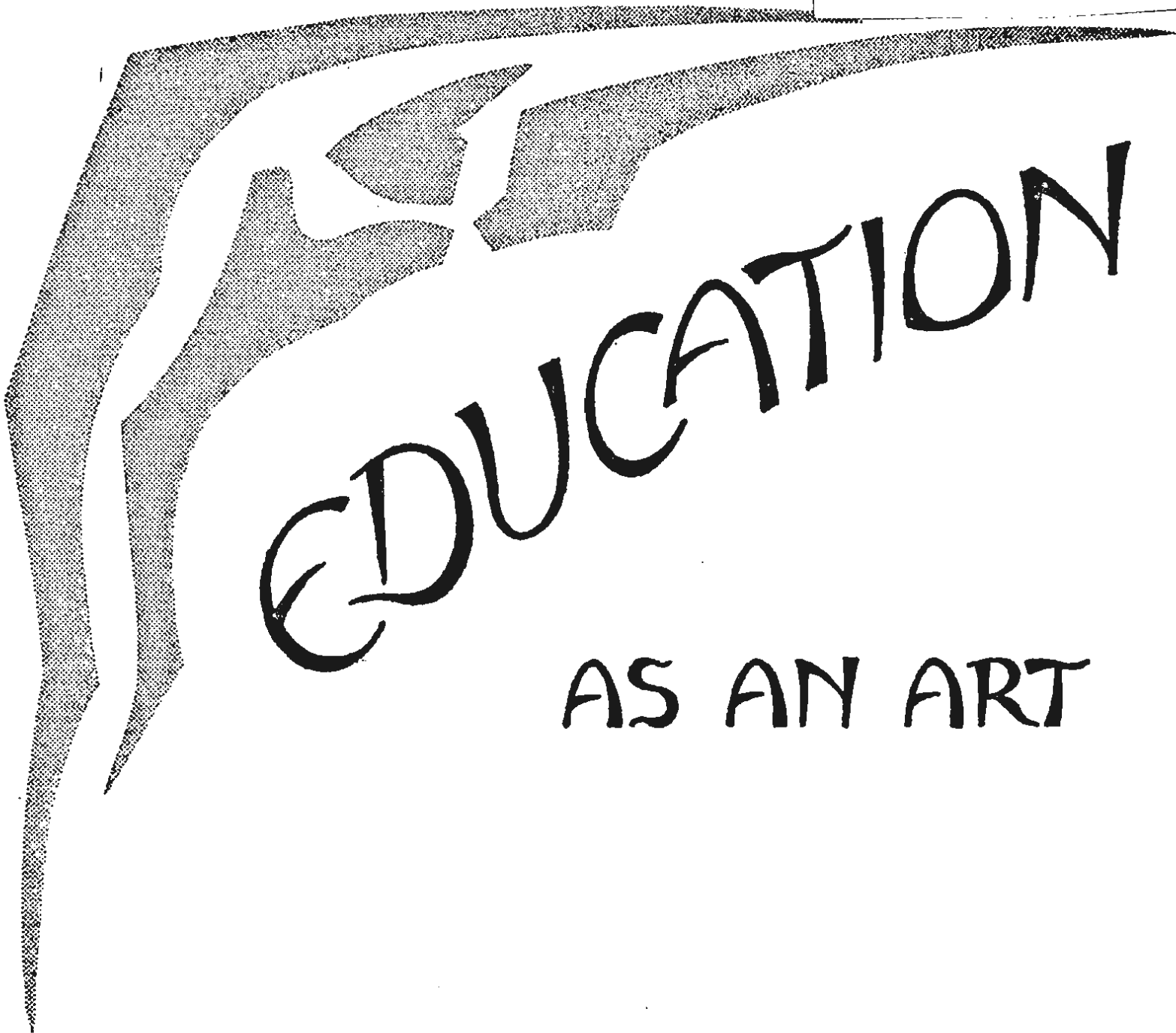




EDUCATION

AS AN ART

Published by the
Waldorf Schools
of North America

THE NEEDS OF CHILDHOOD

*Color, Sounds, Toys: articles by
Gisela O'Neil, Trude Amann,
Sheila Nielsen, William Bryant*

Vol. 29

Fall-Winter, 1970-71

No. 1

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"Education As An Art"
15 East 79th Street
New York, N. Y. 10021

Published twice yearly
Subscription \$2.00
Editor: Ruth Pusch

COLOR IN CHILDHOOD

From the moment of birth onward the child lives in a world where colors play a decisive part as strong sense impressions. A healthy child is naturally delighted when for the first time paints, paper and painting brush are put in front of him ready for his use. He has encountered colors in picking yellow buttercups, red poppies and purple violets. He has enjoyed the fresh green of the newly mown grass in spring, when the white cover of snow has long melted away and the blue sky with some fine, white feathery clouds is mirrored in the quickly flowing river.

