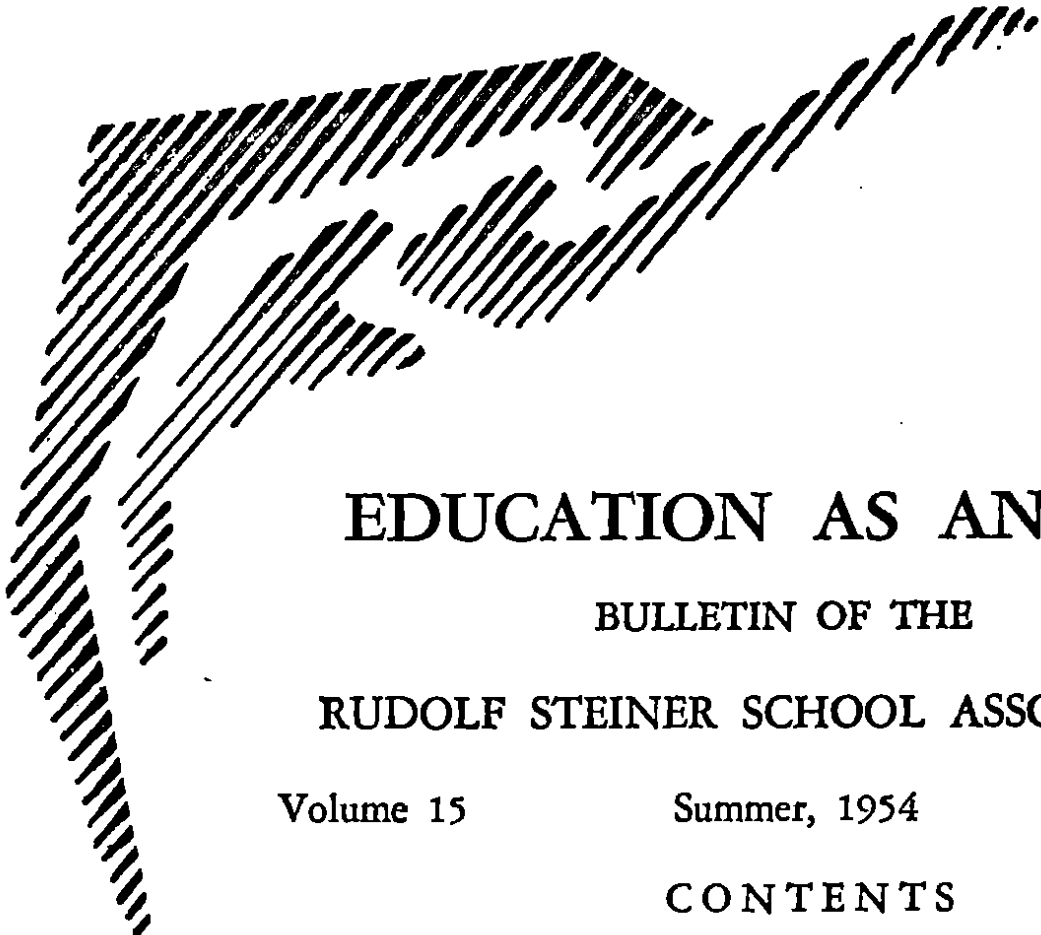




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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CONTENTS

- This Child* — Percy MacKaye
Ye Olde Anchor and Compass — Cecil Harwood
The Challenge to Education — George St. John
The Road of Education — Beulah Emmet
A Living Picture — William Harrer
Knowledge of the Human Being — Henry Barnes

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Rudolf Steiner School was celebrated by a conference in March of this year. This issue is composed of excerpts from some of the speeches given during the conference.

THIS CHILD

Written for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Rudolf Steiner School

Greater than the deed is the soul who does it:
What he *is* creates it.

This child—this human being—ghost-like beyond in the future
Hover the men, the women, this soul may—might—
Become, but only one among them
Is the essential, ever-self-maturing child.
What he imagines very clearly—saint or sinner—
He shall become.

The focus of education is the knowledge of what we are.
As growing teachers let us learn to be wiser children,
Scrape off the barnacles from our spirit keels,
So that with our pupils we may move smoothly, jubilantly
Through the calms and the whirlpools ahead.

