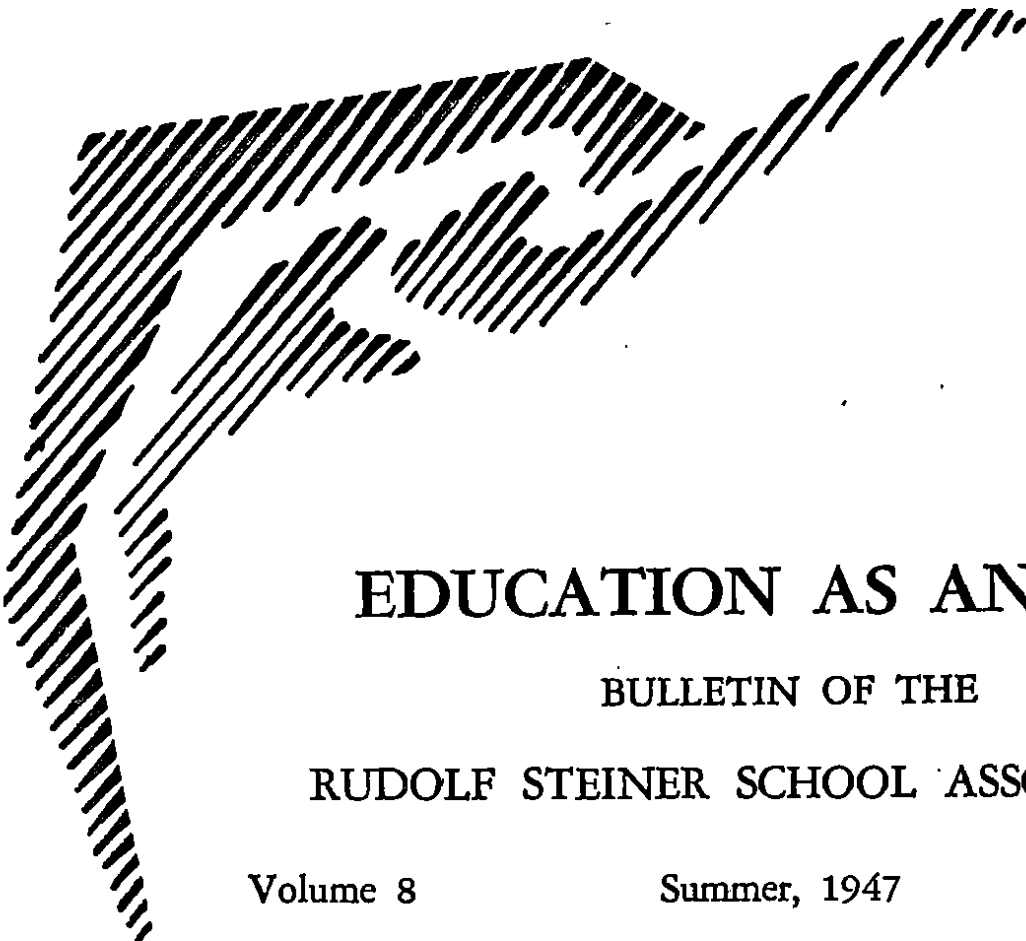




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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NORMAL AND MORAL ELEMENTS IN CHILDHOOD

It is an interesting fact that the words *normal* and *moral* have the same form in most European languages: in the English, German, Slavic and the Romance languages. The fact that these words, derived from the Latin, were taken up into the speech of so many peoples, and have remained almost unchanged in form, gives them the character of belonging to a language above nations and races.

What is a normal child? Few educators like to give a definition, but out of every system of education a concept of a normal child emerges. It can be worded in the following way: The normal child develops his physical and mental faculties according to a pattern found in every average child. He is well adjusted to his environment and is free of any physical or mental ailment. The concepts are more or less the same in most systems of education; they all relate normalcy to a pattern and to an average. When we designate a child as normal, we imply that there is nothing exciting about him, that he is average. Parents do not like their children to be called merely normal and still far less, abnormal. The word normal has a bad taste attached to it. Man's sense of freedom rebels against being put into a pattern. He aspires to be more than a creature of pattern.

We now come to the other word of controversial significance. Without much imagination you can transform the word *normal* into that of the word *moral*. It is as if the genius of the language revealed to us a relationship which the intellect does not appreciate. The misinterpretation and misuse of the word *moral* is especially great in our times. How much tragedy and suspicion has been caused by asking the negative question: who is immoral, instead of who is moral! The entire outlook on life is a different one if we pose the positive question.