In fairy tales the child is told of the Queen's wish to have a little daughter "as white as snow, as red as blood and as black as the ebony window-frame" or of the "golden bird with the three golden feathers." Colors help to form the imaginative pictures which so powerfully take hold of the child's soul and they reveal to him spontaneously quality and taste — the solemnity of the dark blue or the nobility of the deep red of the King's cloak, or the swift and mischievous vermilion of the frisky pony galloping fast over the hills!

About the age of six the child enters school. The curriculum given for the use of the Waldorf Schools suggests for the first school year: "The child should be introduced to the world of plastic-sculptural forces by means of painting and drawing. The sense of color should be developed by experiencing pure color in its consonance and dissonance. The child can see form as being created by color."

What actually happens in the school-room in the time set aside for painting? The preparation is simple, but it is one of the precious moments when we instil into the growing human being the first love and reverence for his tools and materials. The sheet of painting-paper is white and clean. After dampening the surface of the painting board, a wet sponge helps to stretch the paper so that it lies completely flat on the board. Then we dissolve the paints in small pots, one for each color, and every child has his own yellow, red and blue. The broad paintbrush lies ready for use next to a jar filled with clean water.

Joyful expectancy has reached its peak in the classroom. The brush is dipped with delight into the yellow liquid and touches the white paper. Yellow starts to spread out radiantly and speaks to the child. It can be a gay tale of light. But soon something else appears: blue is moving from one corner of the paper downwards, enveloping the clean, gay yellow in a complete circle. The yellow is soon imprisoned and no ray of light can shine through the blue wall. Only the triumphant red breaks through the blue circle and starts to play with the yellow, making it strong and fiery. Every stroke of the brush performs a colorful miracle, changing colors and forms in an endless variety. The child's soul is the center of this creative activity. No wonder that he is quiet and immersed in his work. Each child is engaged in his own special conversation with the colors.

This is what the young child longs for in his first school years: to enter upon an education which is alive and imbued with an element of art.

Up to the fourth grade children should be stimulated to a genuine color-experience which will enable them later to start to paint out of their own creative phantasy. Color now becomes the means of expression for all

that they learn in their lessons. With their experiences of the quality of colors, they can now paint maps; even artistic work and geography can become united. They will use different color shades when painting a map of Scandinavia than for a map of Egypt.

The healing power of colors and painting is more and more recognized. But only when the teacher has followed the development of a sequence of paintings does he become aware of the manifold difficulties on the way to achievement: to learn to guide the brush, to control the pressure, to avoid scratching the paper with the metal part of the brush, to control the overabundance of liquid color — these belong to the initial difficulties.

In the way described, the pupil is gradually introduced to the *discipline* of painting — and I use the word “discipline” with great emphasis. In our time much stress is laid on the young child’s “freedom” to choose his own materials for his first artistic ventures, out of a bewildering manifoldness. The child’s path to “free expression” is paved forcefully at an early age by modern teaching methods. This is done especially at the time when the school child is trying to find in his teacher one who “knows” — who knows what is beautiful, what is ugly.

Whether conscious of it or not, the child longs to be guided into color experiences by his teacher — to be told, for example, that a blue patch next to a yellow one is more beautiful than green put next to yellow. By providing the child with the right tools for his artistic work, the teacher’s guidance grows into the discipline of painting and drawing. After puberty, true “free expression” can develop, and individual judgment and taste unfold. It is the well-tried way from being a pupil, to becoming an apprentice, in order to achieve mastery in artistic work.

Who would deny the urgent need for fostering these truly creative possibilities in man of today? The first seeds can be planted by the teacher in the first painting lesson he gives to his class. And thus we can divine the responsibility of teachers of today.

What we first and foremost want to achieve is to open the mind of the child for the true quality of the colors, to give him the exciting experiences of red and blue and yellow and green, and to let him partake as fully as possible in the healing truth: “Color is a manifestation of life revealed by the spirit.”

—TRUDE AMANN

*Reprinted with the kind permission of THE CRESSET,
Journal of the Camphill Movement, Christmas, 1969.*

BIOGRAPHY IN EDUCATION

We are all individuals. Occasionally we fiercely defend our individual rights and freedom as a unique entity — a centric being which we call “I.” Often we feel imprisoned within the physical vessel we call a body — sometimes striving to protect itself from other bodies with a will and independence of their own. We can easily sense the meaning of Schweitzer’s ‘reverence for life.’

