curaçao in the West Indies, who was visiting Bali, joined the second half of the seminars.

We held the training at the residence of a Balinese family who have a background as traditional farmers. Their house was designed in the typical Balinese Hindu style as an almost compound-like family home, where the elderly parents stay together with all of their children, each with their own family in a separate housing unit in the same house compound. In

this kind of extended family housing compound, the family dedicates an area exclusively for making offerings and praying to the gods and the spirits of their ancestors on a daily basis.

Everyone who attended the seminar days seemed to enjoy the experience. They all came on time and stayed through to the end of each class. All participants were also actively engaged, during both the 'classroom' sessions and the practical work in the field.

During the four-day seminar, Hans and Ineke explained about Rudolf Steiner, some of his basic spiritual science principles and his biodynamic agriculture teachings. Under their guidance, there were lots of hands-on experiences in preparing BD 500, making a compost heap, using the biodynamic calendar and making tree paste. Hans and Ineke also gave information about how we can have more appreciation towards the various planetary forces and influences in our daily lives.

The people who attended the seminars were of very diverse backgrounds. There were farmers, university lecturers, permaculture garden workers, medical doctors, office workers, stay-at-home mothers and business people.

Here is some of the collected feedback from the seminar participants:

.....
"BD is a truly amazing invention that must be continuously learned and taught to others, in order to combat the crisis of mindset through tackling food supply and environmental issues. Problems with damaged environment and lack of food supply, plus contamination from pesticides, can result in people developing the wrong mindset. Therefore, we have high hopes for BD to become one of the solutions to these problems."

– **Mega Adnyana** | UNIVERSITY LECTURER IN AGRICULTURE IN BALI

.....

"The training was amazing and has truly further opened my mind. I'm very grateful to have been able to learn directly from the masters. I hope this kind of training will continue."

– **Adolf Hutajulu** | AVOCADO FARMER IN BATAM

.....

"Thank you so much Hans and Ineke. These two weekends have been precious moments for me personally. Thank you for stimulating our thoughts. Thank you for powerful quotes and the meaningful demonstrations. The sessions were delivered clearly, full of thoughts and flowing. You have successfully cultivated the potentials of the participants and made everyone share freely so it enriched the sessions."

– **Yemie** | BALIKPAPAN

.....

"This BD seminar is so beneficial for the community, to introduce an alternative way to farm and live life in good health. For those who already believe in organic, this was a great encouragement."

– **Thony** | FRUITARIAN AND ORGANIC GROWER IN BALI

.....

During and subsequent to the seminar weekends, we practiced making BD 500 at four locations in Bali, and at various other locations in Balikpapan, Bogor, Bandung, Jogjakarta and also Batam. This was to catch the rainy season, which traditionally starts in November. Apart from BD 500, at those locations we also have started making compost heaps and tree paste.

In order to help maintain and grow the momentum around the study of biodynamic agriculture, we have now created a number of social media avenues for people in Indonesia. This includes a WhatsApp group entitled Rudolf Steiner Indonesia, and a Facebook group page called Biodynamic Indonesia Organic Farming & Gardening, which is linked to the Instagram account **"biodynamic_id"**.

We have also started to network and communicate with the biodynamic group in Malaysia, and they recently came to Bogor in Indonesia to share about biodynamics.



*Seminar participants apply biodynamic tree paste.
Photo: Octavius Tjiantoro*

Beyond biodynamics, we are extending our network to the groups focusing on implementing Waldorf education in Indonesia. These groups are very active right now in Jakarta (Waldorf Jakarta Study Group), Bogor (Cipta Cendekia School), Bandung (Jagad Alit and Arunika Waldorf Schools) and also Bali (Madu Playgroup).

We all have high hopes to be able to continue our journey in learning and applying biodynamic agriculture principles in the communities in Indonesia, as well as supporting other initiatives such as Waldorf education, eurythmy, anthroposophical medicine, ethical banking and the knowledge and application of anthroposophy, as we are starting to really appreciate the benefits for ourselves and society in general.

About the author

Octavius Tjiantoro is an Indonesian-born Australian who now resides in Bali with his family. Trained in IT, project management and business transformation management, he has been working in corporate and government work environments throughout his professional life. A few years ago, an opportunity to tackle the issue of industrial waste management introduced him to the potential of organic waste recycling and the wonderful roles that worms and microbes perform to help create and maintain a balanced ecosystem. This then led to a discovery of biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner. After some initial searching on the Internet, Octavius eventually was introduced to New Zealand's Hans and Ineke Mulder through the Australian office for anthroposophy. Octavius is now keen to take every opportunity to continue to learn about biodynamics and anthroposophy in general, and to help spread the knowledge and assist others in Indonesia who have similar interests.

