



# ATHENA

Association for Therapeutic Eurythmy in North America

APRIL 2007



Dear Members and Friends,

This issue of ATHENA opens with the Abstract from a four-year study, "Anthroposophic Therapy for Chronic Depression" which was initiated by a German health insurance company and in which more than half of the evaluated patients improved at least 50%.

From Germany, as well, we were graced by a visit during the therapeutic eurythmy graduation of Angelika Jaschke, who responding to questions from the Board stressed the need to document and evaluate our therapy sessions to be intelligible to any medical doctor. Alicia Landman-Reiner contributes some ideas toward this in the "Dialogue Corner."

Presently, there is a movement toward raising the standards of eurythmy therapy by including it in a Master's Degree program. This is, in part, a response to the European Union which is trying to abolish alternative medical care and regulate medicine and treatment among its member states. There are millions of consumers of Anthroposophical products and services who by their signatures (see insert) can make a difference. "One million signatures by summer 2007," is Michaela Glockler's goal for the first stage. (see ELIANT-"More Political Weight").

Last and best, we had the wonderful therapeutic eurythmy graduation March 1 in Camphill Village, Copake, New York. See the 12 happy faces on Page 11. One of their projects is being presented herein - with hopefully, more to come.

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Front cover: *This is the crystal cave of Gieants found in the Naica Mine, Chihuahua, Mexico. These are Selenite crystals (gypsum) and are the largest crystals ever discovered. They are 1000 feet down in a limestone host rock where they are mining for lead zinc and silver. These crystals were formed by hydrothermal fluids emanating from the magma chambers below. The miners had to drill through the Niaca fault, which they were worried would flood the mine, and this is what they discovered. This mine also contains the Cave of Swords, another collection of large gypsum crystals.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Articles	Page
Chronic Depression Abstract and Charts	3
Angelika Jaschke Visit Jeanne Simon-MacDonald and Linda DeRis	5
Continuing Conversation Kristen Hawkins	6
The Four Elements and Therapeutic Eurythmy Wendalyn Meyenfeldt	7
Dialogue Corner Alicia Landman-Reiner, MD Therapeutic eurythmy graduate photo	11
Board of Eliant and words by Michaela Gloekler	12

### Inserts

Eliant charter with signatures

Documentation at the beginning of the treatment

**Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition  
 The Essential Spiritual Activity  
 in Therapeutic Eurythmy  
 April 19-22, 2007  
 Camphill Village, Kimberton Hills, PA**

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Although welcomed, the viewpoints expressed in ATHENA are not necessarily those of the publisher.

# ANTHROPOSOPHIC THERAPY FOR CHRONIC DEPRESSION: A FOUR-YEAR PROSPECTIVE COHORT STUDY

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## Abstract

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**Background:** Depressive disorders are common, cause considerable disability, and do not always respond to standard therapy (psychotherapy, antidepressants). Anthroposophic treatment for depression differs from ordinary treatment in the use of artistic and physical therapies and special medication. We studied clinical outcomes of anthroposophic therapy for depression.

**Methods:** 97 outpatients from 42 medical practices in Germany participated in a prospective cohort study. Patients were aged 20–69 years and were referred to anthroposophic therapies (art, eurythmy movement exercises, or rhythmical massage) or started physician-provided anthroposophic therapy (counselling, medication) for depression: depressed mood, at least two of six further depressive symptoms, minimum duration six months, Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, German version (CES-D, range 0–60 points) of at least 24 points. Outcomes were CES-D (primary outcome) and SF-36 after 3, 6, 12, 18, 24, and 48 months. Data were collected from July 1998 to March 2005.

**Results:** Median number of art/eurythmy/massage sessions was 14 (interquartile range 12–22), median therapy duration was 137 (91–212) days. All outcomes improved significantly between baseline and all subsequent follow-ups. Improvements from baseline to 12 months were: CES-D from mean (standard deviation) 34.77 (8.21) to 19.55 (13.12) ( $p < 0.001$ ), SF-36 Mental Component Summary from 26.11 (7.98) to 39.15 (12.08) ( $p < 0.001$ ), and SF-36 Physical Component Summary from 43.78 (9.46) to 48.79 (9.00) ( $p < 0.001$ ). All these improvements were maintained until last follow-up. At 12-month follow-up and later, 52%–56% of evaluable patients (35%–42% of all patients) were improved by at least 50% of baseline CESD scores. CES-D improved similarly in patients not using antidepressants or psychotherapy during the first six study months (55% of patients).

**Conclusion:** In outpatients with chronic depression, anthroposophic therapies were followed by longterm clinical improvement. Although the pre-post design of the present study does not allow for conclusions about comparative effectiveness, study findings suggest that the anthroposophic approach, with its recourse to non-verbal and artistic exercising therapies can be useful for patients motivated for such therapies.