‘I am the life that wills to live in the midst of other life which wills to live.’ Yet as we set great store by our independence, so do all men

possess a deep desire to transcend the personal and unite with the lives of other beings around us. We bear the polarities of independence and social need and desire. We are caught in, or suspended within, a dynamic tension between ourself and our fellows about us. The personal and the self-transcendent are a rack we are hung upon by the very nature of our humanity. There is a deep desire in man to know and to love his fellows, in spite of his weakness, and the frailties of his companions. Here lie the real roots of our need for biography. We can glimpse for a moment or two the correspondences between men. We can measure and reaffirm the nature of our humanity — that we belong with all other men to mankind.

Out of the richness of the Hebrew testament come the words, "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help . . . my help cometh from the powers that transcend me . . .," but also these words help suggest to me a way to see biography — the hills we often lift our eyes to could easily dissolve in the mists of our imagination, to become the great men and women who have graced the earth in the march of evolving consciousness. There are so many such hills to which we can lift our gaze.

We can derive great strength from these mountains of success, travail and pain, and strength of purpose. Like us they have toiled to fashion their destiny and to attain their goals. Olympian beings they may seem, yet we search to disclose their humanity, their failings and their virtues. They were human too and they were our brothers. They have gone before, and thus can help us find our way over the tortuous terrain we all have to negotiate. Through them, too, we reaffirm the nobility of man. We can value the purpose of pain and learn from those who have transmuted suffering into higher qualities and enrichment of being.

Biography is one vital dimension of education. In the first school year, no biographies are given. The wisdom of the fairy tales is a supra-personal picture of all men and all kingdoms of nature and heaven. An archetypal biography is revealed in the fairy-tales — a picture of before birth, life, death and rebirth, and the creative power and guidance in the universe. The struggle for direction and purpose is hidden behind these tales. The mission of the old travelling storyteller was not for amusement, nor entertainment, but one of instruction from the wisdom of the past.

In the second grade we will find the legends of the saints and animals. The stories of St. Francis, St. Jerome, St. Patrick, St. Valentine, bring before the children feeling-filled pictures of the highest of men given to the service of the earth and their fellows. It is easy to recognize the root of a future ecology here, but the essence is the picture of man as a near-perfected being in harmony with nature, himself, man and the beyond.

As the time of the awakening self-awareness approaches, the children feel themselves as separate beings or entities — they lose the world of fairy tales and fables, but gain a rich emotional expansion. Yet the path of isolation continues and deepens as they contract more and more into centric beings within their own self-awareness. Thus, the role of biography becomes ever more vital, to unite them with their humankind. The biographies given are not vague and haphazard, leaping hither and thither through the centuries, but as far as possible they are related to the historical epoch of the particular grade. The third-graders, for example, take part in the colossal lives of the patriarchs of the Old Testament and the struggle for

self-identity and knowledge of good and evil.

The fourth-graders meet the Norse legends, simply teeming with magnificently proportioned biographies that represent, as it were, a personification of all the faculties within emergent man and all the powers within the cosmos.

In the fifth grade, we reach the beginning of a historical consciousness, and pass on from the Ancient Indian, Persian, Egyptian, to Greek legends and history. Great beings speak out of these times to contribute to the waiting, open souls of the children, strengthening the inner life, giving direction and guidance deep below the threshold of waking consciousness. In the fifth grade the Greek spirit will again emerge to speak in her inimitable rhythm of the poetry, drama, beauty and courage of her sons.

As the sixth-graders encounter the Roman world, biography will give them a deep insight into the Roman manner of life. This will not be a brief excursion into a history of dates and facts, but a penetration into the hearts and minds of the citizens and luminaries of Rome and her world. History will not be "one damned thing after another" or "a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (James Joyce, *Ulysses*) but the emergence of a conscious mankind through meeting resistance and travail — a mirror of the individual path.

As the grades advance and the student approaches puberty, the value of biography intensifies. Remember that the Waldorf Schools perceive puberty to be far more extensive than a mere sexual maturity. Of course, the physical changes are an important consideration, but they are the outcome of a greater process, the descent to the earth in more ways than one. The adolescent is deeply aware of himself as a separate entity — he is confused by and sensitive to a host of new feelings that arise in him, and the nature of his physical changes. He is concerned with who he is and where he should go. This is the first time that he really senses what it is to be human — as an individual. The sense of loss, the withdrawal and sensitivity met with at the approach of puberty is another step in self-awareness. As the earthly physical development has reached a particular point, so the age of idealism and hero-worship arises. The young people are deeply concerned with the nature of life and human values. Here then is the gift of the biography. Men and women worthy of their esteem can speak to them from the past.