Morality and ethics are two different things. The latter deals with man-made rules of conduct that are designed to promote correct human relations. Morality springs forth out of human nature. In man's struggle for survival and for his human integrity moral forces are at work. If he fights for a cause he believes in, even under adverse circumstances, he shows strong moral power. An action done beyond the call of duty is a moral one.

Most concepts of education consider environment, heredity, physical and mental development, but they omit the spiritual nature of man, his ego and the stages of consciousness he is able to develop, the very essence of what distinguishes him from the animal. Because of this, these concepts lack also a goal in education. John Watson, the behaviorist who stresses environment, apparently recognized this fact. In speaking about his own children he is reported to have said: "I'm now in a position to condition my children for anything. But what the devil am I going to condition them for?"

Morality stems from the very ego of man himself. This applies to the adult but how about children? Can we speak of morality in them? After all they have not yet developed a sense of responsibility; so we might think. In this connection Rudolf Steiner was the first to point to the fact that the forces underlying the creation, formation and growth of the organism are metamorphosed, and to the degree to which they have completed their first task, they gradually emerge as forces of consciousness and as moral forces.*

Now we are at the point when we can ask the real question: How do the moral or "ego" forces manifest themselves in childhood? It is the artistic sense which most easily observes these. This opens the way to a reality not accessible to the senses and to analysis. Rudolf Steiner's book "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment" starts with the words: "There slumber in every human being faculties by means of which he can acquire for himself a knowledge of higher worlds" The education that was inaugurated by Rudolf Steiner is based upon such knowledge. The term "artistic sense" is a vague designation of those forces in man that can lead to such a concrete and practical knowledge of his spiritual nature.

An infant already gives us the opportunity for many interesting observations. In the first cry of the newly-born something of his inner nature and vitality is revealed. At about six weeks the child begins to laugh and to "fix his eyes". Then begins the long process of gradually bringing the body into a vertical position. He raises his head, sits, and finally, after innumerable attempts, succeeds in standing on his own feet. Soon thereafter he triumphantly takes his first unaided steps. Something of the child's moral powers can be experienced in these efforts. Modern psychology does not appreciate the significance of this event. It is one of those everyday happenings that is simply taken for granted. The upright position is a purely human trait. It distinguishes man from the animal. Without it he could not develop ego consciousness in later years. Such observations are scientific in a new sense of the word. They point to a science that is still in its beginnings, not to phycho-somatics, Christian Science or metaphysics, but to a true spiritual science of the interpenetration of body, soul and spirit. We get a different impression from a man who stands erect and gazes straight at us than from a man who looks downward and stands in a sloppy position. Such subtle impressions determine human relationships. The uncomplicated human nature and the artist in us react to them. Let us now apply the same method of ob-

*See *Education* by Rudolf Steiner.

servation to other phases of the child's development. He begins to talk in his second year. Talking in itself is a human trait. At first merely a reflexion of physical vitality and well being, it becomes an expression of the ego when the child says "I". This occurs generally during the third year and is associated with the beginning of an obstreperous period when the home resounds with no's. The despairing parent may not take to the thought that this also is the expression of moral powers, of the ego. The fact that this is so, does not mean that the child is right or justified in his no. He simply begins to distinguish himself from his environment and feel himself an independent being.

In this connection a few words about the child's instinct are in order. Is there such a thing as a true, unfailing instinct? Or is what is designated as instinct merely an expression of bodily needs, emotions, moods and wishful thinking? As a doctor I am frequently asked: Is this or that the child's healthy instinct or is he merely spoiled? This is sometimes a difficult question to answer. There is no doubt that the child sees things that we do not observe with our rational mind. The psychologist would say that the unconscious is wiser than the conscious and that in the child the former is not obstructed by the intellect. With the knowledge underlying Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy we would go further and say: An instinctive power of vision actually lives in the child. A child senses with his whole being the mood, intention and character of a person approaching him. His instinct goes far beyond the animal instinct. He is nourished by, or repudiates, the moral qualities in his environment. When you observe how some children react to nature and what they say, you feel for a moment as though you lived in a world of the distant past when people were still gifted with an instinctive power of vision and spoke of the elemental beings in nature as we do today of trees and flowers. There are many things in modern life that spoil the finer senses at an early age. A highly emotional or a highly intellectual attitude in the environment blot it out. True instinct is a feeble plant that can be protected and developed only when recognized. In the realm of nutrition the instinct is spoiled when children are fed meat and eggs during the first few years and through the eating of fancy sweets. The majority of children take to them with such a strong craving that other tastes and desires are displaced. As a result they frequently do not care any more for plain food or for vegetables. Meat products and fancy sweets are not a necessary food for the growth of the normal child. Vegetables, cereals and milk products actually contain all the nutritive elements and vitamins necessary. Dr. Steiner recommended that parents not give their children meat or eggs before the age of three.