.....
He welcomes collaboration and can be contacted on
octavius.tjiantoro@gmail.com
.....



*Eager smiles as participants fill cow horns with manure.
Photo: Octavius Tjiantoro*

BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE IN INDONESIA: THEN AND NOW

By Hans van Florenstein Mulder

It is a great pleasure to write an article alongside the report of Octavius Tjiantoro on the two biodynamic seminars held in October 2019 in Bali.

I was approached by Octavius in August of 2019 with a request for information about anthroposophy and biodynamic agriculture in Indonesia. As this turned out to be a serious request, we started a correspondence, which resulted in Ineke and I planning a visit to Bali to give a seminar in biodynamic agriculture.

This was the third request for information from Indonesia in my anthroposophical working life. The first one was in 2002 with the request to come to Solo in Java to give seminars in biodynamic agriculture in four different villages. These seminars were well received, but because of my other commitments I could not follow them up further.

Then in 2008 came the second request: to give a seminar in Waldorf education in Jakarta.

This led to the opening of a Waldorf kindergarten in Jakarta, which became the impulse for further development of Waldorf education in Indonesia.

Through a contact at the seminar, I was approached by an NGO, the HDI Foundation, to design and bring into practice an

organic curriculum in vegetable growing in the Pangerasan Junior High School near Bogor, south of Jakarta.

We maintained contact with this school for many years.

In the meantime, much is developing not only in Bali – making BD 500, compost heaps, cow pat pits and tree pastes – but also in other parts of Indonesia, especially in West Java.

Waldorf schools in Bogor and Bandung, a state school in South Sumatra and a parent group in Balikpapan in Kalimantan (Borneo) also started to dig in cow horns with manure, making 500, compost heaps and cow pat pits.

The challenge we now face is to make the compost preparations 502 to 507 locally for Indonesia to become self-reliant. At present we have found a piece of land in the Bandung area, which is at an altitude of about 800 metres, to grow the preparation plants so that we can start to make the preparations.

Another impulse is to find ways to supply micro-funding for small farmers so that they can convert their small farms safely to organic/biodynamic farming.

We are now planning further introductory and deepening seminars, starting in April in Bali and West Java. It is most heartwarming to experience the interest in biodynamic agriculture not only from farmers but also from parents and students from schools.

Historical connections

Now with the renewed development of Waldorf education and biodynamic agriculture in Indonesia and an interest in anthroposophy, we have started to research what already happened around these initiatives before the Second World War in Indonesia.

With the help of a friend in the Netherlands, Arie Bogert, a retired Christian priest, we developed a picture of these initiatives in Indonesia. I thought it relevant to share some of this information in this article.

Both Arie Bogert and I had our roots in Indonesia. I was born in Medan, Sumatra and grew up in Indonesia. I lived in Bali for three years, until my 12th year, when my family decided to go back to the Netherlands.

The two main results of Arie Bogert's research from the newsletters of the Anthroposophical Society in the Netherlands on biodynamic agriculture are the following.

First, Dr Lily Kolisko, the author of *Agriculture of Tomorrow*, was invited by the members of the anthroposophical group in Bandung to come to Indonesia to give lectures on her work in 1938. At that time she worked at the biological research centre in London. The title of the lecture she gave was "Wirkung kleinster Entitäten" ("The Effect of Smallest Entities"). The members, especially the pharmacists amongst the audience, asked her to give more lectures arising from this topic. So other lectures were on "The Sun and Gold", and the influence of the moon on the growth of plants. She also gave talks for



*Hans lectures on biodynamic principles. A traditional Balinese family compound provided the site for the seminars.
Photo: Octavius Tjiantoro*

the memorial days of the birth and death of Rudolf Steiner. She held lectures in Bandung, Klaten, Bogor and Jakarta.

The second piece of information that Arie found was about a coffee plantation called Soember Bopong in East Java in 1938.

J Koster, the administrator of this plantation, had been asked by the directors of the plantation to attend a lecture by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer while on leave in the Netherlands in 1936. On his return, his directors encouraged him to start trials, composting all the waste of the coffee factory.

A shed was built with five compartments, and compost was made with the waste, grass and other green material. Manure had to be brought in. After 14 days the compost preparations were added, and a month later the heap was turned into the second compartment. Then a new heap was set up in the first compartment.