The struggle to live and grow will be demonstrated in a thousand ways in the incessant striving for self-development, in the failings and hypocrisies of men and in their virtues. As the ray of destiny penetrates the prism of life, it is manifest in a colorful spectrum which will absorb and intrigue the young soul. All this is the food they need at this time. Men of courage, the intrepid explorers, will show themselves and men and women of compassion and idealism; myriads of qualities will reveal themselves through biography. Madame Curie, Galileo, Schweitzer, Braille, Lincoln, Einstein, Nobel, Helen Keller, Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo, Beethoven, will speak to them. There will be a balance of good and bad, the enlightened and the misguided, the tyrants and the saints, men who sacrificed their lives for human liberty, those who seek to heal and those who strive to understand. All the fruits of history can be brought to our students.

They will recognize the humanity in every man and feel it stir in their souls. They sense the nobility of the spirit of man — how men seek, how they lose the path, how they climb the heights. The young soul will respect this insight into the human life-span. He will be touched by the gentleness of an Emerson, the humility of a St. Francis, the brilliant failures of a Leonardo, the singleness of purpose of a Columbus, the resilience of a Madame Curie, the crushing burdens of a Beethoven, the equanimity of a Buddha, the invincibility of a Moses, the refined love of an Elizabeth Barrett-Browning, the idealism and sacrifice of a Martin Luther King, the soul-searching of Augustine or of a Tolstoy, and the hate of a Hitler, the ruthlessness of a Rhodes, and the selflessness of a Gandhi.

All these dangers, enigmas and qualities are within our students as potential. The tempest and the wilderness that faced those who have passed will come to face those who have to come. Yet we will encourage them to see beyond the obscuring mists and impeding marshes to the clear sun-covered peaks that are the finest heights of human achievement.

Biography possesses remedial qualities, too, for we can bring a great life to bear on the particular problems of a child. This can be related to and guided by the temperaments. The choleric will grasp for the leaders of men, their nobility of purpose, or will perceive the narrow greed that drove them on to self-destruction. The melancholic will drink deep the draught of lives dedicated to the overcoming of suffering, or those who sink beneath the weighty burden of life. The sanguine will be delighted by a fast-changing life, the eagerness, the vitality and vivacity of a many-faceted purpose, or the dissipation by the temptations that lie along the way. The phlegmatic will be encouraged by those who stand resolute and firm, upholding their tasks in spite of the floods and storms that inundate them, or recognize those who fail to act when the time is ripe — monuments to lost opportunity.

The intuitive teacher can find in Biography an endless creative source of healing and balance that can be directed to the needs of his pupils. He can find biographies that reflect on a grand scale the basic problems of a particular student. Intuitively, he can sense that both a particular student and a particular biography reveal the same fundamental problems, thus the biography can be given as a story, as drama, or in artistic form, in poetry or music. In the middle and lower grades the biography must not be explained, for deep in the metabolism of the soul there will be a recognition. In adolescence or college, biography can be used as another, more conscious medium by the counsellor.

Biography is a perpetual source of tolerance and compassion for the vices and virtues of man. Biography can stimulate a feeling that beneath the integuments of creed, color and nationality, of success and failure, all men are brothers, for we all must travel the road between birth and death. Herein lies one of the great roots of an enlightened humanism; a foundation for manhood . . . and as the light of a higher awareness dawns within the young person, so will he sense the common thread woven into the complex tapestry of all men — and the creative, directional spirit within himself and his fellow travelers.

—WILLIAM BRYANT

***SESAME STREET*: WHAT ARE THE LONG RANGE EFFECTS?**

During this last year *Sesame Street* has become an American household word. The fairy tale language: 'Open, Sesame!' provides the powerful analogy for a big-scale undertaking to open the door for pre-school children to the world of letters, numbers, and meanings of words and symbols. TV is the medium, available in 96% of our homes.

Extensive research into interest and attention-span of pre-schoolers formed the basis for this major educational attack directed at our 12 million children aged three to five. It has been estimated that at least five million have watched the daily, one-hour program regularly; some figures go as high as nine million.

The general response has been enthusiastic. Parents, teachers, and critics have been full of praise for this racially integrated program. Mothers pride themselves on their tots' capacity to recite the alphabet, to recognize and name geometric shapes, and to rattle off the numbers up to ten. Negative voices tend to be drowned out in the din of praise. Programming for a second year, with stepped-up teaching material and the prospects of larger audiences, has started.