This child, freighted from within with immortal nutriment,
Is voyager, voyage and goal

—Percy MacKaye

YE OLDE ANCHOR AND COMPASS

Psychologists, when they want to discover our quidities and iddities, have invented a technique of presenting a word to us and asking us to tell them our immediate reaction. Mr. Henry Barnes opened the Conference by telling us of the very heavy feeling that comes to him when he hears the words "educational conference." I must tell you the more cheerful viewpoint I assumed when I had my orders to speak to you on Education as the Anchor and Compass of the Coming Generation. I saw at once a little harbor where I keep a little sailing boat. I saw this little harbor at about six o'clock in the evening, and a number of sailors and jovial young men were making their way along the harbor quay towards an inviting public house whose gaily painted sign declared it: "Ye Olde Anchor and Compass." I was tempted to make a comparison between a school and a pub, and I believe I could do it beautifully! Happily, however, I remembered another name for such places of call in England, the "Goat and Compass." People who investigate the roots of language tell us that this name is a corruption of the words "God Incompasseth us." By the happy chance of this memory my thoughts were led to a more suitable sphere.

Now I recall that long before the compass had been invented, man had a compass of a cosmic and divine origin. He found his way over sea and earth by the heavenly compass of the stars. In the education of our children there comes a rather wonderful moment when they realize for the first time that you cannot know where you stand on the earth unless you look up toward the heavens. Your magnetic compass gives you the direction but if you wish to know what point of the earth you are on, you must look toward the stars. Even to know the time of the day or night men had once to turn toward the heaven of sun, moon and stars. Little by little his glance turned earthwards, first to the clock in the church tower, then towards the watch he drew from his pocket. Similarly the time came when the seaman no longer looked at the stars but at his magnetic compass.

It is from this time, when men no longer looked toward the heavens for their position in time and space that a schism began to appear in their lives. On the one hand man became increasingly aware of his own personality; the inner life of personal feelings and emotions became so important that hundreds of words were added to our language to express man's preoccupation with his subjective life. On the other hand, while this was happening, while men were becoming more and more aware of their individualized feelings, they were using one part of themselves and only one part, namely the intellect, to investigate the world and find out what they believed was objective knowledge. Through this one part alone, the intellect, men looked into the world for knowledge, leaving the finer inner forces of the soul behind them. Moreover they looked into the outside world to find only what was quantitative—and they found it. So there came about this split between what men feel about the eternal values of human life, and the theories of the external world, which the intellectual interpretation of their senses had taught them. Of all splits and schisms which we have experienced in our day—and they are numerous enough in every sphere—I think this is the greatest. Moreover it is the one we have in our own hands to make good. Maybe it will be the one which will ultimately heal the others as well.

I am not here to speak to you in detail about the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner which lies behind the education in this school. I am here to rejoice that in this great city for twenty-five years there has been an institution which has been endeavoring and succeeding in bringing up a generation of children

to overcome this split within themselves. For the teachers here endeavor to understand when the virtue of love arises in the child, the virtue of reverence, the virtue of beauty, and direct these virtues and powers to the outer world of objective knowledge. This is the beginning of the healing of that split which is the duty of everyone of us to endeavor to make good.

My country and yours have been brought together in a catastrophic world. I am aware that there lives in your country very many ardent memories of the time when you turned us out. I like to go in Britain to the little Wiltshire town of Eddington where Alfred camped with his army before he drove the heathen out of his country. I like equally to go to Valley Forge to see where Washington prepared to do the same thing! Today, however, we share with you a dreadful partnership. We share with you in the swinging of that mighty pick with which humanity seems to be digging its early grave. With every stroke of the colossal pick a chill passes over man throughout the entire world. Already we seem to see humanity standing like Hamlet in the grave, holding the skull which recalls the memories of the innocent life gone by. In this tragedy we share together. But we can also share together constructive spiritual work. In the sphere of education we have been able to make a fruitful cooperation between our English schools and your schools in America. I have personally learned much—very much—from my visits here. I am very happy that you have invited the cooperation of Mr. Edmunds to this school. I would like to express the wish that just as you desire your children to grow to the full stature of manhood, so this school may grow to the full stature of a school in the coming years. And I give you my heartiest congratulations that in the difficult circumstances of this difficult city you have kept this educational banner flying for a quarter of a century.

Cecil Harwood, Michael Hall School, England

THE CHALLENGE TO EDUCATION TODAY

In every individual there are creative capacities which are never awakened. De Exupéry writes this of a ragged fifteen-year-old Arab boy whom he watched in a North African town: "No one grasped you by the shoulder while there was still time; and now the clay is dry and hardened; naught will awaken in you the sleeping poet or musician or astronomer that possibly inhabited you from the beginning."