The advice Koster gave in 1938 to the directors from this trial was: "If money is available for fertiliser, it is much better to use compost than artificial fertiliser. Compost is much better for the soil and far more cost effective." He also advised bringing some cows into the plantation.

About the author

Born in Indonesia in 1939 and educated in the Netherlands, Hans van Florenstein Mulder has been involved with Waldorf education, biodynamic agriculture and anthroposophy, along with his wife Ineke, for about 45 years. They moved to New Zealand in 1972.

Hans has actively supported the growth of Waldorf education, biodynamic agriculture and Goethean science in the Asia-Pacific region for about 30 years. Hans was a cofounder of the first Waldorf high school in New Zealand, as a science and horticulture teacher. In 1976 the family started the Beehive Gardens in Hastings, one of the first three Demeter farms in New Zealand. He was a council member of the New Zealand Biodynamic Association during the 1980s and 1990s during the tremendous growth of organic/biodynamic agriculture in New Zealand and was one of the initiative-takers and lecturers in the one-year biodynamic agriculture diploma in 1990 at Taruna College in Havelock North. From 1992 to 2006 he was General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand. Since 2006 he has been the representative of the General Anthroposophical Society in Asia.

The Value of Hands-On Art in Waldorf High Schools

Carolyn Siegel, Mountain View, California, USA

[First printed in *Waldorf Today* online, May 11, 2020]



Summerfield Waldorf School

In the heart of technology-rich Silicon Valley, some prospective parents wonder why Waldorf students are required to take four years of art classes while, in contrast, California public high school students are required to have only one year of art to graduate. Parents whose children have been in Waldorf education from kindergarten through eighth grade generally do not question the value of art in their children's elementary and middle school education.

However, when they are looking at high schools for their teens, even some of these long-term Waldorf parents question why Waldorf high schools continue to allot so much time to the arts instead of giving more hours over to academic subjects, especially when their students are competing with mainstream schools that require far fewer art classes to graduate and that offer Advanced Placement and Honors classes, the academic pathway considered in the region by many to be the main vehicle for preparing their children for college entrance exams specifically and for college success in general.

So, why do Waldorf high school students take four years of art, and what do they gain from it?

In years gone by when more of us lived on farms than do now, we survived on what our hands could make. We learned



Sebastopol Charter School

how to milk cows, shear sheep, plant crops, and bake bread. Initially we would watch others, try out what we saw, and learn from our mistakes until we succeeded. Our endeavors connected us to the processes and environment surrounding us. Learning by doing is something we depended upon for our survival for most of our human existence.

Hands-on experience gives us a certain kind of knowledge of the world, one from hand-smarts. Our hands and brain interrelate and intercommunicate. Our brain instructs our hands, and in turn, what our hands explore teaches our brain. In so doing, our brain networks become more robust. Innovation arises from the evolving interrelationship of the brain and hands while interacting with three-dimensional materials. How often have you been doing something with your hands when something unexpected happened, and you figured out how to do it better or differently?

When we use a tool, our brain maps that usage as if the tool is part of our body. Students learn to use a variety of tools within any single art class, the breadth of tool knowledge multiplying over the number of classes taken. The brain codes tools as if they were parts of the body, which essentially integrates the learning required in tool usage into the physiology of the student, strengthening “widely distributed, yet highly interactive, (brain cell) networks [that also stimulate] social, cognitive, perceptual, and motor processes.”¹



Waldorf School of the Peninsula

Neurophysiologist Professor Matti Bergström remarked that children can become “finger blind” when they haven’t had adequate and varied hands-on experiences that grow and enrich the brain’s sensory networks.² In finger blindness, essentially the fingers and brain forget how to coordinate movement together.

I have seen this with the occasional student, often one whose main extracurricular activity was being on the computer. These students’ fingers would remain straight (as in typing) when attempting to make a sphere. It would be as if they had forgotten how to make their fingers curl. I would sometimes (with their permission) literally curl their fingers to create a hollow in their palms, forming a concave space in

which a convex sphere could be sculpted. By the time these students became seniors, they had more agility in the use of their fingers and often more flexibility in their thinking as well.

How students approach the medium and, more importantly, how they respond to problems they encounter in working with the medium shows them a mirror vis-à-vis how they respond to problems in life. How do they deal with and approach new situations that can be full of unknowns, excitement, uncertainty, frustration, and that ask them to show themselves, their ideas, and creativity for others to see?