There is a general tendency to boost the health of the child. Even perfectly well children are given meat, eggs and vitamins. Naturally, in certain cases such boosting and extra help is indicated. But if it is not, such things act as crutches; they weaken the innate vitality of the child. It is the disbelief in these innate creative powers and in natural resistance that has led to a short-sighted policy in dealing with children. Some parents shelter the child too much and forbid too much. In doing so they postpone the issues. As a result the child does not meet his environment as he should, and does not develop resistance and the power of adaptation. In medicine we have similar trends. The belief is strong that all illness is bad and that symptoms have to be combatted as soon as they appear. Result: overmedication and boosting of

vitality by outer means. Education as well as the art of medicine will have to develop an understanding of the instinctive and reactive powers of the child if such tendencies are to be avoided.

From the fifth year onward the first definite form of thinking appears, and with it the asking of questions reaches its height. Story telling has its greatest effect at this time. The child reveals a sense for what is beautiful or ugly. In this, and in his intense desire for investigation, his moral impulses reveal themselves upon a new level.

Between seven and fourteen the morality of the child becomes more conscious. He develops a fine sense of justice and a feeling for what is right or wrong. Moreover he tends to idealize people. Somewhere in his environment he finds his hero, the perfect man. Nothing hurts a child more than injustice or treatment that differentiates him from others. On the other hand his conscience awakens. He cannot hide what he has done wrong. We can judge the morality of a child by the degree to which these qualities are present. The integration of these qualities into the personality is the foremost task of education. This is not done by teaching ethics.

In most schools the child is taught the facts of life on one hand and art and religion on the other. This already creates a split because the child experiences separately first the life of the outer world and then a spiritual life. An atristic approach to the subject lets the child experience the unity of spirit and matter. When the child sees a picture of a snake, hears the sound of spirit and matter. In a Rudolf Steiner School the alphabet is taught and form, spirit and matter. In a Rudolf Steiner School the alphabet is taught in such a way and the child is intensely interested because his ego or spiritual nature can participate in it.

To mention another example of how such a split is created: Modern physical exercises have been worked out on the basis of a knowledge of the mechanics of the body. In a purely muscular sense they strengthen the body, but they also introduce automatism and mechanical laws into the consciousness. The ego or moral nature cannot live in them. This is only possible if art flows through the movements. In Greek gymnastics or in Eurythmy the whole nature of the child reveals itself. I mention this example for a special reason. Physical fitness and preparedness has become a slogan, in some countries more than in others. Nothing can be said against the ideal in itself. But what has actually happened? Whole nations have engaged in physical exercises in an unprecedented way stressing physical courage. The result has been automatization and mechanization, disintegration and dehumanization of the people themselves, and the catastrophe that followed.

Physical courage is a desirable thing after the age of seven. When developed through the right type of exercises, sports or art, it will transform itself into moral courage in later years. Physical exercises can be a powerful means of either integrating or disintegrating the personality.

A few words should also be said about children's fights and quarrels. The child learns through these to meet resistance in a still playful way. The moral nature not only reveals itself but can strengthen itself. The educational significance of this is not fully appreciated in these days of abstract peace talks. Children are sometimes oversheltered and so often the terrible phrase "be good" is uttered which on a timid child has an inhibiting effect, on a boisterous child no influence at all. It is uneducational in either case. In settling quarrels an appeal to the sense of justice can be made. The child of this age has a feeling for what is right or wrong.

Games are really organized fights. The child learns that there are certain immutable laws to the game, and develops a feeling for what it is to transgress that law. Sports and competitive games are educational as long as the inner nature of the child is connected with them and as long as they do not become detached from human life. A boy who climbs a high mountain learns to endure physical hardship and to overcome physical obstacles. A boy who wrestles with another of equal strength learns to resist and overcome regardless of whether he wins or loses. It is of special importance to the girl to express beauty and art in bodily movements. Physical forces when developed in the right way become moral powers in later life and create a sound basis for human relationships. Playing games in childhood can be an excellent preparation for learning to play the real thing, namely the game of life. Americans have a special appreciation for a "good sport".