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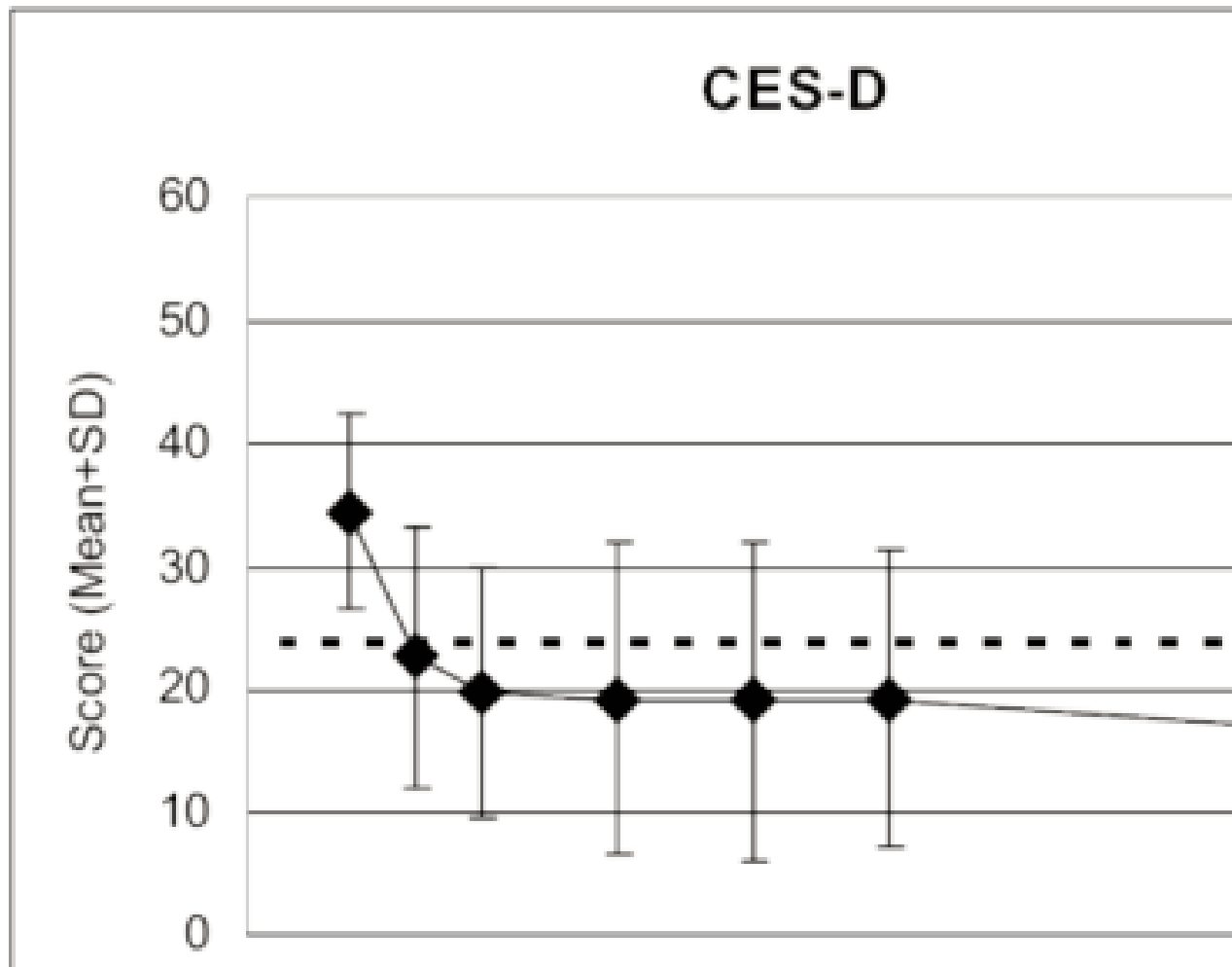


Figure 2. Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. Higher scores indicate more depressive symptoms".

Table 2: Clinical outcomes 0–12 months

Item	N	0 months	12 months	P-value	Median difference (95%-CI)
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
<b>CES-D (0–60)</b>					
-all patients	75	34.77 (8.21)	19.55 (13.12)	p < 0.001	15.50 (12.50–18.50)
-AMI Art Therapy	33	36.94 (8.58)	21.12 (11.99)	p < 0.001	15.50 (11.50–19.50)
--painting/drawing/day	27	38.95 (8.24)	23.18 (12.52)	p < 0.001	15.00 (10.50–21.50)
-Eurythmy Therapy	27	30.70 (5.55)	16.67 (13.32)	p < 0.001	15.00 (8.50–19.50)
Disease Score (0–10)	57	7.09 (1.38)	2.84 (2.07)	p < 0.001	4.50 (4.00–5.00)
Symptom Score (0–10)	69	6.35 (1.47)	3.90 (2.42)	p < 0.001	2.63 (1.92–3.29)
SF-36 Mental Component	80	26.11 (7.98)	39.15 (12.08)	p < 0.001	13.04 (10.45–16.05)
SF-36 Physical Component	80	43.78 (9.46)	48.79 (9.00)	p < 0.001	4.96 (3.02–6.84)
<b>SF-36 Scales (0–100)</b>					
Physical Function	82	75.12 (22.80)	85.15 (19.00)	p < 0.001	10.00 (5.00–12.50)
Role Physical	81	31.58 (35.52)	68.21 (38.33)	p < 0.001	50.00 (37.50–62.50)
Role-Emotional	80	22.92 (32.52)	60.21 (39.38)	p < 0.001	50.00 (33.34–66.67)
Social Functioning	82	43.14 (22.92)	65.70 (26.48)	p < 0.001	25.00 (18.75–37.50)
Mental Health	81	33.48 (13.82)	56.10 (19.05)	p < 0.001	22.00 (18.00–28.00)
Bodily Pain	82	50.27 (26.74)	66.67 (25.06)	p < 0.001	19.50 (12.50–26.00)
Visual Analog Scale	81	55.00 (15.47)	66.67 (16.47)	p < 0.001	10.00 (5.00–15.00)