What are the best capacities of Richard or Elizabeth? How could these best capacities be awakened? We can never be wholly sure. We only know that the richness and variety of human personality give the educator a goal that stretches toward infinity. In this is the permanent challenge to education, renewed every time a child is born.

Even while we give imagination and strength to try to draw out the best in individual children, we teachers have to retain a great humility and recognize that our efforts may or may not be decisive. Great human qualities somehow blossom forth at times from what we might think the most unpromising soil. I presume that no graduate school of education would deliberately contrive for a child the school and family background of Abraham Lincoln, yet from that background Abraham Lincoln drew the strength he needed.

On the philosophic and religious level we simply do not have today the kind of unity which we had one hundred years ago. The school may well have certain ethical and social standards, but is likely to ignore ultimate beliefs.

In this situation education faces a varied challenge: First, to help students see underlying unity in many ideals and points of view in different countries

and different centuries, even where there may be conflict on the surface; second, to help students expect differences in philosophy as part of life, and third, a few independent schools can do even more and can interpret a significant, unified philosophy.

In the United States we live with the American dilemma—the conflict between democratic ideals and a heritage of prejudice that in many places still accords second-class citizenship to members of minority groups. Let me mention just one specific incident. A few weeks ago, my son, tried out for the Youth Symphony Orchestra in Nashville. He was disappointed not to earn a place, but he was delighted that several boys and girls from the Negro high school were chosen. This was the first time that Negro boys and girls had had a chance to try out for the Youth Symphony, and many of us looked on this event as one of the milestones on the road to a free, integrated society. But a week later the new Negro members were told they need not come to rehearsals; they could not be accepted after all. They had been tried out and earned their places. The other members of the orchestra wanted them to join. But two or three Board members in the Civic Music Association opposed the change bitterly, and the change would have to wait.

Young people must learn to expect differences and then learn to live with people whose customs and values are different from their own. They must learn how to handle conflict constructively, whether it is conflict between members of the family or conflict between social groups, or between East and West.

If this age is a time of troubles, then men need more than ever a sound perspective. We need the capacity to see ourselves as others see us and the capacity to see ourselves in the whole long stretch of human history. We need the habit of putting ourselves in the other fellow's shoes, the habit of living *sub specie aeternitatis*. In the face of the great common denominators of life and death, of joy and suffering, many differences in values take their right place.

Educators sometimes make it one of their goals to produce young people who are *well adjusted*. But well adjusted to what? Adjusted to the acceptance of things as they are, to swimming with the tide, or to a *divine discontent with things as they ought not to be*?

The greatest hope for our country or the world lies in people who are thoroughly maladjusted to many of the standards in their society. We need rebels. But they must be the right sort of rebels, *redemptive rebels* somebody called them. They need patience and understanding and a deep spirit of love if their rebellion is to be constructive and creative. They need a special degree of personal integration. They need to be adjusted to *themselves* and somehow adjusted to other people as human beings, even though they may resist with all their might some of the things which those other people do.

What do we know about human beings to help us in our task of education? How can we help people to be maladjusted to injustice and wrong, yet at peace with themselves and with life? I speak as a layman, not as one trained in psychology or educational philosophy. We are more and more aware of the tremendous role emotion plays in human action and thinking. We recognize rationalization as a normal instrument of human pride or human greed. We know that anger has its roots in fatigue or insecurity or hurt feelings rather than in a specific occasion for an outburst of temper. We know that the mind is at times quite literally blocked by distracting emotions. Yet we often fail as teachers and parents to understand just what emotions may be controlling a

child or just what we can do to free the child. Here is a challenge to all the science, all the art, all the experience a teacher or parent can bring to his task.

A second fact we recognize is that there is a tremendous variety of possibilities in the human being. Mankind can produce in the same generation an Albert Schweitzer, a Franklin Roosevelt, a T. S. Eliot, a Josef Stalin—the list could run to four figures without bringing any duplication in type. Even within the single individual there are very wide potentialities, good and bad.

A third thing we know about the human being is that he responds to the spirit of love. When the Quakers speak of the seed of God in every man, they are expressing with remarkable clarity a fact about human beings. This belief does not fall into the trap of roseate optimism about human nature. It does not maintain that all men are good or that men would all be good if it were not for evil rulers or corrupt social systems. It is simply a belief in the *capacity* for goodness in each boy and girl, each man or woman.

