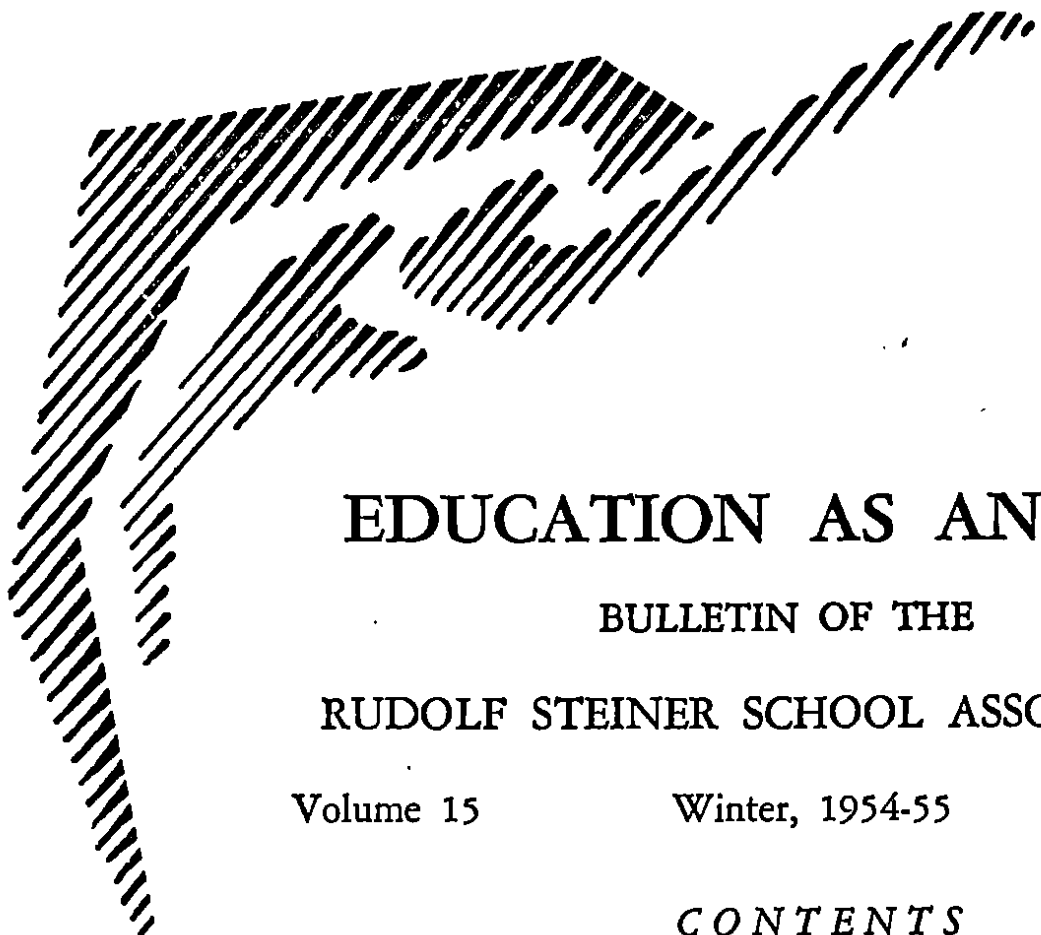




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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FEELING IN THE GROWING CHILD*

We have come to regard feelings as subjective and therefore untrustworthy. We fight shy of them in public and are not a little ashamed of them in private. There have been parents who have asked uneasily whether our education does not encourage too much feeling for a world as hard and competitive as our own. The fact is that most people have more feeling than they know what to do with; they get distressed about little things and worry about nothings. Feeling is too often confused with emotionalism. A man of strong, deep feeling is a character; an emotional man is a type of horror. It is probably true that there is too much emotionalism in our day and too little real feeling. Yet feeling is an essential part of human nature: a man who lacks feeling is hardly human.