*Conversation with Angelika Jaschke, Therapeutic Eurythmist, International Coordinator for Therapeutic Eurythmy through the Medical Section*

**What was Rudolf Steiner's original intention for Therapeutic Eurythmy?**

**What is the reality for us now, and how can we work creatively with it?**

In 1921 Rudolf Steiner gave the Therapeutic Eurythmy course to doctors in response to questions put to him initially by eurythmists and doctors. Two of those eurythmists were invited to demonstrate Rudolf Steiner's indications with new exercises. Rudolf Steiner imagined that the doctors would prescribe and carry out the therapeutic eurythmy themselves.

In 1922 Rudolf Steiner especially entrusted Dr. Bockholt, a medical doctor schooled in eurythmy, under the guidance of Dr. Ita Wegman in Arlesheim, Switzerland, with the nurturing and training of this new therapy. At first, nurses and curative educators received this training without formal artistic eurythmy training. It soon became clear that many trained eurythmists were also interested in this therapeutic aspect. Rudolf Steiner strongly emphasized the distinction between eurythmy as a performing art and eurythmy as therapy. As time went on a basic foundation in eurythmy and anthroposophical physiology were more and more required.

Over decades it emerged that most Anthroposophical doctors, though interested in the therapeutic eurythmy, were not prepared to study it and carry out the exercises themselves. They developed what we will call a 'cognitive empathy' for the therapeutic eurythmy.

To clarify, the starting point for therapeutic eurythmy was Rudolf Steiner's indications to the doctors, not an artistic training. This is unique among our sister therapies of art, sculpture, music and speech. It raises many questions for us. It is almost unimaginable today that we would offer this therapy without having gone through the transformation that takes place during an artistic training.

In the early years therapeutic eurythmists were part of the doctors' association in Germany, where most worked. By 1964 there were so many therapeutic eurythmists that they formed their own separate organization. This separation was both a curse and a blessing. The original intention of Rudolf Steiner was lost to a certain extent when the therapeutic eurythmists became independent.

There are clear standards for both professions now. Our challenge today is to nurture the relationship to the doctors. This is further complicated by the many other therapies now being developed. Art, sculpture, music and speech as well as rhythmical massage and oil dispersion baths to name a few. There is a research project under way in Germany (focused on cancer) where the many different

disciplines are all working together to try to understand how the different professions approach this illness and what they each have to offer towards the healing of this illness. We need greater understanding.

There are now too few doctors, trained in anthroposophical medicine, for the number of therapeutic eurythmists. We need to be creative about this! We have to be able to work with any doctor who can give us a diagnosis\*. We must learn to speak a language that any doctor can understand. We need to develop skills at documentation and evaluation that make clear and transparent what our work is. Most of us were not trained in these skills. Let's learn them now!

Angelika gave an example from her practice at this point. She described her work with babies with dislocated hips. In about 90% of the cases, which were sent to her over a number of years, the therapeutic eurythmy worked like magic. After five years she finally met face to face with the doctor who had been sending her the babies, and only then did he ask her what she was doing with them.

Angelika Jaschke trained in eurythmy and therapeutic eurythmy in Vienna with Trude Thetter. She has worked as therapist in schools, in curative education and in private practice. She became president of the professional association for therapeutic eurythmy in Germany about 10 years ago. In 2002 she was asked by Michaela Gloeckler to take on a newly created position as international coordinator for therapeutic eurythmy. She travels all over the world in this capacity and has just come to North America for the first time.

It is her heartfelt wish to serve our profession here in North America in whatever way she can. She is prepared to share with us documents for standards for our profession, standards for mentoring, and guidelines for documentation among others.

Linde deRis and  
Jeanne Simon-MacDonald for Athena

*Norman Davidson*, beloved friend and teacher crossed the threshold on Saturday, April 14 about 1:30 p.m.

Isaiah 26:19:  
*Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust for...the earth shall cast out the dead.*

## CONTINUING REPORT OF MEETING WITH ANGELIKA JASCHKE

The Board of Athena had prepared a lengthy list of questions to be presented to Angelika. It was clear that time would not permit us to air all of them. The following is a summary of some of the issues discussed.

One of the questions presented dealt with accreditation of Therapeutic Eurythmists. Angelika reported that in Europe:

1. an effort is underway to integrate Eurythmy Study with more academic studies, which could eventually lead to a recognized Bachelor's Degree, and

2. attempts are being made to initiate a training for a variety of therapies (including non-Anthroposophical), which could then lead to a Master's Degree in Artistic Therapy, with a Specialty in Therapeutic Eurythmy.

The consensus was that there was a need to raise the standards of Therapeutic Eurythmy. By keeping careful records of our work we can document what we do, how we do it, and its effect (results) on the patient.

