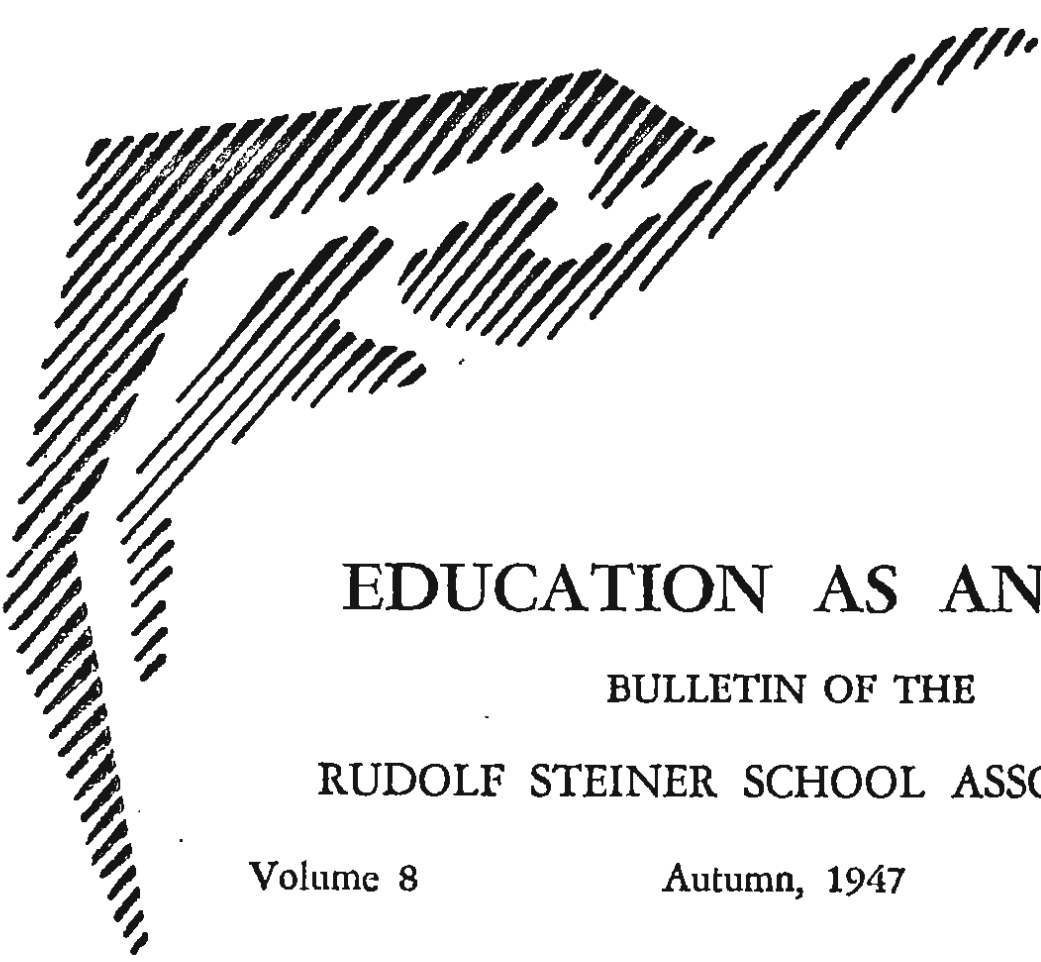




EDUCATION AS AN ART

BULLETIN OF THE
RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Volume 8

Autumn, 1947

Number 3

A CHILD'S GRACE

by Christian Morgenstern

Earth, that brought us all this food,
Sun, that made it ripe and good,
Dearest Earth and dearest Sun,
We'll not forget what you have done!

Translated by Margaret Peckham

ON THE MORAL EDUCATION OF YOUNGER CHILDREN*

by Christoph Boy

When we attempt to speak on moral education, we feel that this may not be done lightly but that our thoughts must be deeply rooted. We even have a sense of strong discomfiture when we speak on such a theme; for a lifetime is insufficient for acquiring all the knowledge of man, upon which alone morality can be founded in such a way that it will grow as an integral part of man, and not be merely impressed upon him like a stamp.