YOUNG CHILDREN'S TASTE AND ATTENTION-SPAN

To begin with, both are limited. Of the regular programs, cartoons with fast-changing events seem to be favorites. Talking adult faces on the screen lead immediately to boredom. Most popular are the commercials. While these annoy the grown-ups with undesirable interruptions, repetition, glare and blare, they delight the young children. They love the repeated slogans, the tinkles and tunes, the one-minute story action, the pace, the noise, the brevity.

It is the principle of the commercial, this brief interruption, the sudden assault of the onlooker with information hammered into him, that has led to the success of *Sesame Street*. Children can watch a frequently changing program, often a trivial, somewhat humorous conversation interrupted by 'commercials' in the form of the presentation of a letter of the alphabet, often ingeniously developed, or the numbers up to ten, that light up in rapidly changing sequence and whirling colors, enlarge, and almost explode upon the onlooker. A well-meaning critic has called the total effect "psychedelic razzle-dazzle." — The need to make the teaching actions funny apparently led to the creation of two unfortunate adult characters, Jim and Buddy, who demonstrate in long drawn-out episodes adult stupidity of the worst kind, in order to teach logical reasoning. Puppets and Muppets, with distorted faces and distorted voices, entertain by playing up human weaknesses. Sentimentality is not lacking. The poor frog who bemoans his green color, the Funny-face Song, crooned to the projection of sad monkey faces, could be mentioned as examples. Endless repetition plays a part. The numbers explode over and over again and from program to program. The silly cook drops his pies regularly.

THE PROBLEM OF IMMEDIATE RESULTS VS. LONG-RANGE EFFECTS

We have learned to take a hard look at the total effect of technological innovations. Pesticides, sulfa drugs, phosphates, to mention a few of the recent panaceas, have startled many by their powerful, unexpected and un-

wanted secondary effects. In addition to their impressive immediate results, they have opened a Pandora's box of evils for us. Let us raise the question: what will be the total effect of this "psychedelic razzle-dazzle" on our very young in their most pliable, most vulnerable age? They rattle off numbers and letters like nursery rhymes. Improvement of learning skills can be tested. But what about the rest? We have been warned that early childhood impressions go deepest. We have been told that the psychological health of a lifetime can be severely damaged during this period. We have been told that the onset and intensity of the aging process in later years depends largely on these formative years. We have been told that a healthy relationship to parents and other adults, to other human beings, must have its foundation laid at this time. *Let us ask:* what effect do these flickering, swirling colors, the interruptions, and razzle-dazzle have on the sense organs, the eyes, the ears, of the very young? . . . How does the assault, the overloading of the senses, the glare and the blare, the shocks, the hammering in, the confusion affect the functioning of the nervous system? the behavior patterns? the mental health? How do the slapstick scenes, the distorted faces and voices, the funny, silly adults, affect the moral development of our children, who at this early age learn mostly through imitation and emulation? . . . Where do all the trivia go, that are imbibed hour after hour? They are not just washed away! Some are remembered, some are emulated. May it not be possible that most of it lives on as a deadening pollution of the subconscious life which forms the basis for the total personality?

The true test of a massive technological impulse, implanted into the living, growing organisms of our very young, is going to show up only years later. The fruits of *Sesame Street* will manifest themselves in the lives of young people in the 80's.

HEALTHY CHILDREN

It has been stated that children, deprived of language at home, learn through this program the needed vocabulary; that retarded children can retain the numbers and letters. This may be true. But what about normal children? . . . Intravenous feeding may be necessary to save the lives of the desperately ill; we all acknowledge it as a great technological achievement. But prescribed and administered to healthy children, in fact, to all children, it would be a devastating diet indeed.

For normal pre-school children the healthy diet for learning will always be human beings worthy of being imitated; and warm, clear human voices speaking a language which will form the basis for the development of thinking. They need a protective environment to develop healthy senses and nervous systems, inner poise and stability, and trust and confidence in the adult world. Pre-school children learn through imitation, activity, imaginative play. This fosters health, vitality, security, and inner resources as a foundation for a human education later, when the child is truly ready.

The time has come to be concerned not only with protecting and salvaging our rivers and lakes, the air we breathe, and the natural beauty of our environment. The time has arrived when we must salvage childhood, its innocence, vulnerability and beauty, from the deadening embrace of technology.