Somewhat earlier, but also very much related to the above subject, we discussed the importance of working together with a doctor. We need a clear diagnosis from a doctor, and guidance in interpreting what we observe in our sessions with the patient. It is clear that doctors have a much better training than we have in understanding and interpreting various symptoms. Angelika reported that in Europe lists are being prepared of symptoms and their meanings, which will, if this was understood correctly, in the future be integrated in our training.

In this regard, the question of documentation and reporting the progress of the patient was mentioned. Angelika said that her own training was very exacting. In her work, after receiving a doctor's diagnosis, she does a therapeutic movement evaluation. After four weeks, a reevaluation of the patient is done in order to know how to proceed. She emphasized that everything is done "strictly". She feels that we must be able to be recognized by the State just as therapeutic gymnastics is recognized. We should lay great emphasis on reflecting on what we plan to do with the patient and then carry it out consistently.

Reports must be written in clear language about the steps we took with the patient, including our observations, not what we think but what we observe. The report goes to the doctor and to others as needed. When it is clearly written, non-Anthroposophical doctors will be able to follow what we do.

Another question raised was the matter of mentoring. Angelika stated that she is interested in knowing about our mentoring. "What does the American mentor do? How do you avail yourself of a mentor? I think there are two different approaches: one is for the benefit of the student and the other is to help each other." One of the attending Eurythmists suggested that we should familiarize physicians with

Therapeutic Eurythmy so that we/they can make it available in their practice. Courses are planned in the future for mentors which will cover how the Eurythmist communicates with the patient, how she presents herself and of course how the new Therapeutic Eurythmist learns how to apply the exercises. Possibly also a course in conflict resolution may be included so that the mentor will be able to deal with difficulties when they arise. It is expected that in the future the criteria for mentorship will also be much more developed than at present. We might take this up as a task to explore with Athena.

Angelika also stressed the importance of a close association between the training, the Association and mentors. In Europe the mentor already accompanies the student during his or her training and practicum. The idea is that the training includes the help of an experienced colleague to guide the new therapist into the work. "Mentorship is a skill. People learn their sounds during their training and then they need the practicum to know how do I do the sound M, how do I get hold of it. We are trying now that the mentor will become...a practical part of the curative training...This time with a mentor is enormously important for the quality of the (work)", said Angelika.

One mentor reported on the problems regarding a State-supported German training. The State was interested only in quantity - how many hours the student gave and how many patients the student treated. There was no interest at all in evaluating the student's work in a qualitative sense. Here again, the question of documentation arose - this time in relation to the student of Therapeutic Eurythmy and the mentor.

For clarity's sake, I am showing the three categories in which documentation was mentioned:

1. Clear documentation of exactly what we did with the patient and our observations of the patient for our own files,
2. Reports based on this documentation which we can share with the doctor, the school and, as needed,
3. Documentation by the mentor regarding the aspiring Therapeutic Eurythmist.

Angelika also brought to our attention that the European Union is becoming more aggressive in trying to abolish alternative medical care. On September 29, 2006, a new alliance (ELIANT, or European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy) was formed by nine Anthroposophical organizations, which issued a strong statement announcing that they will be active in protecting the rights of each individual to choose his or her medical care (see back cover). Included in the Athena Newsletter is the ELIANT Charter Statement on the reverse of which is a petition for signatures. Please collect as many signatures as you can and send the completed petition to the address on the bottom of the petition.

*Reported by Kristin Hawkins*

## THE FOUR ELEMENTS AND THERAPEUTIC EURYTHMY

Wendalyn von Meyenfeldt



*With the eurythmy demonstration of these projects, a metamorphosis occurs. The newsletter cannot bring this experience; nevertheless, the written words are valuable.*

### INTRODUCTION:

My project has been an exploration of the four elements as a study path towards understanding the healing power of the consonants in therapeutic eurythmy. Earth, water, air and fire are powerful principles in the world around us and in our internal organization of body and soul. The four bodies of the human being (physical, etheric, astral, and ego) and the four kingdoms of nature (mineral, plant, animal, and human) show a fundamental relationship to these elements.

This project invited me to explore the elements in a variety of ways. Reading from diverse sources, and experiencing the elements in nature, or as they have "spoken" to poets and seekers, has been both enjoyable and enlightening. Eurythmy practice, including artistic, hygienic, and therapeutic applications of the consonants, has also opened doors of understanding. This topic is both generous and grand. So where to begin?

As we spent much of our therapeutic eurythmy study-time at Camphill, Copake, it was "natural" to begin with experiencing the four elements as they reveal themselves in nature, and within the kingdoms of nature. I also live in the province of British Columbia in Canada. Our car license plates say "Supernatural BC"! Nature is rich and abundant there...a wonderful healer and teacher.

### EARTH:

*Oh, our Mother the Earth* is spoken out of the wisdom of the Native American Indian people. The earth element is substantive relating to physicality and matter (*mater*: Latin for

mother). The earth holds us, sustains us, is solid, and allows us to stand and walk and fulfill our destinies. Seeds can be planted in the earth, where they send their roots down into substance that is dark and dense.