We realize that it is not sufficient to follow in the steps of the natural sciences only. Knowledge of the body alone is not enough. In order to be able to work in a way which is morally fruitful, knowledge of the soul-spiritual being of man is necessary, and we feel that we stand only at the beginning of true research in this realm.

A further difficulty consists in our being unable to have any influence on an individual human being so long as we do not understand how physical body and soul-spiritual affect each other. Nothing can happen to or within man without body, soul and spirit being affected. It is not enough to know how to rear

*Translated from the bi-monthly Magazine *Erziehungskunst* published by the teachers of the Waldorf School, Stuttgart, Year IX, Issue 1. April 1935.

This essay of the year 1927 was found among the papers of the author after his death. As a teacher at the Waldorf School he had made the questions of moral life and moral education his special tasks.

a healthy child and then to believe that we can inculcate into his healthy organism what we consider psychologically and spiritually suitable.

There is no such thing as physical science on the one hand and ethics on the other, and we cannot consider what is within apart from what is without, the body separate from the soul. This may only be done in the case of someone who has died, but then we only have a corpse before us. We must learn to understand man as a working unit of body, soul and spirit, as Goethe felt it to be when he said: "Naught is within, naught is without. For what is within, that is without".

Our present-day culture has sundered the religious and moral element in man from the physical and natural one, and we must now learn to comprehend them as a working unity once more. We must learn to see man as a complete human being by seeing the interplay of both these members of his being. This is also the goal which is striven for in the educational system of the Waldorf School.

There is another point that I would like to place before you. Man as he stands before us, closed off within his skin, is not simply a spatial being. Rudolf Steiner has taught us to look upon man as a "time being" as well. The picture of a plant rises before me as it progresses in time through the various stages of development. First comes the seed, then the seed leaves; then the leaf, the green calyx, finally the blossom's petals. One after the other we experience the metamorphoses of the plant—its continual transformation. Man as a time organism goes through such continual changes also, for his bodily, soul and spirit faculties are not all present at the same time but unfold gradually in more or less apparent rhythms. We know the more obvious rhythms as, for instance, in the change of teeth and puberty.

The question now arises for the educator and the teacher: "What special physical, soul and spirit relationships does childhood present, and how must my educational measures be constituted so that my efforts within these relationships will further and quicken the child—not injure and weaken him?"

Such questions awaken a deeper feeling of conscience and a greater sense of responsibility in the educator. He learns to pay a much closer attention to the finer measures of education, much more so than he had perhaps done before, and he learns to reckon with far-reaching effects.

It often happens that parents see something naughty in a child. Then they are apt to resort to some kind of universal remedy, perhaps in the very next moment, in order to eliminate the misbehavior as rapidly as possible. But in this way the naughtiness is only suppressed, because they have not the patience to hold a waiting attitude toward the child, and the remedy is not based on insight into the child's nature. In fact the naughtiness may be repeated again and again, but if, out of the knowledge of the child's nature, one is confident of having found the right thing for him, then the healing effect will gradually show itself. In questions regarding the education of children, one is always led back to a consideration of the adult, for education is in the most eminent sense self-education. Uneducated persons cannot educate, and there are more such than we often believe. Selflessness and self-dedication are basic necessities for the educator. More and more the realization grows upon us that morality cannot be taught, it must be given ground from which to grow. To issue orders is of no value, not even in the subtler manner in which we try to influence the other human being forcibly by the example of our own ethical character — when children are to be made into what we would like to have become. Man can only be moral when, as a free being, he creates morality from out his innermost nature. This he cannot do in his early childhood; but what is to develop itself freely as morality after his fourteenth year must be planted in him like a seed between his first and seventh years. The moral freedom or non-freedom

of a human being is planted in him seed-like between his first and seventh years.