The power of love, the power of creative good will, is closely associated with a deep sense of perspective. This is partly a matter of intellectual perspective and partly a matter of moral perspective. There are people who have an understanding of human history, an understanding of what Arthur Morgan has called "The Long Road." Arthur Morgan, a great idealist of our times, had no illusions about quick social revolutions. He knew that progress would have to be slow and would have to depend on the development of individual character even more than on the framework of social organization. We need to understand "The Long Road"; we need to accept the fact that does not always lead straight ahead, that life includes problems which cannot be solved, tragedy that cannot be prevented, and mystery which cannot be analyzed.

How many of us see ourselves in the whole long stretch of human history and live *sub specie aeternitatis*—under the aspect of eternity? We know that human beings can develop this capacity because many men show the capacity at times and great individuals achieve it for their whole lives.

Isn't it our central task as parents and teachers to help young people live under the aspect of eternity and help them grow in the capacity for out-going love? This, it seems to me, is the great challenge to education today and possibly forever.

George C. St. John, Jr., Dean of Fisk University

THE ROAD OF EDUCATION

Our world today is hung with vast curtains of fear obscuring the sun—curtains woven of haunting pictures of great machines that have grown from triumphant conquests of matter to huge phantoms of destruction; pictures of a universe that goes back and further back into unknown eons of time and out into the vortices of space; pictures that outpace man's reason and beggar his imagination.

One result is a sense of futility—a feeling of what's the use—what can one man, such as myself, or many men sitting in endless conclave spinning words and words and more words, do to bring back the hidden sun. It is all the same search for security.

Some of us are trying the road of education. It is a long way. It looks to the next generation and the next. It does not give a formula for an immediate solution but it does give a groundwork, a firm building for a balanced

growth. And is not growth the story and the triumph of man? Where in the history of man has there ever been a solution? There is no stopping, for that would be death. There is growth and the exciting change as the long centuries wheel.

So we as a group offer education as a path for growth—a particular type of education born of this day and age, started by Dr. Steiner in the Waldorf school in Stuttgart. At its core lies the study of man, man in all the different stages of his growth, the babe, the child, the youth, the man; his needs at this age and at this, and how differently the teacher should meet them at the different levels. At its core also lies the recognition that man is a spiritual being and that his greatest strength lies in those invisible powers within him, that security and freedom lie not in outer things but within man himself—in the creative and spiritual power that is within each of us.

Today man in his intense interest in the world outside, in the material world around him—because of the very greatness of his achievement in the field of modern natural science—has left out in his study part of his very self—has forgotten, until just lately, to study the rich world of his emotions—the world of the heart. Where in the formulae and searchings of the laboratory do we find the living heart?

We who have been working for years—twenty-five here at this school, are trying to build and balance each child as a whole person in his thinking, in his feeling and in his willing so that he can find security and freedom where they are still to be found even today—within.

We who have been for many years doing our best with this fascinating and ever living approach to education would like on this twenty-fifth anniversary of our mother school in this country to bear witness. And it has been said that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

Beulah H. Emmet, High Mowing School

A LIVING PICTURE

If it were not for the gifts to education that have been given to the teachers of the Rudolf Steiner School and to whosoever wishes to make use of them, I would feel in utter despair after having heard all that has been said this morning. But with that which Rudolf Steiner has given us, one can find a way. A teacher never feels that he is doing what he ought, but at least he has a goal. This goal again and again gives him courage even if he fails day after day in what he attempts to accomplish.

After Mr. Ege's talk last night, when he said, "With the kind of thinking we have today, which the scientists have at their disposal, we cannot fully understand the human being," you might have had the question: "What does the Rudolf Steiner School do so that the children have besides that kind of thinking, a thinking that can penetrate into nature and can eventually understand the human being?" I will try to give an example. At the present time the fifth grade has not yet had botany. I have thought quite a bit about it. I am not quite prepared to teach it yet. But in thinking about botany I know that from my own childhood there is connected with the teaching of botany a feeling for the classification of various plants but I cannot recall that from it I ever received in my soul a living picture of the plants themselves. I shall attempt to teach botany in this way.