Compared with thought, feeling is certainly subjective. A given thought is the same whoever thinks it, just as a given object is the same whoever beholds it. This does not apply to feeling. Even if we communicate our feelings to others, each must still feel in his own way: we can know exactly what another person thinks, we can see exactly what another person does, we can only sense approximately how the same person feels. Whether we like it or not we stand in a feeling relationship with everything around us; even indifference is a state of feeling. We feel situations, events, people, ideas, all day long, and

* Reprinted from *Child and Man*, published by Rudolf Steiner Educational Association, England.

these feelings at least color if they do not actually form our judgments. When someone concludes an argument by saying "That is how I think about it," as likely as not he means "That is how I feel about it." Because feelings are so deeply rooted in the personal, we want to be wary of them; on the other hand, to eliminate feeling from our conduct of life leads to disaster.

If we are not to override our feelings or be over-ridden by them, we need to know them, understand them, and above all educate them. Only by educating the feeling can we hope to rise above the personal. To feel deeply may indeed mean to suffer more, but it also means to know more, to understand more, to joy more and triumph more greatly—to be more of a man.

The greatest educator of feeling is undoubtedly art. Since art is inevitably bound up with feeling it, too, is largely discredited today as being subjective. Art may *please* us, so it is argued, but it has no value in the struggle for existence. Therefore it is little more than a plaything. To spend time on art, except as a recreation, is so much waste of time. This word "recreation" is an example of how the mighty are fallen: what can be more wonderful than to re-create the human being—but that is no longer what the word means.

I have watched men and women, however, being re-created by means of art and the allied crafts. I had the good fortune to visit a place called Letchworth Village in New York where there are over four thousand "retarded" patients of all ages. Men and women of fifty, sixty and seventy years old were still called 'boys and girls.' I have seen these 'boys and girls,' mental age described as two to three years old, doing astonishing things, making lace, tapestry, rugs, a great variety of articles that would do credit to any shop window. Under the guidance of a trained and sympathetic teacher, their limbs could do what clever heads could not. By means of their work, these unhappy debris of modern times were reintegrated into society, were made part of the general community of man.

Here was a case not of art as pastime, not of art for art's sake, but of art for man's sake. If so much could be done through art and crafts for the mentally sick, what might not be done, by the same means, to re-create a mentally sick age where abstract minds are running ahead of human hearts: is not this whole age nervously over-wrought and crippled thereby?

Art calls for skill, form and style. Its practice educates right feeling and right judgment. True art has its source in invisible manhood,—in that which makes man by his very nature more than a thing or a conditioned animal. To educate through art is to awaken man to his nobler attributes, to quicken his faculties for a higher perception of the world he lives in.

Art makes use of matter to express that which is more than material. Poetry makes use of words to utter what is beyond the articulate. Music calls out in us another kind of hearing, the plastic arts another kind of seeing. Education should be the greatest art of all calling out a better form of manhood. The teacher cooperates with the unexpressed genius of the child in his care, so that this hidden genius may one day speak his own language, reveal his own powers for life. In a Rudolf Steiner School all practice of the specific arts serves this all-inclusive art of education itself.

From the first grade on, in our schools, the main lesson becomes the outstanding example of an artistic method of teaching. There is nothing set. What comes about each day and in the course of weeks and years is a free creative

act, according to the gifts and endeavors of the teacher in relation to the needs and capacities of his children. The ultimate goal of the whole education is that human beings shall be so helped and guided in childhood that they may, in the course of their own lives as adults arrive at the truest possible picture of man. There is a time for listening and learning, a time for moving, clapping, reciting, practising, conversing, a time for self-expressive individual doing, not according to the clock but as human need directs. What has been thought needs to be felt, what has been felt needs to be willed and expressed for the co-ordination of the whole human being. With the young child, the *picture* given contains the idea, for a picture can always be *felt*; young children experience the world in pictures—they *feel* the world around them long before they think about it.

Just as art selects its material with the greatest care for each particular task, so must education. The child is ever the guide. The example often quoted because it is particularly striking is that of the ninth year. Round about the ninth year when the speech center is formed there is a gentle accentuation of the feeling of *self*: for the first time the child becomes inwardly aware that it is alone in the world. This expresses itself variously in different children: in some it leads to assertiveness, in others to a measure of fearfulness. Something must go out from the understanding adult to meet the child. The curriculum answers the situation in its own way. For example, Rudolf Steiner recommended for the main lesson, stories from the Old Testament. These show by example the force of growing personality, the sense of purpose, of struggle and fulfillment, types of behavior and conduct, what is faithful or unfaithful, steadfast or inconsequent, courageous or cowardly—in all cases how man is intended to be the representative of something higher than himself. A companion period on farming shows how man lives in relation to sun and moon and the seasons: to the earth beneath him, to the plants that grow and the creatures of the field; the farmer and his wife and the whole community of the farm form a picture of the wise coordinating powers of man carrying purpose to expression in outer life. During this year, there is given the first important period on grammar, “the backbone of language”, so that with the forming of the speech centre there may also be the beginning of a more conscious use of words.