Let us consider the development of the infant. Before birth it rests in the womb of the mother whose body is a protective sheath. This is also the periphery from which influences radiate toward the child as toward a center. All that happens to the mother is imparted to the child's body; it is exposed to the influences emanating from the mother. The question is often asked: Is there a pre-natal education? To this one can only answer: Yes, there is one. It is the absolute and strictest education of the mother's own self through herself. No direct educational influence can be brought to bear on the child in the mother's womb.

The knowledge of how the child is so thoroughly protected in the body of the mother before birth gives us a good clue as to how he will find his way after birth into the body of the family. Just as the mother had to care for him when he was still within her body, so now the family must take care to see that the child's surroundings are sound. Just as good light and color are part and parcel of healthy eyesight, so the sound moral development of the child requires that a healthy moral life surround him. Not the moral phrases of the adults, but their moral actions are what count, and the child takes these in with his whole being. We might even say that he devours them, for he takes his surroundings into himself as deeply as we do when we breathe in the outer air and drive it into the very depths of our body, making it into our inner world.

Of immense importance for the forming of the child's body is the kind of moral life which surrounds him. Never again in later life does such a surrender to his environment occur, not even through love. Even the unspoken thoughts of the persons around him affect the child. He senses whether the thoughts of those about him move more slowly or more quickly. He feels his father's energy and life-courage, his mother's kindness and love as active forces. The moral sensitivity of his surroundings forms his moral interests, and also shapes his organism harmoniously. Weariness of life, withdrawal from life, weaken the moral forces of the child for his whole future, unless an educator later on realizes this and takes it in hand. Even his organism is affected inharmoniously by such qualities.

Children are tremendously healthy. Predispositions to illness are laid in them through the behaviour of the human beings around them. Dishonest people, hypocrites for instance, who set up laws which they themselves do not observe, injure the child. Untruthfulness injures him, even his physical organism, and this can cause a tendency toward disturbances of the metabolic system later in life. Whence these disturbances come is often unknown then because we are not accustomed to pay attention to such connections.

If it is desired that a child acquire a certain attribute, this is dependent upon its being "done" in the child's surroundings. He does not acquire the feeling of gratitude from being taught to say *thank you* and to bow or courtesy. He learns gratitude when the adults with whom he lives are able to say *thank you* out of a sincerely experienced feeling of gratefulness, for instance, towards servants, in which respect much is wanting. By reason of having observed and imitated such behavior, the child will learn later on not to accept as a matter of course what others do for him.

All that goes on around the child in the way of foolish or sensible actions affects his organs in a health-promoting or injurious manner. From the first to the seventh year his organism develops forms and tendencies which it then retains for his whole lifetime. After the seventh year, growth alone is his essential preoccupation. Foolish actions affect the child's brain and can even shape it so that later on it also can give out only foolish thoughts. Then the child is stupid.

The father says: "Where does he get it from? Certainly not from me!" The mother says: "Nor from me!" They do not ask themselves whether their actions, observed by the child, may not have aided in bringing about this state.

Many parents, with good intentions toward their children, give them mechanical toys. By doing so they mechanize the child's brain and suppress something which he needs urgently. They paralyze his imagination, his creative spiritual forces.

We aid him to develop healthy imaginative forces by giving the child incomplete toys.* When playing railway, for instance, simply let him use tables and chairs even though it cause disorder, for this is better than the perfect products of the latest toy-manufacturing technique.

The emotions of adults exercise a very strong influence upon children. Let us suppose that there is a rift between the parents giving rise to quarrels and scoldings. The child may be sitting in the corner playing, apparently not listening. He nevertheless takes in his parents' emotions with his whole being. His breathing grows faster or slower, his circulation quicker or more halting. The dread he feels makes his lips dry and a bitter taste on his tongue. In such a way very, very much is done in regard to his moral upbringing, towards making or unmaking the moral education of a child, without the adults holding themselves to account for it.