—GISELA THOMAS O'NEIL

Others have also had questions:

On a recent Thursday the entire faculty of the Waldorf School, Garden City, provided itself with a TV set and took the time to view *Sesame Street* . . . "When the teachers meet late in the week for two hours, at the end of a long day," says John Gardner, faculty chairman, "they look forward to whatever of harmony, beauty, inspiration and insight can be brought into the meeting. They hope to be restored and refreshed for the next day and the week to come. Under these conditions, *Sesame Street* did not fill the bill . . . The teachers felt that their own tiredness did not prejudice them against the program but prepared them, rather. Being tired, they were in the mood for drama and fun. Being vulnerable, they could feel, in a different yet comparable way, as a small child does, who is so sensitive, so entirely impressionable.

"Briefly, the teachers were shattered. They found the noise infernal, the assault of the number '3' intolerable, the contempt for the intelligence of even the youngest child demeaning (this refers to being taught, for example, that a typewriter does not sound like a fire engine, nor vice versa). The nature shots were beautiful but so jumbled that the mind was dizzy, the eye exhausted, and the 'love' not forthcoming. There were charming items (especially one or two of the puppets) and ingenious developments, but the effect of the whole was both tasteless and destructive. It jangled nerves, fractured mood, confused the mind. It alternated between patronizing sophistication and the hard sell. It used both pictures and sounds like baseball bats, to slug information home. Of inwardness, of reverence, of true joy and love, out of which alone a child can later become creative, there was no sign.

"If man's chief soul faculties are thinking, feeling, and will, *Sesame Street*, in the opinion of the faculty, hardens the first while seeming to sharpen it, cheapens the second while seeming to enrich it, and renders the last uncertain and unstable while pretending to fire it. To speak only of the hardening: this program will tend to make children 'smarty' but surely not discerning. The hard, bright mentality it induces will incline to arrogance, to impatience, to selfishness. Closed against the wisdom that should seep through knowledge of the everyday as through a permeable membrane, it will become increasingly sterile and deeply dissatisfied. It is not an exaggeration, I believe, to say that this is the kind of mind that will, in a very few years, find itself attracted to drugs, sex, perhaps violence, as a way out of its tight box.

"In general, one wonders whether the ultimate result of children's being exposed to such assault and battery on the senses will not be to confirm them in materialism and then to inspire them with the urge to fight back. Somehow one looks for consequences when numbers come shooting into the child; one can see this child, sooner or later, come shooting out with his voice, his fists, and his temper."

(from the Waldorf School News)

TOYS & THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

What is a toy? What is its function? What effect does the toy have on the child? What is a child actually doing when he is "playing"? These and similar questions frequently arise in the pre-school at Green Meadow and understandably so — considering we live in an age in which the manufacturing of toys has become a massive, major industry and every shop, from the corner drug store to the local hardware store, does a bit in displaying and promoting them.

Let us watch a child in play. He picks up an object, a small piece of wood perhaps, and crawling on his hands and knees he causes that block of wood to jump up and down on the floor across the room. Perhaps he will come to a chair: the block is made to jump on the chair, and then on to a nearby table. Next the piece of wood is shoved into a cup or saucer and the child will pucker up his lips, draw in his breath and create the sound of drinking. Sometimes a conversation may take place between him and the block. Finally this little piece of wood, which of course we all know by now is not a little piece of wood at all but some animal — a horse per-

haps — is laid to rest and a fence or shelter may very well be constructed around it with whatever material is available.

A little later an interesting thing may occur. That same piece of wood in the hands of that same child is transformed into an airplane, landing, taking-off, doing loop-the-loops, accompanied all the while with appropriate sound effects. And even that does not end the possibilities of that little piece of wood. It may become a car, a boat, a house, a train, a tree, a mountain, a man — who knows! Whole worlds have been built around little pieces of wood in the nursery.

Now what is the child doing here? *He is projecting his phantasy and imagination into the toy. The toy is nothing more than an extension of the child himself.* In the example above, the little piece of wood may be a horse, but so is the child. The child has made a contact with the block, has been able to identify with and has become one with it. Incidentally this projection of himself through his phantasy and imagination is a part of the child's first learning experience. What is worked through in his phantasy is all that he has taken in from his physical environment. His play is actually an imitation of his environment.

But can a little piece of wood be considered a toy? Why not? It doesn't look like a perfectly formed, manufactured airplane, so it can become a tree. It doesn't look like a realistically finished tree so it can become an airplane. It has no rigid limitations inherent in it. In other words, a child can project into it exactly what he wishes. He does not for a minute have to submit to it as he does to a perfectly formed, realistic toy that can only be what it is.