I have tried to describe the moral impulse or the ego nature of the child in various examples and stages of development. During the first seven years this impulse works through the will in the physical development, during the following seven years it is active also in the feelings, in conscience and a feeling for justice. Only after the age of fourteen does it become conscious in thought-life, and understood as concept.

The word *moral* is used here in a different sense from that in which it is most often used. It has no connotation of sex or sentimentality. It represents the spiritual nature of man that creates the physical instrument, the body, in early childhood and appears as a sense of freedom and responsibility in the adult. It is accessible to different methods of observation not found in textbooks on psychology or pediatrics. The moral impulse does not rightly unfold in the abnormal child. For instance such a child does not laugh. The mongoloid neither laughs nor weeps — it always grins, his uncontrolled motions can at times make the observer dizzy. Laughing and harmonious movement are an expression of the human ego. The child with rickets is unable to overcome the law of gravity in his body, he learns very late to stand on his own feet. Speech defects and uncoordinated movements develop later. Abnormalities are easy to see when they are present to a marked degree. The true educator learns to observe them in their first beginnings.

The reader may wonder why a physician writes with so much emphasis on the spiritual nature of the child. It is not only because he believes that it is the determining factor in a healthy development, but because he has observed the human constitution in the making over a period of twenty years, watching children grow up and become adults, finding their way through life. The more educator and physician heed the spiritual nature, the more they will be able to protect and to foster it so that when the child enters into life at puberty, the ego is strong enough to control the liberated vitality. Schools of today tend to become mere centers of information leading to an accumulation in the child's head of facts and data about the outer aspect of the world that have no connection with the inner life of the soul. Feeling and intuition take hold of the latter, intellect of the former. These develop without being related to each other and they pull the personality in two different directions. The intellect of the scientist may be satisfied by his work, the inner life is not, and draws him to art, religion or a hobby, or if this is not the case he develops an over-strong emotional nature. This split in the personality is a sign of the times and the result of a one-sided education. It belongs to the fundamentals of Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy to let

the child during the earliest years of his life, experience in every subject the unity of body, soul and spirit. In such teaching the ego and moral nature will participate and they will be well integrated in the personality. And now we come back to the first question: What is a normal child? The genius of the language points to the answer. Many outstanding scholars assume that there was a time when the human family was not divided into races and languages. The common origin of the words *moral* and *normal* goes back to such epochs. I am told that in ancient Hebrew times the word *mor-es* was used to designate people who venerated God. In Roman times of religious customs. The word *normal* is related to the Greek *nom-os* meaning divine law. What was found to be just and right was formulated into law. Thus the relationship between the two words is apparent through their inner meaning. Morality heals and creates health. The absence of it is the precursor of disease. This answer helps us to understand the real nature of man. It gives a goal and ideal to work for.

Christoph U. Linder, M.D.

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

(Continued)

SIXTH GRADE

The twelfth year generally marks the entry into a new phase of development, just as the ninth year did. The natural, rhythmic grace of the younger child gives way to the angular, self-conscious movements of the pre-adolescent who does not know what to do with his limbs. Instead of being carried by the unconscious harmony of movement inspired by the muscles, which are continuously nourished by the circulation of the blood, the developing human being now lays stronger hold on his own bone structure and finds it at first unfamiliar and clumsy. However, just this new connection with the mechanics of the skeleton gives him the first real opportunity to grasp the laws of mechanical action, and an introduction to the physical sciences can now be made with greatest benefit.

THE MAIN LESSON SUBJECTS

History

Roman history is studied from the foundation of the Republic to the fall of the Empire, and the continuation of Greco-Latin cultural and political institutions into the early Middle Ages is indicated. From the fifth to the sixth grades the children pass out of the youthful and spontaneous harmony of Greek culture into the Roman world, dedicated to the conquest of physical space and to the mastery of the laws of social and political organization. The historical significance of the appearance of Christianity at this time is presented in contrast to the external power of Rome.

American history is studied through the continuation of brief biographical and descriptive presentations, and through supplementary reading which lays the background and foundations for more intensive study in the seventh and eighth grades.

Geography

The study of the western hemisphere is continued and completed. From the description of the climatic condition of a region, the child is led over to a study of the conditions in the heavens. The historical-geographic and nature

study subjects are made vivid through the students' own drawing, painting and modelling so that each individual part of their work, for example the maps, is developed through artistic perception and execution.