Let attention be called to another phenomenon. According to the conception of Rudolf Steiner there occurs, when the child is being born, a union of something coming, so to say, from heaven, from the spiritual world, with something coming from the earth. The eternal being of the child, its "ego", is given a body by the parents; but the meeting of these two is not always a happy one. A comparison may help us here. We may have a suit that fits perfectly or does not fit well, it pinches here or there, we slip into it in this way or that and it always causes a feeling of discomfort. The eternal being of a child may feel such discomfort in regard to its body. Sometimes the union takes place without friction, then the children are well-balanced and do not cry much. Other children behave badly and cry a lot. But we cease to be angered when we comprehend that there is a struggle, a resistance against taking possession of the body, of fitting into it. And this struggle may last a long time. As a rule strong natures have to undergo this struggle; they have more difficulty than weaker ones, It is harder for them to lay hold of or form their body. Children's diseases are also connected with the difficulties that the human ego experiences in connection with a body that does not yet fit it. These difficulties first express themselves through the soul in whining and naughty behaviour. The child has everything he needs in the way of food and play and he is not content. He is scolded as ungrateful simply because we do not understand him. These difficulties then express themselves more strongly, even physically in children's diseases.

For the moral education of the child everything is important that goes on around him while he is learning to *walk, talk and think*. With his kicking the child is preparing himself to learn to speak**. From orderly speech orderly thinking is developed and this is the proper sequence in the development of the child. What does it mean for a child's life that he learns to walk, talk and think? It signifies the first rising-up of man towards manhood, the first overcoming of animality. It means conquering necessity, the first act of freedom. Man raises his countenance to heaven, frees his front limbs from the earth, moving them freely, and thus makes the first bodily step toward becoming a human being.

**What Shall We Give Our Children to Play With?* by William Harrer. Selected Articles, Vol. I, of this Bulletin.

**See *The New Art of Education*. p. 117, by Rudolf Steiner.

In learning to walk the child orientates himself in space and finds his relationship to the world. It is a mistaken kind of ambition to want to hasten this learning. Such misguided action on the part of the grownups may in later life give rise to a disposition towards gout and rheumatism.* And then we do not know where the diseases come from. Perhaps an explanation could be found by looking deeper into the underlying relationships.

When we observe the way in which a child walks we can see something of his childish character. How he places his feet, bends his knee, uses his little fingers, all this can serve us as a clue to his character as it will reveal itself in the future.

In learning to speak the child enters into connection with the spirit of the people, and this learning to speak should proceed correctly as it is important for his moral development. Adults should see to it that truthfulness reign in the child's surroundings, and not show a lack of it by imitating the babblings of the child. Only after the child has learned to speak properly can he learn to think properly.

Through thinking he becomes a part of common humanity. He acquires what is common to all men. For the sake of his future moral development we should avoid being ourselves confused, for all inconsistency in our thinking injures the child. For instance, one should not give an order and then countermand it after a short while. If the adult educator can not avoid confusion in his thinking there is created in the child the possibility of future nervousness, and a lack of self-control.

If the child has had a proper upbringing between the first and seventh years he will develop a strong will, and this will is the portal through which he takes into himself the external world.

If at this age the child has the right model to imitate, then he will at the same time receive the best moral education, because at this time there lives in him the unconscious but strong belief that *the world is good, is worthy of imitation*.

At the age of six or seven the child starts going to school. The teacher does not find him an unwritten page, for he brings with him influences from his surroundings, influences which have been stamped into him like the impressions of a seal. A teacher may endeavor to sharpen his eye for such seal-impressions and then be able to recognize through them the ethical love that surrounded the child, or even the lack of warmth and love that have affected him and brought about an inharmonious development. He traces, for example, in the frequent paleness of the child at school, the weariness of life which has made its impression upon him at home. Here the teacher can help, not by ridding the child of such impressions, which turn into traits of character, but by transforming them. A child's fear may be changed into self-possession and discernment. The opportunity may be offered him to transform fearfulness into courage and strength of judgement. This the teacher can emphasize. It is just between the seventh and fourteenth year that there is as yet nothing in the child that cannot be transformed into good. Rudolf Steiner has pointed this out again and again. The belief in the child's ability to change should become a permanent attitude of mind on the part of parents and teachers.