In sculpture classes, students come up against internal challenges as they wrestle with the challenges of working the material. “What are the limits of this material? What are my own limits? Where and how can I push the boundary (of the material...and of myself); when and how do I step back and re-group?” When the clay slumps, it is a metaphor for when the student slumps or falls in life; in supporting the clay, they get the experience of shoring something up; on some level, they learn that they, too, can pull themselves back up and try again in life.



Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School

One student, who was a self-described perfectionist, went too far in hollowing her clay portrait, resulting in the too-thin walls collapsing; this very visible failure felt like a disaster to her. After showing her how to reinforce and repair her sculpture, her artwork successfully was fired. A few years after she graduated, she told me that she kept the clay portrait in a place where she could see it every day. Whenever she felt overwhelmed, she would look at her sculpture and remember that “some mistakes really can be fixed.” This was a life-changing realization for her.

Working with a material requires a working dialogue between the student and the sculpture. As a result, a relationship with the art piece is formed as the art itself is created. Decisions made in its creation exercise judgment, action, and a type of morality. When students follow the natural laws of the medium, they feel the satisfaction gained from working in harmony with the material, with working with its ways

rather than against them. In going against the material, they either learn to deal with any adverse consequences for not abiding by the materials’ natural laws or, when possible, they learn to repair the result of their actions and adjust their ways in working the materials and tools.



Waldorfschule Wahlwies, Germany

In this way, the art itself teaches them to feel the right and wrong inherent in their relationship with the material. Morality and ethics are felt. The natural laws inherent in each art form teach through experience and natural consequences a standard of ethics—right/wrong; too little/too much, action/patience. Students learn to see when something is failing and to know that this is part of the process of creating and living. By facing their mistakes, they develop stronger capabilities to solve problems, to be resilient and confident in their capacity to meet and handle what they encounter. They become stronger, more upright individuals in relationship to others and to situational dynamics in their lives. Doing art transforms us; even simply striving to make art changes us.

As our hands are generally our means of reaching out to the world, sculptural arts give students the opportunity to create art that they can literally get their hands around. The more we experience the world through our hands, i.e., the more we get involved with manipulating actual objects of our world to learn texture, weight, process, and consequence, the more connected we feel to the world.

In transforming three-dimensional raw matter into a sculpted, finished form, students learn that they can literally take a part of the world and change it, an experience that gives them a sense of empowerment that they can transform not only themselves but become active participants in their lives. They feel inspired, think in an integrative way, and act with intention. This “can do” attitude allows them to manifest what they imagine and to believe that they can make a difference in the world. Through art, students make sense of the world; through making art, students make sense of themselves. This is accomplished not by the type of art but by the act of art making.

1 Sigman, Aric. (2008). Practically minded—The benefits and mechanisms associated with a craft- based curriculum. Stroud, England: Ruskin Mill Educational Trust.
 2 Stowe, D. (2007, April 24). Wisdom of the hands. Retrieved from <http://wisdomofhands.blogspot.com/2007/04/neurophysiologist-professor-matti.html>

Carolyn Siegel teaches sculptural arts at the Waldorf School of the Peninsula high school in Mountain View, California. This article was excerpted from her master's thesis *Learning by Making: The Value of Sculptural Arts in Waldorf High Schools*.



End the Lockdown

Nicanor Perlas, Iloilo, Philippines

You may wish to take a look at this article I just wrote. It summarizes what our team has learned in the past 4 months with the COVID-19 challenge. It also provides some useful suggestions on what we can do on an individual basis. Hopefully it will also be useful for your situation.

<https://covidcalltohumanity.org/nicanor-perlas-end-the-lockdowns-stop-it-outside-by-ending-the-lockdowns-inside-us/>

This is the link that would direct you to the references used for the overview article. There are dozens of them selected out of hundreds through the months.

<https://covidcalltohumanity.org/science-has-spoken-end-the-lockdown/>

For more, you may wish to take a look at our website:
www.covidcalltohumanity.org



NEWS

The Jubilee Years:

2021: Weleda and Eurythmy Therapy.

2022: Christian Community (consecration, synod, conference); East-West Congress 4 - 7 June in Vienna; New Year's Eve burning of the first Goetheanum (A chain of lights will be wrapped around the Goetheanum on New Year's Eve as a symbol not of the fire but of resurrection forces.)

2023: Christmas Conference, re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science

2024: Pastoral Medicine; BD Agriculture; Special Education; Youth Course; Establishment of the First Class with Class Lessons

2025: Anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's death, March 30.



Some Anthroposophical Newsletters and Websites

Anthroposophy Worldwide

<http://www.goetheanum.org/Newsletter.aw.0.html?&L=1>

News Network Anthroposophy

nna-news.org.