The earth element is heavy and hard, and has weight. It does not move. We traditionally have built our houses out of earth substances: stone, adobe, rammed earth, and wood (the dense and most earthy part of the plant). Earth provides shelter. We may think of the caves where the first caves where many ancient people lived.

The earth element shapes itself in the form of the rocks and stones and crystals. When Rudolf Steiner spoke to the young doctors, he indicated that the earth element is something that resembles our own thoughts. *"In thought, life freezes and, Thinking is an organic process which is a continuation of the earth formation"*. Blaise Pascal wrote in the 1600's: *By space, the Universe embraces me like an atom. By thought, I embrace the Universe.*

We can also imagine clear thoughts as having a radiant crystalline quality. It is interesting that people of old put stone markers in places to remember what had happened there. This custom echoes the connection of earth substance with memory and thought. Rudolf Steiner describes the human skeleton as *the most earthly part of the human being and that aspect of the organs with their definite outlines and contours, as having the nature of thought.*

Further study reveals this earth element in the physical body is actually *bound up with life* in the etheric body. Perhaps in this excerpt of one of Rudolf Steiner's meditations given to the young doctors, we can understand something of the spiritual quality and healing gift of the earth element.

*You healing Spirits  
You make your halting place  
In the earth salt  
That nourishes the root  
In the soil.*

*I will make strong  
The being of my Soul  
With all the hardening Salt  
Whereby the Earth with loving care  
Natures the root.*

During my therapeutic eurythmy practicum at the San Francisco Waldorf School, 'B' was done with several thin-skinned children. This earth sound builds a protective sheath around us. Our life forces do not flow out, but are contained. Margarete Kirchner-Bockholt writes: *"the 'B' exercise is particularly important for children living in large cities and exposed in such high degree to the detrimental influences of civilization"*. *Frequently these children also lack the security that the mother and the family should give.*

One child that I worked with was prescribed the 'B'. She was quite sweet and open, yet slow in class and did not remember things well. Her mother was on medication and she, the mother, seemed "somewhat dull", according to my mentor. My mentor felt that the child "had not been able to meet the true being of her mother".

Another child, who demonstrated social challenges and who fought with his brother at home, was prescribed the 'B' by the doctor. According to Margarete Kirchner-Bockholt, *"the 'B' done calmly and quietly, purifies and cleanses the astral body"*. This particular child also bed-wet. The 'B' was given to address the kidney system and the activity of the astral body. The doctor recommended the 'B' be done as the last exercise, at the end of the therapeutic session. The 'B' helps pull together everything that has been done previously. As the last exercise, it tends to *"remain, and to be remembered."*

Another "weak" child was working with the sound 'M'. She needed to push against the resistance of the therapist's hands to come into this movement. The therapeutic eurythmy remarked, *"you have to be in yourself, be incarnated, in order to go out and penetrate the world."*

With an understanding of the elements, we can try to see people in terms of their elemental make-up. One healer, Nicki Skully, writes in her book, *Alchemical Healing*, *"When earth is balanced in a person, he or she is stable, secure, strong, grounded, organized, considerate, honest, patient, reliable, punctual, efficient, and able to manifest needs."* Massage practitioners may work on the feet to strengthen the earth element in their clients. The "earth" massage stroke done on any part of the body begins with a lighter touch, and then grasps more firmly at the end of the stroke.

With the plosive sounds, (which are considered related to the earth element), we are asked to "transform" or "polarize" the impact of the speech when we form the eurythmy gesture. We "lame or soften these sounds when we convey them through movement. Rudolf Steiner says that when we have a thrusting or plosive sound, we would like to remain, contained within ourselves.

#### **WATER:**

*"Over the water and over the waves, drifting in mist through the ocean caves.."*

The next element to explore is water. We may experience water in many forms in nature. We might have noted the calming influence of water when we sit by a quiet lake or pond. A merry stream brings playfulness, flow and movement. The ocean breathes and surges with mighty waves. Its water cleanses and refreshes and we become buoyant.

Unlike the fixed earth element, water moves and brings mobility. Merchants of old sailed in ships, bringing goods for trade, news and new ideas. Water wakens the seeds that nestle in the dark earth element. The plant world with its leafing and unfolding is bound up with the element of water.

Rudolf Steiner wrote in a meditation: *"I will bestir the life of*

*my soul on the glistening drop of leafy morning."* In a similar vein he said to the young doctors, Water is the outer manifestation of feeling. In feeling there is the same inner activity as is present in the external world in water. Water is feeling. In turn, the watery organism of the human being, the fluid organism with its inner mobility, is the seat of feeling, the feeling that flows in the centrifugal and centripetal forces, and which strives everywhere to hold the balance.

'L' the water sound in eurythmy, soothes and relaxes. Stiffness of the body and the soul is loosened, and crippled limbs can gradually be led to move again. Rudolf Steiner speaks of the 'L' in the Therapeutic Eurythmy Course as having a wave in its movement. The etheric body is the healer in the human being and according to Margarete Kirchner-Bockholt, 'L' is practiced with most patients who do the therapeutic eurythmy. 'L' activates the healing forces within us.