The manufactured, perfectly shaped, realistically finished toy incorporates in its very perfection a limitation to the child's phantasy and imagination. The perfectly shaped, realistically finished airplane will never be anything else to him but an airplane. He must submit to that. It limits his freedom in the projection of himself. Such a toy is only interesting when the child is willing to accept it as an airplane. If he is not interested in an airplane at the moment, then the toy becomes not only useless but very likely an object of frustration. A good toy must cooperate with the child, not hinder him.

Mechanical toys are even more limiting, because they don't permit the child any freedom at all to play. They leave nothing for the child to do. How can a child identify with such a toy at all? He must completely submit to it and remain absolutely uninvolved and passive. Children become very quickly bored with mechanical toys.

The question often arises concerning the materials used in making toys. Must a toy be wood or some other natural material? Why not plastic? We know that the pre-school child lives very much in his environment. We know that his contact with this physical environment is through his senses. He wants to see, he wants to hear, but most of all he wants to touch. He *needs* to touch. Only through touch can he make a truly honest contact with the physical world around him and experience the inner, more subtle qualities of an object. Actually adults still experience this need too, although not as strongly as the child. If we see a beautiful piece of wood, we are drawn to pass our hands over its surface, feel its texture. We may have

a desire to pick it up, experience its weight. We have a sensation of the inner substance of the wood through handling it. We sense its organic, living qualities and it gives us pleasure. Could you experience this pleasure from a piece of plastic? Do its texture, substance, weight give you any idea of its inner qualities? Does it have any inner qualities for that matter? Is it not dead? Cold? Inorganic? Rather than a feeling of pleasure, does one not have a slight sensation of repulsion when one passes one's hand over a piece of plastic? Almost as if it were unreal . . .

And yet so many children are presented with nothing but plastic toys these days, and at a time in their lives when the sense of touch is the most important contact they have with the natural, physical world around them.

I hope I have not created the impression that all the child needs for a toy is a little piece of wood. That would be highly unrealistic.

No, children need toys. Simple toys. Honest toys. Toys that are designed to help the child realize as much freedom as possible in his projection of himself through his phantasy and imagination. We must not be misled by big business, modern psychology, or even the latest trends in education. We must start catering to the needs of the child. Our knowledge and understanding of the child must be our guidance in our selection of a toy.

—SHEILA NIELSEN

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NEWS OF THE SCHOOLS

BEGINNINGS: Two new schools have promising names, new addresses, experienced teachers. We send them best wishes for fruitful work in their communities and a flourishing future. They are the Washington Waldorf School in Washington, D.C. and the Rudolf Steiner School at Falls Church, Virginia.

HIGH MOWING SCHOOL:

A Devastating Fire That Was Not a Tragedy

On January 18 at one a.m. one hundred and eighty feet of old 1763 farm buildings with all their accumulated treasures went up in flames in one hour and a half, carrying everything with it. As soon as the ruins cooled, students started to search for manuscripts and notes. They found and saved many. A group of boys went to the woods, felling and sawing trees and piling the lumber to be used when it had cured. As soon as the snow melted and the ground unfroze two months later, the students under faculty supervision began digging the cellar for the first structure. Other students played archeologist in search of buried art objects, while still others scraped and piled the old bricks from the chimneys.

When school closed in June a group of four students, three alumni, and local workmen carried on the building of a home for the headmaster and the faculty who had been burned homeless. By the end of June the house was lived in and almost finished. Then the crew set about tearing down, to enlarge a wing to hold the office, the infirmary and on the second floor nine girls and their counsellor. The wing had to be habitable by the open-

ing of school. This posed a drive and goal for definite needs: a heterogeneous group working for a common aim.

Workmen in New Hampshire are craftsmen often working in family groups as the cement pourers and sewer builders; they are not union men — which gave a human atmosphere and made the whole group a unit — man, boy and girl. It was a delight to watch them work together, eat together in the dining room with the sound of laughter, and even to hear a song rising above the noise of the great machines bringing material, carrying away dirt and stones and oddments, shovelling and dumping. Work began at 6 a.m., and at 4 p.m. there was silence except for the tree toads. Nature took over and gave us daily sunsets, for the weather was also cooperative. All summer if it rained it was after four o'clock or on the weekend. It was hard for farmers but we were deeply grateful.

We have lived through a summer of hard work cheerfully done even at times to the point of exhaustion. When need arose they even worked Saturday and Sunday. Added to this group the outside world came in personally or on contract: foundation pourers, electricians, plumbers — they came as needed with a "Hello! here I am again."