Being Human

info@anthroposophy.org

Journal for Steiner/Waldorf Education

journalwe@gmail.com

New View

http://www.newview.org.uk/new_view.htm

Scope

scope@anthroposophy.org.nz

International Association of Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education

<https://www.iaswece.org/iaswece-newsletter/>

The Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i;

website with back issues of *Pacifica Journal* at:

www.anthrohawaii.org



**This Friday, September 18th at 7 p.m. MT
we will be speaking with Van James**

<https://zoom.us/j/294724669>

"The Form of a Time Spirit"

This presentation will explore how we picture a Time Spirit, a Seasonal Influencer, an Archangel-Archai. How has history experienced and pictured the Archangel Michael and how do we develop an exact imagination of a spiritual being, the Spirit of our Time?

Van James, is an artist, author and educator. He is chair of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i, editor of Pacifica Journal, and a guest instructor at numerous colleges and Steiner-Waldorf training centers throughout Asia and the Pacific. He is an award winning author of several books on art and culture including Ancient Sites of O'ahu, Ancient Sites of Hawai'i, Ancient Sites of Maui, Moloka'i and Lana'i, Ancient Sites of Kaua'i, Spirit and Art: Pictures of the Transformation of Consciousness, The Secret Language of Form: Visual Meaning in Art and Nature, Drawing with Hand, Head and Heart, and Painting with Hand, Head and Heart. He has been a teaching artist in Hawai'i for over thirty-five years and is a founding faculty member of the Honolulu Waldorf High School. He holds a BFA in drawing and painting from the San Francisco Art Institute, and diplomas from Emerson College, England, and the Goetheanum School of Painting in Switzerland. He travels widely as an advocate for the arts and lives in Honolulu with his wife.

We look forward to seeing you on Friday shortly before 7 PM (Mountain time.) Here is the link to our Anthroposophical Café and all you need to do to join us is click on it: <https://zoom.us/j/294724669>

Upcoming Guest Speaker:

9/25 - Lelan Harris
10/2 - Sanford Miller
10/9 - Betty Staley
10/16 - Angela Foster & Jordan Walker
10/23 - Ina Jaenig

Warmly,
Karen van Vuuren
Tom Altgelt
Jamie York
and our growing circle of Café Friends





Excellent New Video - Now Available!

StarWisdom at StarHouse

Brian Gray
David Tresemer
Robert Schiappacasse

Hypothesis: “Your first breath was not random....”

Astrology as a tool can affirm the wisdom in one’s biography - revealing the mysteries that weave together the triumphs and tragedies that belong to each individual. This video is for everyone seeking to understand one’s personal biography in the context of world events through anthroposophic astrology (astrosophy).

In this video, you will learn:

- How celestial dynamics can influence your life – the beings in the heavens who have supported you since conception.
- How to interpret the chart of your first in-breath (birth).
- The foundations of western anthroposophic sidereal astrology (astrosophy).
- How to dialog with mainstream science in an evaluation of astrology.

Brian Gray

Teacher at Rudolf Steiner College for 38 years, author of star wisdom articles (Journal for Star Wisdom), and presenter of many anthroposophy courses with Wise Cosmos Educational Initiative.

Robert Schiappacasse

Involved for many years in Waldorf education, author of star wisdom articles (Journal for Star Wisdom), and co-author of the book Star Wisdom & Rudolf Steiner.

David Tresemer, PhD

Founder of StarHouse, author of star wisdom articles (Journal for Star Wisdom and other books), and co-author of Star Wisdom & Rudolf Steiner.

Cost: \$30 for one session (1 hour 40 minutes)

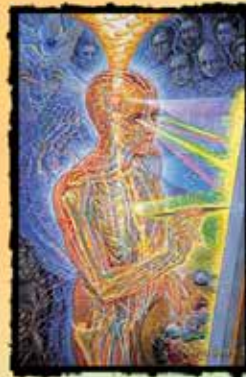
Registration available through the WiseCosmos.org website.



NURTURER'S STUDIO

Presents Masterclass 1.2

Picturing the Future of Humanity: Artistic Exercises for Nurturing the Soul



with **Van James**

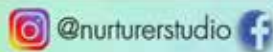
Artist, Author, Educator
Hawaii, USA

Saturday, September 26, 2020
9:30 AM - 12:00 PM Indian Standard Time

Continuing our exploration of human transformation through Art we will build on our previous session (Masterclass #1 on 'Pictures of the Transformation of Humanity: Art as a Language of Human Development'). We will take it further and view more recent pictures of our human development, engage in more artistic activities, have breakout sessions and conversations.