'L' is often found in a therapeutic eurythmy sequence, as in our time many people are immobile and stiff in the etheric. Where buoyancy is lacking, 'L' can be applied. The veil in the wooden figures carved by Edith Myron is a silvery gray, like a shimmering shower of descending water. The fluid sound of 'L' is rounded all the time, retaining a drop-like form. It is important that the arms reach into the forces of gravity before they rise in their opening movement. Then, in the lifting and opening of the gesture, the heaviness is transformed into levity and light. Where there is too much earth (hardening and stiffening) the water sound of 'L' can loosen and lighten.

In my second practicum, I worked with the L-M sequence with several children to strengthen their rhythmic systems and breathing. One asthmatic child practiced the LAOUM sequence with rocking 'L's.

The fluid human being includes the blood, the tissue fluid, the lymph, and the muscles. The rocking 'L's that work the knees strengthen the circulation of the blood. According to Rudolf Steiner, there is a lot of free etheric force around the knee. The kneecap and the crossed ligaments there give great freedom of movement.

The therapeutic L with x-legs works on the movement of the intestine. When the intestinal movement is regulated, the food-stuff can become well mixed and blended with digestive fluids.

The spiritual healer, Nicki Scully, writes: *"When water is balanced in a person, he or she is flexible, adaptable, fluid, nurturing, giving, compassionate, intuitive, sensitive, and caring."* Rudolf Steiner, as previously mentioned, spoke of the water element and its connection to the feeling or emotional life. The 'L' can be practiced to balance and lift a heavy or depressed mood. I was also advised to use the 'L' with a girl who had diabetes, to help keep this quality of lightness. In the Hallelujah, the seven 'L's purify and lift the soul. We find our wings. Thought is lifted into the realm of imagination.

#### **AIR:**

*"O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,*



*Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.”*  
(from Ode to a West Wind by Percy B. Shelley)

With the element of air we become ever lighter, meeting the wandering winds, refreshing breezes, and spacious skies. Winds of change and winds that stir, we are all connected through this element in that we breathe in the air. Wind is sometimes called the breath of Spirit or breath of Life. Winds embody the power of dissemination: the dispersal of ideas or seeds for what is new. The winged seeds in Shelley's poem are freed from their cold graves to help bring the transformation of the earth in spring.

Rudolf Steiner said that in breathing, the aeriform nature of the human being is circulating. This activity takes us into the outer world as well, so that we may assert ourselves within this outer world. Steiner also told the young doctors that wherever wind blows, you will experience it in your own soul as courage. To be healers, we must experience this in our souls.

In his Ode to the West Wind, Shelley calls upon the wind to inspire the conviction and courage to drive away his old and dead thoughts. These are like withered leaves, abstract, no longer connected to life. Air carries sound and the air element brings inspiration, a cognition which is like unto an experience of music. Make me they lyre, writes the poet.

The natural element of air finds its constituent element in the soul or astral body of the human being. This body is the body of feeling. The animals also bear an astral body. They, unlike the plants, are not rooted to the soil, but have freedom of movement. They also express feeling, i.e. movement of the soul in their sympathies and antipathies. The realm of the inner organs, which appears first in animals and humans is the work of the astral body.

*Rhythm is connected with the astral body," the body that is borne or carried by the air organism. "In both inhalation and exhalation, the air within us is in continual rapid interchange with the outer air; where it meets the atmospheric influences of light and warmth. The breathing rhythm meets the rhythm of the blood inside us and continues through the whole being in the blood. (M. Kirchner-Bockholt, Foundations of Curative Eurythmy.)*

The rhythmic activity of breathing and circulation unites and harmonizes the polarity of the digestive-limb system and the nerve-sense system within us. Forces which go out (centrifugal forces) and forces which go in (centripetal forces) are balanced.

When we observe the 'R' the vibratory air sound in eurythmy, we see a movement that should be a going out-into the air and then a turning back into oneself. We do not become one with the air, but return to ourselves before we breathe out again. A balance is created in oneself between surrender and self assertion. We are reminded of Steiner's indication of courage, and also of Shelley's invocation. The eurythmy figure for the 'R' has a red dress, a gold veil, and a green character. Meditating on these colors, one can sense the activity of the red



*Marion Hesse demonstrating "Breathing R*

*and the gold, and the balance given by the green within.*

The Big R Exercise in therapeutic eurythmy brings rhythm and regularity to the evacuation. The Rhythmical R, one of the soul exercises, brings order and stability to the soul and works positively on the rhythm of breathing and of circulation. The exercise brings about a healthy breathing with the world. 'R' can also be used to help the posture and to relieve stress in the back.

Nicki Skully (Spiritual Healer) writes that when air is balanced in a person, he or she is "*optimistic, adaptive, thoughtful, communicative, articulate, clever, witty and wise.*" She describes the characteristics of air as including lightness and spaciousness, intelligence, beauty and sound.

**FIRE:**

*Every day I bathe myself in light  
And write my name in stars across the sky.  
Everyday I am the Fire of Life,  
Burning with the intensity of the Sun.*

(from The fire of life by Nancy Wood)

Last summer at Camphill, Copake, I was delighted to hear that there would be a Fourth of July bonfire. We gathered in a large grassy field in the evening, where the place for the fire had been prepared.