At this age a child should be neither judged nor condemned. Jean Paul once said: "Furthermore let it become a law, that every force is holy. No force is to be weakened, but over against it let another be awakened; thus, for instance, an over-tender, loving soul is not to be hardened, but the power of honor and clarity in it strengthened. In this way a bold character is not to

*See *The New Art of Education*, pp. 120-125, by Rudolf Steiner.

be made fearful but lovingly and judiciously formed."* Just as the child between the first and seventh year viewed his surroundings, so he now listens to the world of authority resounding near him. A great deal of veneration and respect appears in the child's life at this time between the seventh and fourteenth years. These forces must be preserved in him and become effective in his moral education, for nothing is attained at this stage of development by the categorical imperative and by simply giving orders. On the other hand moral judgment founded on feeling is to be cultivated. It is important that everything which the teacher has to relate to the children be related with an undertone of feeling. His sympathies and antipathies should be engaged in what he presents. Sympathy for what is moral and antipathy for what is unmoral will in this way be awakened in the child by the teacher.

Thus in teaching history he will tell them of exemplary men and women. He will awaken in the children sympathy for good and antipathy for bad qualities by describing them in a vivid way. If the teacher notices an undesirable characteristic in a child, he will do well not to attack this peculiarity directly. He will do better to tell the child a story in which this quality plays a corresponding role and he will then wait and see what the child makes of it. He does not exhort, but presents the moral quality by means of a picture. For example, he allows animals with the most varied characteristics to speak and act before the child's imagination, and in this way works, through the pictures, upon his moral feeling.

If a young choleric, for instance, commits some folly in an access of rage, we will, for the moment, only keep him from doing any damage. Not till the next day perhaps will the teacher take him aside, let him relate what took place and talk it over with him. Now that his emotions have died down he can face himself quietly. Moral education during the school period must be based on truthfulness. For this reason the educator must learn to be willing to allow the child to live out his true nature beside him and before his very eyes. If by using severity we repress all that the child would otherwise live out, we force him to commit all kinds of nonsense behind our backs.

About the ninth and tenth year an important moment arrives in the child's life. He becomes more conscious, more thoughtful, more personal. Inwardly he questions the teacher, he questions life: "Is your authority really the right one to present the world to me? Can I go on having confidence in you?" An inner restlessness disturbs the child until he receives an answer to this question, until the teacher, either directly or indirectly, says to him: "I can tell you still more about the world, things more beautiful than you have learned from me so far." If he is satisfied in his often unspoken questioning, if he can feel confidence, then his moral character will also grow stronger and more settled. Rudolf Steiner has often pointed out that there are old people who have a beneficent effect on us. Even without their speaking to us we feel blessed in being with them. They shed a blessing about them. If we look into the fact more closely, we find that such persons can bless because as children they have had the good fortune to be able to look up with reverence to an authority whom they venerated. Hands that learn to fold in prayer when young can dispense blessings in old age.

Jean Paul says: "Of what does warmth consist for the little human babe? Joyfulness! I can endure a sad man, but not a sad child; no matter into what morass the former has sunk, he can raise his eyes either to the realm of reason or to that of hope; but the little child becomes altogether enveloped and crushed by one poisonous, black drop of the Present."

*Jean Paul Richter, 1763-1825, novelist and humorist in the period of German Romanticism.

Just as important as the sun is for the plant seed, so is cheerful serenity, true happiness for the development of children. Cheerfulness, truthfulness, genuine love, form the truly nourishing soil from which the child's moral character can grow.