This two-and-a-half hour online session will incorporate figure drawing in a very elementary manner for all levels of beginners, nurturers, and accomplished artists. We will render the human figure from two different developmental perspectives using this experience as a basis for further visual artistic studies into human development.

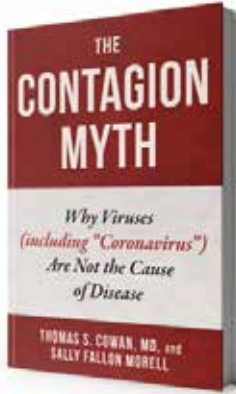
Visit: nurturerstudio.com/masterclass-1-2-van-james to Register!



+91-9849018769



Books



Dear friends,

We are living in an unprecedented and perilous time in history. Never before that I know of has the full fury and power of “science,” “medicine” and technology been unleashed to control the lives of so many people. As many of you know, I have somewhat reluctantly been thrust into a role of examining the facts behind the “science” and “medicine” surrounding the Covid-19 crisis. This examination has been the intellectual challenge of my life. Although I don’t pretend I have all the answers or the full truth, I do believe I have something important to contribute.

It is in that spirit of contribution that some months ago my dear friend and colleague Sally Fallon Morell and I decided to write a book detailing the history of the real science of contagious disease, including Covid-19. It will be published September 15. What we found might be shocking and even hard to fathom for many, but I can assure you that our findings are based on meticulous research, not the dogma of germ theory. We want the information in this book to become part of an open, honest, public debate, an integral part of a serious and scientific dialogue.



To that end, we are asking everyone we know to purchase a copy of our book, [The Contagion Myth](#). Read it yourself, read it again, send me your feedback, comments and questions. Give a copy to your friends, family members, health-care providers and government officials. I will continue to speak out, but I need your help.

We are at a turning point in history. Like the mythical Phoenix, we can rise up and create a more beautiful world, one based in trust, compassion, mutual aid and a profound connection to the needs of all life. But, this more beautiful future will be born only from an intentional and collective effort to see and think clearly and to act with confidence and courage.

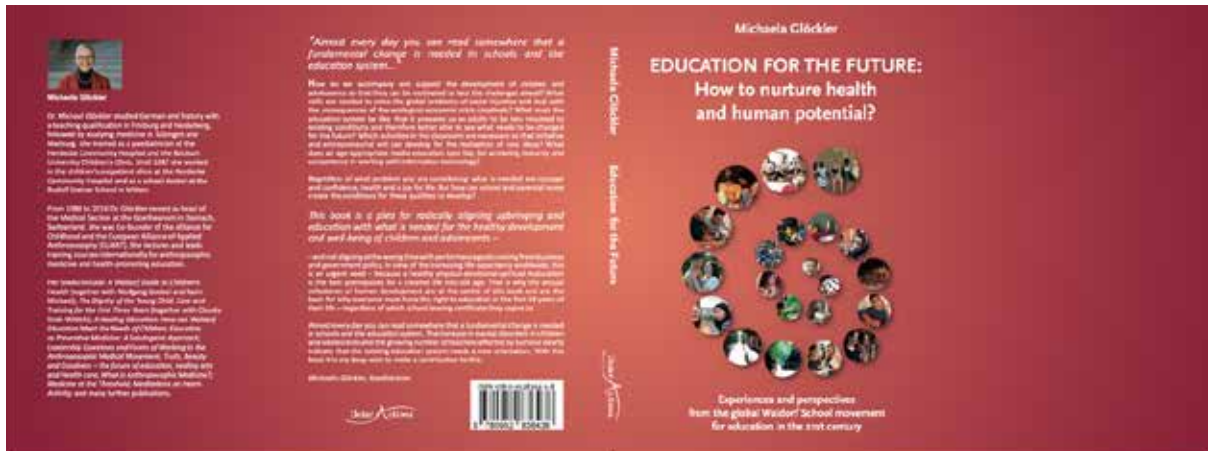
Join me, please.

All the best,
Tom

Education for the Future: How to Nurture Health and Human Potential

Michael Glockler

"This book is a plea for radically aligning upbringing and education with what is needed for the healthy development and well-being of children and adolescents — and not aligning at the wrong time with performance goals coming from business and government policy. In view of the increasing life expectancy worldwide, this is an urgent need — because a healthy physical-emotional-spiritual maturation is the best prerequisite for a creative life into old age. That is why the annual milestones of human development are at the center of this book and are the basis for why everyone must have the right to education in the first 18 years of their life — regardless of which school-leaving certificate they aspire to."