The flames rose vertical and high: yellow, orange and red with blue at the center. The dark base of wood was consumed below, while sparks danced like fireflies in the deepening blue of the night. It was hot near the fire, and people gathered around its warmth. While the tongues of the flames leapt at the sky, folks began to tell their own stories, sing songs, and renew their friendships. This fire seemed to kindle an enthusiasm to come together and build community.

I remembered that in Greek Mythology, Prometheus brought the gift of the fire from the gods to earth. The fire element, such as the bonfire in the meadow last summer and the human warmth generated by this created what we, as people, can "*speak back to the stars*" (or to the Gods)

Rudolf Steiner spoke to the young doctors of the external

phenomenon of fire, of fire that gives warmth. He said that this external manifestation is really semblance, a seeming, and that behind the fire there is working, active will. There is a kinship in our own active and working will with fire. Rudolf Steiner repeated this thought many times in the lecture, bringing emphasis and importance to this relationship or reality of fire, as being active, working will.

To quickly draw some other points together, we might recall that the natural element of fire is connected with our warmth or heat organism and with the ego or human spirit. Only human beings are constituted with an ego or individual spirit. This ego gives humankind the potential for freedom. We can make choices and attain freedom in accordance with moral ideas, by our own active will. We are not bound by our instincts and desires like the animal kingdom.

The ego works through warmth. It displays a structure or organization throughout the human body. This is the "heat-organism" through which the ego or human spirit acts. "*The ego is directly active in the blood and above all in the warmth of the blood. Here it enters into the inner movement of warmth. The ego creates in the blood a balance between the influences flowing into a person from outside, through the sense organs of the head and the inner impressions rising up from the various organs.*" (M. Kirchner-Bockholt)

The eurythmy sounds that are related to the fire element include: *F*, *H*, and *S*. Already we have flames, heat, and sparks!

The '*S*' is controlled fire. It has formative ability and it can dissolve what is solid. '*S*' can also soothe and calm. The gray, brown, and black of the figure are like the ashes that remain after a fire has burned.

We are taught in Rudolf Steiner's Curative Eurythmy lectures that the eurythmic element or gesture must be polar to the actual process in speech. Although *F*, *H*, and *S* are breath sounds, or blowing sounds, we hold back or we hold something back. We don't let ourselves be fully carried into the outer world. We would like to remain within.

The '*F*' sound, presented artistically, portrays its flame-like quality. The dress or movement of the eurythmy figure is white, the veil or feeling is orange and the character reddish.

In its therapeutic application, '*F*' is very successful with children who bed-wet. This is a widespread affliction which often appears with children who grow up in difficult conditions or who are exposed to the continual effects of shock from which they are unprotected. These could well be our modern children, who are often assaulted by many overwhelming sense impressions.

With bed-wetting, the connection between the etheric body and the physical body in the abdominal organs is weak. Hence the ego and astral body leak out and not enough astral and ego activity remains behind in the organs. With the therapeutic eurythmy '*F*' exercise, the etheric body and the physical body (which are too loosely interwoven) are pulled more firmly

together. The jump is very important, particularly the emphatic falling back on the heels that press the etheric body more firmly into the physical in the lower organs. The astral body is more able to take hold. The power of '*F*' must be felt throughout the movement, and the '*F*' gesture directed downwards.

The sequence *BFU* is a very effective prescription for bed-wetting. I used this sequence with several children during my practicum at the San Francisco Waldorf School. The '*B*' creates a protective shelter and the fire-y '*F*' warms the lower organs, allowing the ego to take hold. The '*U*' anchors the warmth and the standing still (or holding) as opposed to the flowing out of the bed -wetting.

The Spiritual Healer Nicki Scully writes that the nature of fire is spiritual and transformative. (Think of the white dress of the eurythmy figure). She writes that fire is expansive and hot, energetic, passionate, destructive and quick. It also relates to vitality, excitement, willpower and daring.

## CONCLUSION:

My exploration of the four elements, in relation to the consonants and to therapeutic eurythmy has been a rich and rewarding study. I have learned a lot and I hope that I have awakened seeds of knowledge and interest in my readers and listeners. When we apply healing sound-gesture movement in therapeutic eurythmy we may better recognize the elemental potency of the consonants. Hopefully we can use this understanding to illumine and inspire our work.

Of course, our wholeness or health depends on a harmony and balance of the elements weaving and working within us. As therapists, we can work with the elements of earth, water, fire and air to attune our thinking, feeling and willing for courage in the work that is before us.

## Celtic Prayer by Andrew Keith

*Christ, King of the Elements,*

*Hear me!*

*Earth bear me.*

*Air, lift me.*

*Fire, cleanse me.*

*Water, quicken me.*

*Christ, King of the Elements,*

*Hear me!*

*I will bear the burden of earth with Thee,*

*I will lift my heart through the Air to Thee,*

*I will cleanse my desire for love of Thee.*

*I will offer my life renewed to Thee.*

*Christ, King of the Elements!*

*Water, Fire, Air and Earth:*

*Weave within my heart this day,*

*A cradle for Thy birth.*

## DIALOGUE CORNER

*In our last issue we started the "Dialogue Corner" featuring questions, suggestions between doctors and and eurythmists and colleagues. The following is a response to communication problems and problems of working on one's own.*

Regarding the problem of eurythmist-doctor communication: I've always had a referral form which I filled out and mailed to the eurythmist about each patient. That way I could efficiently note a few thoughts about the patient's constitution, and a few ideas for therapy without creating the back- and- forth phone calls that are difficult for both the doctor and the eurythmist.