And something else. The child should be guarded from experiencing too early a feeling of guilt. We should endeavor, just as long as possible, to preserve the child's feeling of innocence. All the more does one assure the development of the moral force which has to prove itself in later life.

What the child is to take in between the seventh and fourteenth year he can only take in in an artistic way through his feelings, just as between the first and seventh year he takes in the world through his will. By this means he acquires a soul quality, namely gratefulness. Now love should find its proper unfolding in the child.

My intention was not to impart the details of a moral education, but to indicate the inner attitude out of which alone moral education can be achieved. This must first be developed in ourselves if we wish to be able to educate.

In closing let me quote some words by Mrs. Therese Schroer which speak of this attitude and which may accompany us. Looking upon her children whom she had brought up with great patience and with unbounded love and wisdom, she says: "Youth has transition periods when it needs forbearance and gentle guidance, . . . Children may not be pressed or pushed through the portal from one life-period into the next. In watching over them we must give them as guiding companions quiet, love and self-abnegation. Do we believe ourselves exhausted, ready to sink down in complete weariness of heart, then let us say to ourselves: 'With God's help it may be better tomorrow.' And frequently it is so. Then comes an hour, a day, and our daughter, our son has cast off the chrysalis and the soul spreads her young wings towards us."

Translated by Helen S. Belsterli

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

(Continued)

SEVENTH GRADE

History

The study of history is carried on through the Renaissance and Reformation. The child should acquire a deep impression of the importance of this period in which modern history has its root. American history is brought up to the civil war.

Geography

The eastern hemisphere is taken up beginning with a description of the cultural life of its inhabitants as this is linked with material and economic conditions.

Physiology

In the preceding school years the child has studied man in relation to the animal kingdom, plant kingdom and the minerals. During the seventh grade the observation of nature leads him back to mankind. A more detailed study of the human being is made which includes the circulation of the blood, respiration, digestion, nourishment, health and hygiene.

Physics

The students broaden their knowledge of acoustics, optics, heat, magnetism and electricity. In addition they study the elements of mechanics such as inclined planes, the screw, etc.,

Chemistry

Starting with familiar examples of combustion the child becomes acquainted with chemical compounds and elements such as oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen. Whatever is studied in chemistry at this time is with a view toward its practical application in life.

Mathematics

Business calculation is continued, algebra is extended somewhat to include simple equations connected with practical life, and more complicated formulas are introduced. Inductive geometry is continued and carried up to the Pythagorean Theorem.

English

As an approach to creative writing a study can be made of the structural forms of speech in expressions of wish, surprise or command. Parts of speech, sentences and paragraphs can be studied more intensively as problems of style in writing are developed. These should now include conjunctions, prepositional phrases, compound sentences and an introduction to complex sentences. Reading, composition, dictation, practice in speaking and recitation of poetry continue as factors in the study of English. A study of poetry as to style and structure leads to the writing of poetry by the children themselves.

William Harter

For the Faculty of the Rudolf Steiner School

EUROPEAN RELIEF

Dear Friends;

The need of our friends abroad will be even greater this winter because of the long period of undernourishment which has weakened them. Their supplies have not increased. May we ask you to continue your contributions?

One of our main objectives this Fall is to send 5,000 pairs of shoes or shoe soles to our schools. In Germany people are allowed one pair of soles a year on an old pair of shoes. Please every one of you try to encourage five friends to send us either an old pair of shoes, or a pair of soles and heels, we can also purchase the leather here for wholesale prices if you should wish to contribute for this specific purpose.

Thank you for all your help,

Vera Leroi, Alfred Barnes

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Sense for Reality, (Vol. 6, No. 1, of this Bulletin) written by Henry Barnes while stationed in Puerto Rico, has appeared in Spanish translation by Maria Luisa Munoz in a recent issue of *La Revista* the journal for teachers in Puerto Rico.

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.

Address Secretary, Rudolf Steiner School Association, 15 East 79th Street, New York.

Editor of the Bulletin: Christy Barnes.