Another Michaela Glockler interview:

<https://steiner.edu/an-attempt-toward-healing-a-talk-by-michaela-glockler/>

Michaelmas Festival:

‘Courage Born of Wisdom’

Wednesday 23 September 2020 – On ZOOM – 7:15 pm CDT – 8:30 pm

CRC performs a telling of a tale from ancient Chaldea where EA gives birth to Marduk, precursor to Michael.

then **“Wisdom Built herself a house”**...7 members of the various sections of the Anthroposophical Society will stand as Wisdom’s **7 Pillars** to share how Courage was born from Wisdom leading to their work in the world.

with a closing about the connection between Michael,

The Christ & Anthroposophia!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82070460900>

Meeting ID: 820 7046 0900

If you have questions, please contact Alberto Loya aloyavaca@utexas.edu





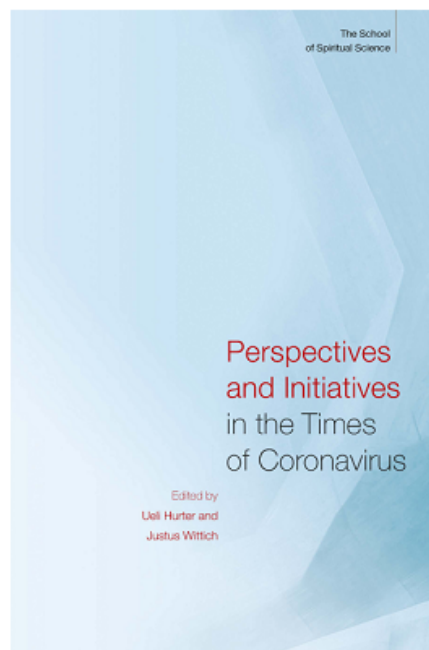
The School of Spiritual Science
Edited by Ueli Hurter and Justus Wittich

Perspectives and Initiatives *in the Times of Coronavirus*

The School of Spiritual Science, with its headquarters at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, has eleven sections that are active worldwide in research, development, teaching and the practical implementation of research results. During the early stages of the Corona pandemic of 2020, the sections of the School made individual contributions to the crisis in the form of sixteen essays that offer insights, perspectives and approaches to tackling the challenges of Coronavirus through spiritual-scientific knowledge and practice.

The work of each of the School's sections seeks to develop anthroposophy – as founded by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) – in a contemporary context through the core disciplines of general anthroposophy, medicine, agriculture, pedagogy, natural science, mathematics and astronomy, literary and visual arts and humanities, performing arts and youth work.

The featured essays include: Creating Spaces of Inner Freedom – Training Approaches in Times of Uncertainty and Fear; The Hidden Sun – Reality, Language and Art in Corona Times; Consequences of COVID-19 – Perspectives of Anthroposophic Medicine; Aspects of Epidemic Infectious Diseases in Rudolf Steiner's Work; Challenges and Perspectives of the Corona Crisis in the Agricultural and Food Industry; Corona and Biodynamic Agriculture; Our Relationship with Animals; The Part and the Whole – On the Cognitive Approach of Anthroposophical Natural Science; Comparing the Constellations of the Corona Pandemic and the Spanish Flu; Aspects of Dealing with the Corona Crisis for Youth; 'Crisis Implies that it's Unclear ... as to What, How, Why and by Whom Things Need to be Done'; Education in Times of Corona; Understanding History from the Future – Crisis as Opportunity; Social Challenges and Impulses of the COVID-19 Pandemic; Consequences of COVID-19 – The Perspective of Anthroposophic Curative Education, Social Pedagogy, Social Therapy and Inclusive Social Development; A Medicalized Society?



04 August 2020

Trans. by C. Howard

RSP

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Painting with Hand, Head and Heart: A Natural Approach to Learning the Art of Painting

by Van James

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Self-published, ISBN: 978-164786858-1



Available from BookBaby.com and Amazon.com for US\$45.

Available from pacificajournal@gmail.com in US only for \$35 (includes shipping, handling and tax).

Comments about *Painting with Hand, Head and Heart*:

Even a cursory spin through this eloquent and elegant book reveals two salient strengths of its author. The one is Van James' ability to attend to the developmental nature not only of the child but of the artistic process itself. A fruit tree, an elephant, even the human form itself grows before your very eyes from an initial wet blob of color into an articulated living being. In aesthetic and yet practical steps, he shows how scenes painted wet-on-wet can be made to come alive as though you were giving birth to them yourself — which of course you are, if you are creating them artistically.