I might say to the children, "Now we have already learned quite a bit about science. You talk about science all the time. You are interested mainly in flying to the moon. Science can do countless things. Now I want to ask you whether you think science can produce a seed—a seed that would look like a natural seed and would have the content of the natural seed." Of course they would say that science can do this. I might say, "Yes, modern science has gone so far that men can produce the content of a seed in minute detail—something shaped like a seed and looking exactly like one. Now I will ask you children to do a certain exercise with me. Imagine that you take this seed which the scientists have made and put it side by side with a real seed. We shall bury both of them in the soil. What will happen there in this moistened, dark soil? Both seeds will be affected there. They are affected by the working powers of the earth, by the moisture and chemicals and organisms in the earth. They will both begin to do something. They will both start to decay. Both will die. One will die completely and mix with the surrounding soil and nothing will be left. The other while dying will bring forth a new life. Suddenly out of the seed something will sprout, and while the seed is dying away, little arms and feet will sprout and take hold of the soil. In another direction a sprout will come out and reach towards the sun. This sprout is still whitish, fleshy and thick. It is still earth bound, but as it comes out and reaches for the sun it changes its color. It becomes green and follows the light of the sun and will turn its head towards it. It will look up to the sun as a boy looks up to his father and will follow him around all day long. The leaves will unfold. The ones closer to the sun will become more delicate in their shape. They are gradually losing their earth-bound character, and reaching toward the sun, they will become heaven bound. As the plant grows you will see little nodes and in these little nodes there is something like a miracle. If these nodes develop in the open air, a new leaf begins, but if they are in the earth, a root develops from them. There are both possibilities.

And so I would go on developing the plant upward. Here is the stem and out of the stem there comes an expansion in the leaves and then comes a contraction. At the end of the stem the leaves form a circle. There is a contraction and out of this can come something entirely new. There unfolds then something no longer earth bound at all but there the flower petals appear, colorful, light, almost transparent. Here is no longer a being belonging to the earth but a being looking up to the sun and feeling at home in the sunlight. It looks for its home more to the sun than to the earth. The plant lives between heaven and earth. It looks up to its father above and to its mother below. Within the flower we have a new contraction in the ovum, where the seeds form. Again in the seed there is a complete contraction. In this process of growing between heaven and earth the plant has formed a new seed and the cycle is closed. This new seed carries in itself an image of the flower it will be when it is put into the earth to die.

In this way I would introduce my class to botany. I would hope that the children would go with me in their thoughts and develop a feeling for the plant that would be something that would live within them for a long time to come and not just something they put into their notebooks.

William Harrer

KNOWLEDGE OF THE HUMAN BEING:

ANCHOR AND COMPASS OF THE COMING GENERATION.

If you have ever been caught in a boat that was dragging its anchor in a heavy wind, you know how it feels to be at the mercy of the storm. Similarly, if you have ever been caught in a thick fog at sea and have discovered that your compass is not reliable, you know the measure of helpless desperation. When anchor and compass fail us, we realize their true worth. The signs of the times tell us that we are in danger of losing both in the moral and spiritual chaos of our day.

The human soul has often been compared to a ship at sea. If we accept this image, in what capacity of soul can we find the steadfast anchor which enables us to resist the conflicting storms which drive us from without and from within? Do we not find this anchor to the extent that we come to know ourselves as beings in whom a higher nature is active—a nature which can not be explained by the laws of inheritance and the influence of environment? Once we have sensed the presence of such a nature within us, sensed it independent of every outer compulsion, and have realized that we can educate ourselves to increasing awareness of it, we will not drift again as helplessly nor debase ourselves to such a degree of slavery to outer circumstances as we did before we had this experience. We learn to see ourselves in a new dimension and we sense a new degree of responsibility. We dare not squander our forces so irresponsibly. Self-respect, founded in self-knowledge, holds us steady in the storms.

There is much insecurity and fear abroad today to which youth reacts with indifference and covert despair. Life makes no sense. Idealism is strictly for the birds. Our children are faced with all the material given to them by science. This is strange to them even when it fascinates them most. They cannot digest it. And it remains like an undigested food in the organism and becomes a poison in the soul. They cannot see that man is in the world and that the world is in man. They have not learned to trust their own thinking. Without ever having heard of Immanuel Kant they accept his dictum that man can not know reality and so they trade the essence of security for its counterfeit. Good food with natural vitamins is needed to build a healthy body and only a knowledge which has been made human can educate a healthy, confident mind. One of our tasks is to work on the humanization of knowledge, to transform the material of sense experience with which modern science presents us into a form in which the human being, and particularly the child, can swallow and digest it. If we can do this, even to the smallest degree, we will then make it possible to help the coming generation to find the compass which can give it a sense that life is worth living, can give it that basic confidence toward life without which no free deed will be risked, without which life is eventually paralyzed. The coming generation is not primarily looking for what we call security, but is looking for a goal worth living and, if necessary, worth dying for. The only goal that is worth that is the human being himself. It is our hope that this conference has been a creative step in this direction.

Henry Barnes