Nature Study

The study of natural science continues to deal with the plant world and then leaves the realm of living creatures to pass over to the mineral kingdom. The minerals are not separated from their geological connections. For example, after the child has been given a clear and living picture of a granite mountain range in contrast to a chalk range, he then studies the individual rock specimens.

Physics

The introduction to physics is made by means of the child's direct artistic perception in the realm of music and sound. From the observation of the phenomena of sound, the elementary principles of acoustics are developed in connection also with the human organ of tone, the larynx. Color and painting, already thoroughly familiar to the child through experience, lead to the first study of optics. Discussion of the eye as a physical sense apparatus is not taken up at this time as it has been found that the student is not yet fully able to grasp the reality of the perceptual processes. The study of heat, electricity and magnetism are begun. The starting point is always the phenomena and then laws are developed only in relation to them.

Mathematics

Depending on the readiness of the children, it is sometimes possible to make a beginning in the study of percentage in the fifth grade, which, in the sixth grade is carried further and developed into the calculation of interest. At the end of the sixth grade it is often possible to develop a sense for the formula and to make a primitive beginning with algebra, which is possible after the formula for interest has been used and an understanding has been fostered for the simplicity and convenience which algebra brings to mathematics. Problems in *profit and loss*, *commission*, etc. are taken up. A beginning is made in intuitive geometry. The pupils now learn to understand in geometric concepts the forms originally drawn artistically: the triangle, the square, the circle, etc.

English

The teacher seeks to call forth a feeling for style in speech and writing. Business letters are developed out of the material which has been built up from the third grade. Reading supplements the history and should deal, among other things, with the realm of folk-lore. The study of the parts of speech continues and leads to sentence study.

Henry Barnes

For the Faculty of the Rudolf Steiner School

SUMMER EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Educational Conference will take place at the Threefold Farm from the evening of August 17th to September 1st. The full program will appear later. Although plans are not fully matured the following may be of interest at this time. In the classes the emphasis in the different fields will be on fundamental approaches as indicated by Dr. Steiner. This will be followed by more detailed illustrations using the specific subject matter. We hope this will help individuals themselves to adjust and adapt their teaching to this new pedagogy.

Dr. Poppelbaum will take the field of science with emphasis on biology. Dr. Baravalle will give a course in the field of mathematics and another in geometric drawing. The field of the humanities will be discussed by Henry Barnes and others. Mrs. Monges will again take the Eurythmy aided by Paul Nordoff. Richard Kroth will teach painting. The sequence of evening lectures will be interspersed with music, fairy tales and folk dancing. We are planning to have the Alumni of the Waldorf School take over an afternoon.

For information concerning accommodations please write to Mrs. Elizabeth Kroth, Threefold Farm, Spring Valley, New York. The price of the course with room and board is \$40 per week. A deposit of \$5 is asked.

*Beulah H. Emmet, High Mowing School,
Chairman of the Summer Conference.*

EUROPEAN RELIEF

It will interest you to know that there are now over 5,000 children in the new and reopened Rudolf Steiner Schools in Germany, and that possibly an equal number are on waiting lists. The lack of adequate buildings makes it impossible for these schools to enlarge their number of children until they receive assistance for procuring building materials. Reports received describe plans for new schools, as for example a farm school in connection with the school in Hannover, also in Hannover additional courses in preparation for various trades.

We, here, have little idea of the conditions under which these schools are operating: holes in walls and roofs, little or no heating and so little space for classes that these must be taught in shifts, one teacher often teaching three sections. In many cases teachers have to stand in line for their rations in the morning before school!

We are glad to tell you that at present three of our schools are able to give the pupils and teachers the daily glass of milk for which you have contributed so generously. We hope your support will continue and that this can be extended to more schools. To the milk is added half a tablespoon of medicine. This is a nerve medicine created by the late Dr. Wegmann and prepared today in Switzerland. It is described as having a very beneficial effect upon people suffering from a one-sided and insufficient diet. It is possible now to order containers of this nerve-food-preparation for shipment to individuals by sending one dollar to E. Kirchner, Klinik Arlesheim, Bale, Switzerland. Orders are delivered within three weeks after they are received. Orders sent care of the Association will be forwarded upon request. A single container would last one person about a month.

*Vera Leroi
Alfred Barnes*

Membership in the Rudolf Steiner School Association, including the quarterly Bulletin, is \$2.00 per year. Single copies of the Bulletin, 15c each; for more than 10 copies 10c each, postpaid.

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