If the doctor you work with doesn't do this, you could ask him/her to do so; or you, as the therapeutic eurythmist, could get the process going. As soon as you hear from a patient, get the patient's written permission to obtain medical information from the doctor's office. (You may want to ask the doctor to help you with this form, as there are some legal requirements.) Then, sent your form to the doctor asking him/her for a few words about the patient's problem, their constitution, and any suggestions for specific therapeutic eurythmy exercises. Sent it in non-carbon duplicate, if possible, so the doctor can fill it out, mail you back one, and put the other copy in the patient's chart. (The non-carbon duplicate is easy to have made up at your local copy store.) Include a self-addressed stamped envelope. In other words, lower the bar-help make it easier-but also ask the doctor specifically to put his/her thinking cap on and work with you more actively.

I always find it very helpful when the eurythmist sends me a brief report listing the exercises the patient did and how it went. In this way I get feedback-was the Big A actually a good exercise for this patient, etc. ?

I agree that the doctor's saying, "yes, the patient should have therapeutic eurythmy" does not seem like a very comprehensive co-working. Sometimes the problem is that the doctor hasn't been trained deeply in this therapy. Nevertheless, you might

like to have their view! For all you know, the doctor doesn't know what to prescribe, at least is reticent about suggesting specific exercises when you, after all, seem like the expert. In this case it will help if /you/ make it clear that the doctor's picture of the illness, or imbalance, is the teamwork you want from him/her. At least it's a start.

One more thought, should the eurythmist proceed on her/his own? I don't advise it. Even if the doctor just says, "sure do therapeutic eurythmy"-which I realize isn't satisfactory-still, s/he is aware of what is going on. You, the therapeutic eurythmist, and above all your patient, are protected from a situation in which they are sicker than they realize, or haven't taken some needed medical follow-up step, which they really ought to be doing. And even if the doctor is just "aware," which I grant you is not optimal teamwork, then the eurythmy stands under the medical banner, so to speak. It is integrated as a medical therapy. This makes your work with your patient professional. This is as valid now as it was in 1920.

If the doctor is slow to communicate and you are waiting and the patient wishes to begin, some hygienic exercises might be appropriate. This will establish your relationship, respond to the patient's wish to start right in, but won't initiate a medical therapy without integrating it into their overall medical plan, which is in the doctor's hands.

A second reason why doctor-eurythmist co-working is still the right way to go in 2007: even if it's on a minimal level, if you at least have /some/communication with the doctor, the patient is being cared for by a team. This common consciousness is a real step of healing-even if it is taken minimally. That said, I understand the minimal version is not satisfactory and not optimal for the patient. But, as I describe above, you may be able to lower the bar, streamline, and thereby help your local anthroposophic doctor to communicate with you. And the next step would be meeting together periodically (like once a month) to share a few cases, and thereby build a stronger therapeutic presence around the patient.

A. Landman-Reiner, MD



### Therapeutic eurythmy graduates 2007

left to right: Marion Hesse, Anke Rieger, Mara Di Donna, Carsten Callesen, Monica Galluzzo, Maria Ebersole, Keiko Yamamoto, Leigh Shavelson, Barbara Bresette Mills, Michael Hughes, Wendalyn Meyenfeldt, Kate Stepenuck-Johnson.

Front row: Dr. Traute Page, Angelika Jaschke

## More Political Weight

Since the beginning of November, they 'travel' by post and electronically to every conceivable distribution location: Eliant's signature lists. At least a million signatures are to be collected by June 2007 for the purpose of supporting the political foundations of existence for anthroposophical initiatives in Europe.



Conferring on the collection of signatures for the charter: the Steering Committee for Anthroposophic Medicine meeting on November 12, 2006

In recent years anthroposophical products and services have been faced with massive problems. As a result of mad cow disease, regulations governing hygiene have no longer permitted use of organic components for producing the preparations used in biodynamic agriculture; baby food has had to contain vitamins some anthroposophical remedies could no longer be sold or were excluded from coverage by health insurance companies; and plans for early academic schooling have been calling Waldorf educators to the drawing board – a list that practically writes itself.

### Question of Sufficient Numbers

This is not always due to bad will (*Anthroposophy Worldwide* no. 5, 2003, p. 3). In conversations with representatives of European Union agencies, representatives of anthroposophical interests again and again hear that what they are doing is in

addition to the academic hurdles and the legal, regulatory specifications, there are also the limitations imposed by long-standing economic pressure.

Yet even though anthroposophical initiatives are relatively small, European consumers of anthroposophical cosmetics and medicines who are connected to Waldorf schools and curative homes, as well as consumers of products of biodynamic agriculture are in the millions. For this reason there is hope of being able to demonstrate sufficient support. But in what form? Considerations within various anthroposophical organizations dismissed the idea of a new, possibly administrative-intensive association. Instead, representatives of the Eliant initiative had the idea of founding an alliance in the form of a simple 'de facto' organization, recognized in the EU as having political stature. If it can be proven that at least a million citizens are behind something, the issue

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