Into this general artistic method of education which adapts itself year by year, and which enters into the treatment of every subject, there comes the art work itself. Art includes recitation and drama, painting, modelling, carving, eurythmy and gymnastics, handicrafts of many kinds and other such activities. In all this work it is *the type of exercise* that is all important and the time when it is introduced. If Art is over-directed it becomes mere technique. If, on the other hand, there is unlimited freedom it becomes a matter of mere self-indulgence. Both ways the true impulse of art is defeated. Art is an extended language and needs its own form of grammar, syntax and the like. The training through art in school is not for the purpose of producing artists as specialists but in order to educate young human beings for the art of living. The greatest and most liberating art is based on sober and disciplined exercise and this is equally true of great living.

The following example taken from work with six-year-olds will illustrate what is meant by exercise. The children were told a story about a star. Some

days later, on their painting morning, they were to *paint* a star. What is more fitting than bright radiant yellow for a star? So the children dipped their large square brushes into the liquid paint and formed a bright yellow centre on their slightly moistened paper. And now, with the same big brushes, the children beginning at the centre painted the rays outwards, the yellow growing fainter as it moved further away from its source. Now, in the middle of the paper, there was this great shining star of spreading rays. But there must be something to *hold* the star there on the white paper even as the night holds the stars in the deep blue heavens. The brushes having been carefully washed clean were now dipped into liquid blue and the children began to bring this blue, as if from the furthest heavens, to the edges of the paper. There around the edges the blue was darkest, and now, very carefully, the hands of these little six-year-olds, guided the streams of blue towards the star—led the blue, growing fainter and fainter in between the golden rays, till blue touched yellow on the way to the heart of the golden star. How very carefully they had to guide the blue so that the yellow should remain clean without smudging and so that there should be no dry bare white patches left between. At length it was done and there was the star shining outwards in its yellow and the blue holding it firmly but gently in its place. Half-way through this exercise, as the blue was approaching the yellow but had not yet arrived, one of the six-year-olds was heard to say in wonder, "Look, the star is beginning to shine!" In the exercise there was care, precision, cleanliness, appreciation of the qualities of the colors used, and most important, a *discovery* for the child to make!

This elementary example taken from the very young is true of the entire work which must include at each level the appropriate elements of training, control, true use of material, suitable selection of the task and room for discovery. Such exercises then flow little by little into "Free expression" so that at the end there is *order in freedom*—and this latter is precisely what the world lacks today. Nor will there be *order in freedom* till there is right judgment, a balance between the directing force of thought and the impelling force of will which can come only through sound, disciplined feeling.

One of the most decisive periods of childhood is the transition to adolescence. At this time there is a sudden lighting up in the thinking accompanied by a definite descent into bodily function. The one gives rise to a new feeling of independence and the other to sex maturity. The result is a considerable tension of soul. There are authorities on delinquency who state that a great many recurring criminals begin their unhappy career at this time. In the normal child the mind is open for ideas and ideals whilst there can be at the same time a great feeling of loneliness and depression and a longing for understanding companionship. If the education is intellectual and abstract, leaving the life of feeling to its own resources, there can be much chaos of soul: feeling and will are flung back on themselves and give rise to introspection as well as to erotic impulses. The sex creed of today is the outcome of abstract thinking and unbalanced feeling. The true mood of adolescence is to reach out to the whole of life with understanding and love. The primary impulse is one of love for all creation. If, however, the world is presented as a material process only, this impulse of the soul is largely defeated and is flung back on to itself. As one practical measure the art teaching brings to the children at this time the experience of working with the dramatic medium of black and white, the contrast of light and darkness. The conflict that arises in the soul through the

longing for the ideal and the sense of being body-bound finds relief in self-expression and a right self-knowledge. Art becomes the mediator and protector, the friend and healer in these difficult years.

