

■ ANTHROPOSOLOGY IN THE WORLD

Norway and Canada: Courses in the "School of Nature"

The Longing of Nature

An idea long ago led to a movement that has been taken up in various countries: "The School of Nature" (Anthroposophy Worldwide, No. 8/2004, page 12). Hannes Weigert, the leader of the project, offers an insight into what the participants in the 2006 course in Fyresdal (Norway) and Vancouver (Canada) experienced in the realms of nature.



Nature: An existence with human participation (Photo: The Creative Observer course in Fyresdal)

Squamish River. Waiting on the riverbank. We gaze across the water. There is a rushing sound that fills our ears, and Seislom's song and the beating of the drum. Then we move downstream in the boat. Silently we see trees, stones, mountains glide by. Later a participant describes how he felt himself being watched ("witnessed"). Another felt an expectant mood in nature. Expectation, stillness, silence. Nature can be an idea, a being, or a landscape.

In Canada, *nature* also means *wilderness*, indicates an unspoiled state. Then, too, it means the dream of an all-embracing, innocent existence in which the human being shares, although it remains unchanged by him. Not endangered by him. It seems that nature is out there, outside of me. And my longing is turned to entering it.

To Be at the Heart of Things

The interior of nature is the inner world of the human being. "We have torn ourselves away from nature; but we must have taken something along with us in our being. We have to look for this being of nature in us; then we will once again find the connection. This is missing in dualism. It thinks of what is within the human being

as a spiritual essence entirely foreign to nature, and it makes an attempt to couple this being to nature. It is no wonder that dualism can not find the link. We will not be able to find nature outside us unless we first recognize it in us. The element that is like nature within us will be our guide," writes Rudolf Steiner in the *Philosophy of Freedom* (GA 4).

The Flowers Begin to Speak

In Norwegian, *innerst inne* means something like "in the inmost interior," "at the heart of things." The writer Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson once used the expression in a story in which an artist returns to Norway after being gone for many years. One St. John's Day at the end of the nineteenth century she immerses herself in the nature she had known in her childhood. The flowers lead her deeper and deeper into the interior of the forest. Once there—*innerst inne*, within herself, within the forest—the flowers begin to speak. A new language.

Back amid the landscape of her childhood—the primeval forests of British Columbia, which she had never yet painted—the artist Emily Carr looked for a form of expression that was appropriate both for her and for nature. In *Growing Pains*

she wrote: "I went...to the deep quiet woods near home where I sat staring, staring, staring—half lost, learning a new language.... Slowly, slowly I began to put feeble scratchings and smudges of paint onto my paper, returning home disheartened, wondering, waiting for the woods to say something to me personally. Until they did, what could I say?"

Waiting for the woods. Does nature also have a longing. Is it nature that brings forth its longing in me. Does it want to be seen? Does it hope to create its image through me? Does it allow me to penetrate its countenance?

Inner and Outer Image Brought Together

"The Creative Observer." We paint colors with Patrick Müllerschön. They move together, attract one another, flow together, separate. All this seems to take place before my eyes, brought forth out of me. Lilac, red, yellow and blue, lilac: tension and release, rising and falling, sunrise and sunset, self-made, inspired by Rudolf Steiner's *Moods of Nature* (K 54.1)

We move in the landscape with Michael Seddon and Hans-Christian Zehnter, looking at first; then we fell a few trees; look again. We create landscape when we try to bring the inner image together with the outer one. We are trying to do what Paul Cézanne probably meant when he answered the question of what painting was by looking silently at his two hands as he interlaced his fingers with a slow movement.

Now it is night, and I am 10,000 meters above Greenland. I can peer out through the small cabin window. Slow and pulsating, a gigantic cloud of light moves—we could say, weaves—in the constellation of the Big Dipper. I press my nose closer to the windowpane. For a few moments I am out there with my eyes. I see how the northern lights sound forth. Then I turn away. My gaze is now attracted to the moving images on the screens placed before me at eye level. And the voices in my earphones. We approach Frankfurt am Main (Germany) and the sunrise. | *Hannes Weigert, Norway*

"Nature Spirits" from June 30–July 8, 2007 in Fyresdal, Norway. With (among others) Dorian Schmidt and Florian Roder; "Days on Earth" from August 11–18, 2007 at the Goetheanum. Information available at: www.schoolofnature.org