The other strength is Van James' ability to weave together into a seamless narrative the timeless wisdom and the insights of ancient philosophers with the latest neurological research. Through his skillful juxtaposition of quotations and empirical research, we learn to deepen our understanding of the multiple layers of the creative human being. Only an artist such as Van James could blend these contrary elements without turning them into a muddy soup.

--Douglas Gerwin, Executive Director of Center for Anthroposophy and of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education

Reading this book is like sitting at the foot of a master who shares his life experience, insights, and knowledge. Yet, it is so accessible that I wanted to take a brush, paint, and paper and work my way through the chapters. James not only makes the case for the importance of painting and color in the learning process, but he characterizes child development, Waldorf curriculum, Rudolf Steiner's depth of understanding, and the role of creativity in being human. In addition to these broad topics, James also clarifies misunderstandings in teaching painting from kindergarten through high school, from wet and dry painting to blackboard drawing. This is an essential book for every teacher to have before stepping into the classroom, as well as a treasured gift for anyone who wants to enter the creative process through color and form.

--Betty Staley, former president of Rudolf Steiner College, Waldorf educator, author, and lecturer



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EduCareDo
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based on the work of Rudolf Steiner

Living Speech

September 12th - 6:00pm to 7:30pm New York/Eastern Daylight Time (USA)

September 13th - 8:00am to 9:30am Sydney/Eastern Standard Time (AUS)

During this webinar, we will discuss and engage in exercises to better understand the principles of living speech. Through working with speech it is possible to strengthen our connection with the nourishing forces that wish to participate in the living word.

“We must fill our souls with what can really inspire us when we speak. We must find a way to make the heart speak through the lips. We must find a way to penetrate the words with our entire being.” (Rudolf Steiner, from Empty Phrase to Living Word)

\$20 AUD. Free to current or past participants in the Speech and Drama as Living Arts webinar.

EduCareDo webinars are open to all, and complimentary for all students of the specific EduCareDo course of which a webinar is a part. The cost is \$20AUD (under \$15USD) for all others (refundable if you join that specific distance-learning course after the webinar). *Free registration is available to anyone that requires it, please contact us.* www.educaredo.org

Other Upcoming Webinars

The Fourfold Nature of Love - with Lisa Romero

24 Oct 2020

Working with Polarities in Social Life - with Seth Jordan

21 Nov 2020

Experiencing Plant Development - with Anthony Mecca

4 Dec 2020



Please take a look at the following article on:

The Four-Fold Imagination [of William Blake—appropriate to our time]

by Mark Vernon, in Aeon (online) Magazine, September 2020:

<https://aeon.co/essays/what-we-can-learn-from-william-blakes-visionary-imagination>

Inner Work Path

IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOSOPHY

Advent and the Spiritual Beings of Love

**A series of gatherings over Advent
with Lisa Romero**

The Christmas festival is not only a time to enter into the mysteries of the returning, strengthening light, but also the mysteries of awakening, growing love. During Advent we will be preparing towards entering into the school of love that opens its doors in this season. Through meeting weekly with each of the four spiritual forces of love in the Christmas preparation, we can develop a greater relationship towards love in life and set the ground for growing love in the coming year. Within the human heart the physical, spiritual human being unites in the deepest way. The four-fold nature of love will be deepened in the four gatherings of Advent.

SYDNEY time: Sundays at 8am Nov 29 Dec 6, Dec 13, Dec 20

NEW YORK time : Saturdays at 4pm Nov 28, Dec 5, 12 and 19

LONDON time : Saturdays at 9pm Nov 28, Dec 5, 12 and 19

Fee for all sessions: \$100 AUD - [Register here](#)

This will be an interactive international online gathering ideally engaged with at the live event, but a recording will be made available to all registrants. For registrants of this course the EduCareDo October webinar '[The Four Fold Nature of Love](#)' is a complimentary introduction.

For more upcoming events with Lisa Romero visit:

<https://www.innerworkpath.com/events>

This event is sponsored by [EduCareDo](#)





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Pacifica Journal
is published as a biannual e-newsletter by the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i.

Please send subscriptions, donations, inquiries, announcements and submissions to:

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Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i
2514 Alaula Way
Honolulu, HI 96822 USA
pacificajournal@gmail.com

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Assistant Editor.....Bonnie Ozaki James
Production.....Julian Sydow



Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i

Pacifica Journal

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Now it has become necessary to be awakened not just by Nature, but by the human beings with whom we are karmically connected and whom we want to seek.

--RUDOLF STEINER