Feeling will always be subjective but the subject may grow so that through his feelings he comes into a deeper and more direct relationship with the world of his origin and the goal of his future. When feeling bears the balance of artistic perception, it frees a man from himself, for then he may relate idea to impulse, thought to will, undriven by ought but the voice of his own heart. Such a one will also seek the hearts of his fellowmen. This will be the true strength which works through gentleness.

We live in an age when there is on the one hand too much direction making for unfreedom, and on the other hand, too much abandonment to senseless striving and living, licentiousness masquerading as freedom. It is the middle factor, the balancing factor, that threatens to be eliminated, the life of soul mediating between thoughts and action, between spirit and body. The time has come for the 'pale cast of thought' to be permeated with the warm life-blood of the human heart so that there may arise a new perceiving, a new understanding and a new caring for man and the world. Science itself is coming to this point of view and is awaiting a qualitative change in human thinking. The mathematical thought of the past has produced the machine, largely at the expense of the human heart. The machine is only at the beginning of its possibilities which are great in themselves, but men need new hearts if they are not to be overwhelmed and crushed by the force of their own inventions—and these new hearts can only be born by way of educating qualities of soul, of feeling and of will which can deepen thinking and lead the mind of man to behold horizons of the spirit.

Francis Edmunds

AN INTRODUCTION TO HOUSE BUILDING

THIRD GRADE

From a Teacher's Notebook

We all live in houses. Some of us live in a whole house with just our own family. Some of us live in an apartment house where many other families live too. In this city there are some apartment houses so big that they hold enough people for a whole town. Now it would be hard to imagine one house big enough to hold all the people in New York City. It would be so big that it would take weeks and months to walk through every room. Now imagine a house even bigger, thousands of times bigger, big enough to hold all the people in the world. That house would have to be as big as the earth itself.

The whole earth is a beautiful house which is the home of all human beings, white or black, brown or yellow. They all live together in this earth house. The floor is the ground we walk on. The ceiling is the blue sky where shines the brightest light of all, the sun, to light the earth by day, and the dimmer lights of moon and stars to light the house by night. There are many different rooms in this great house. In the north, near the north star, the floor is covered with snow and ice most of the time, and no plants can grow there. In the south there are thick hot jungles and one can see instead of the north

star the southern cross overhead. In the east you'll find a floor covered with hot sand, so dry that no grass can grow. In the west there are prairies full of high grass, and forests which give cool shade.

Whether people live in the North, South, East or West, God has given to all of them four special gifts so that they can make their homes on earth.

First of all He has given them the earth-floor, the ground upon which they walk. This ground is the same earth-floor under the feet of all human beings, whoever they may be.

Then God has given water to all people. Without water, people cannot live any more than plants can. Another of God's gifts is the air around us which helps us breathe and talk. And last of all there is the fire which God has given to man. It keeps him warm and with its help man can make many useful things. Without these four gifts of earth, water, air and fire, man could not live on earth.

Human beings are not the only ones who make their home on earth. There are also the animals, some of whom are wild and live apart from man, and others who are man's friends and serve him. Then there are the plants which are rooted in the earth itself, yet reach toward the sun unfolding green leaves and colorful flowers and forming sweet fruits for man to eat.

God made the earth so that it could be a home for man, and God made man and gave him a body to live in. God gave man two strong legs and feet with which to stand and walk upon the earth. God gave man two hands with which to work, to make and build things with the help of fire. God gave man eyes to see the light of the sun and moon and all the beauties of earth and sky. God gave man ears with which he may hear the sounds in the air—a nose to smell the fragrant flowers, a tongue to taste the sweet fruits. Best of all God gave man a part of His own wisdom that man might use it to make the world a happy place.

When we look out into the world through our eyes we see beautiful things, and we see other people we love. Our hearts are warm with all the love we feel. We love to do many things too. Sometimes we do things with our feet: we walk to school, we run and jump and go where we know we can be of help to someone. We use our hands to write and paint and play music. Our hands not only help us, they can help others too.

And so we live in our bodies just as if they were houses. When we look out of our eyes and do things with our arms and legs in the world it is just like walking out of our house into the world.

Some people do not think about this so they don't really look out into the world. They don't listen to what they could hear. They don't like to eat. They are, in a way, asleep in their house all the time. The heart's little fire doesn't burn and they are all cold inside—and others who come near them shiver and hurry away. These poor people don't do things with their hands and feet. They like to sit and do nothing and pay other people to do things for them. But they are not really happy people.

The happy ones are the ones who go out and come back again to their houses. They look for wonderful things outside, and if they find something ugly they try to change it into something beautiful. If their hearts are warm, they find out what a help it is to love the work which their hands and feet can do.

Now we have thought of our bodies in this way, as if they were our real houses. And we are going to see how all the other houses which men have built in the different parts of the earth, in all the different rooms of the great earth-house, are like our own bodies in many ways.

Wherever human beings are
'Neath Southern Cross or Northern Star,
On mountain top or sandy plain,
God's gifts to man are all the same:

Firm earth beneath their feet He gives.
In heavenly air man breathes and lives.
Fire warms him when the wild wind blows,
And for his thirst cool water flows.

Now stone and plant and beast and man
Have lived on earth since earth began,
And of all these 'tis man who gives
His thanks to God for all that lives.

Dorothy Harrer

THE SAWMILL

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!
Zipping and ripping with iron claws.
Slitting and splitting, the mill's great saws
Grasping the logs in steely grip
Sunder them through from base to tip.
Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!
Whiz! Whiz! the giant plane
Smooths out lumber with mottled grain
Whish! Whish! Straight and long!
Choose the best and leave the rest.
Whish! Whish! Whish!

GLASSMAKING

From the earth's great treasure chest
Goodly stores of minerals wrest.
Soda, sand and limestone choose,
In well-tried pots of clay to fuse.
Light the hottest glowing fire
Melt the mixture we desire
Out the white hot molten flow
Streams to gather, draw and blow.
Through the giant rollers pass
Shining sheets of window glass.
Heat and cool, and cool and heat
Strengthen now the glassy sheet.
I cut and polish mine with care,
Place it in each window square.
Every crystal window pane
Lets in sun and keeps out rain.
Through these windows may I see
All the earth has given me.

Eleanor Thomas

EXHIBIT FROM FORTY-TWO STEINER SCHOOLS

Reprinted from the *National Zeitung*, Basel, Switzerland.

A unique exhibit is now open to the public at the Goetheanum in Dornach, concurrent with the 1954 summer conference which is being held there under the title of *Artistic Creativeness*. The material for the exhibit has been brought together from forty-two schools all over the world to show the results of the educational efforts of the Rudolf Steiner schools after thirty-five years of Waldorf school pedagogy.

If you visit the workshop near the Goetheanum these days, you will be astonished by the wealth and variety of dynamic works which look down expressively at you from the walls. Pictures are displayed in long rows which bear witness to the creative power of the children through form and color, through geometric constructions and revealing compositions of many kinds. All these are fitted within the larger framework built on Rudolf Steiner's knowledge of man. There are not only paintings and drawings but also many examples of clay sculpture and wood work. In fact all areas of creative activity are richly represented in accordance with the laws of the development of the child.

Dolls and puppets in bright, gay colors smile at you near the door. A model kindergarten shows what possibilities can be found for a healthy environment and the care of the small child. Characteristic drawings of pre-school years reveal the wonders of the child's inner world. And now life begins in earnest—the child enters school!

You walk down a long corridor which contains a colorful wealth of the child's creative work from the first to the third grade. Next you enter the main exhibit hall and are surrounded by works from Stockholm, Switzerland, America, Holland, England and from all the German schools. One gets the impression of how surprising, how joyful, how original and significant are the things done by children, and at the same time one feels how seriously the teacher takes his task, a task in which he seeks to guide children on a path in which the important thing is not the "work of art" produced, but the step forward which the child takes through this activity in its inner development.

It is impossible to give even a rough idea of the entire exhibit in a few words. It covers more than nine hundred feet of wall length and over seventy tables. One could only wish that everyone might see it.

Translated by Amos Franceschelli

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