An alumnus spent the entire summer patching and painting the boys' dormitory and arranging homelike rooms. An alumna came with her two towheaded boys who played happily and imaginatively on the grounds while she painted the girls' dormitory, bought new furniture for the girls' living room, feeling that if so much was done for the boys something must be done for the girls.

The point of this story is to try to give you a picture of people working together, eating, laughing and singing together, of a group of human beings living as they should and mostly do not, a living experience for a whole summer without anger or violence. This atmosphere created on this hill the faculty are working to spread over the eighty-odd new arrivals, are aiming to carry on the strength and cooperation that lives on this hill, that is a reality on this hill.

School has been in session a week as I write. The night before school opened two boys worked until 3 a.m. painting the hall of the new girls' dormitory, the only color when they arrived. The girls are choosing color for their rooms and will be painting these days. They have all accepted the inconveniences not only cheerfully but with enthusiasm.

The busyness is all in the field of activity, but already in the work in the classroom we have felt a vitality, a feeling of: this school is ours because we are building not only with hammer and paint but also with human values and a desire to learn. The young (not only the young) need reminding and it is the task of the faculty to carry forward in the classroom the opportunity that has grown out of the necessity hurled at us by the fire.

—BEULAH H. EMMET

WALDORF SCHOOL, GARDEN CITY

In 1970 the annual Spring Festival was put into the hands of the high school students. They prepared an evening of original dramatic presentations dealing with our environment and man's role in nature. Much research went into the project. The final offering was impressive — thoughtful, humorous, dramatic in turn. The faculty was happy to see the students capable of creating an evening's program and shaping it worthily.

TORONTO WALDORF SCHOOL

Last term our Grade Three went to the farm of Mrs. Dorothee Chambers of Elmvale to plant some wheat as part of their main lesson on Farming. By the time this is published they hope to have reaped it, ground it, made it into bread, and — eaten it.

HIGHLAND HALL SCHOOL:

Easter Vacation on a "Desert Dig" Instead of Balboa or Palm Springs

While the news accounts shouted about the hippie Easter Communes in the above areas, Highland Hall School in Northridge, California, sponsored an expedition of 36 students to Saguaro National Monument, Arizona, during its Easter vacation. Other high schools participated.

The expedition began with a question: What merit is there in archeology for young students of high school age? Jack Zahniser (a UCLA doctoral candidate), the project director, answered the question in retrospect: "I would not have chosen at any time to replace them with hired laborers. I began to wonder if what went into the shoveling was not more valuable even than what came out of the ground as a result. Not one of my youthful diggers left the ruins without some appreciation of what Sir Leonard Woolley called 'the infinite capacity to take pains.' I would regret it if archeology were to become so 'scientific' and so professionally oriented that it has no place for the simple untutored interest of the adolescent boy or girl."

This first expedition to Saguaro National Monument concentrated on the collection of data useful in the refinement and perhaps alteration of the present chronology for the Monument and the Tucson Basin.

Recent years have seen an intensive re-evaluation of the material remains of an ancient people whom archaeologists have named Hohokam. In 1965 more than 80 sites were discovered in the valleys on or near the Monument. About these sites very little is known except that they were inhabited from approximately 700 to 1400 A.D. by the Hohokam. Ruins of temple mounds, ballcourts, and extensive irrigation systems, artifacts, and ceramic designs point to a Meso-American origin unique to the Hohokam.

Easter Sunday was spent at San Xavier del Bac, experiencing the Yaqui ceremonies at Pascua village, a curious blend of the ancient and Catholic religious ceremonies.

Cooperating institutions included Arizona State Museum, in Tucson; California Archaeological Survey — UCLA; Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History; and the National Park Service, Saguaro National Monument, in Tucson.

Surely this expedition confirmed a youthful longing expressed by D. H. Lawrence (in *Etruscan Places*): "Museums anyhow are wrong — who wants object lessons about vanishing races? What one wants is a contact."

DETROIT WALDORF SCHOOL

School opened September 14. One hundred and seventy excited children from nursery through 6th grade were ready to start the new school year. The classes were assembled — the teachers had created a mood out of which the day could begin, when — all of a sudden — a blast of sound boomed through the classrooms, and dust clouds rose to the autumn skies.

The large terrace patio and steps were being repaired — the workmen had not made their schedule to complete the work before beginning of school, and the consequences would have to be weathered.

It was a noisy morning — but a fascinating one, too. During the more exciting portions of the work, the teachers invited the children to look out of the window and see what was going on. This was particularly stimulating for the 4th graders who had had their block on House-building the previous year. Come recess, the children poured out, eager to watch the men at work, to investigate the drills and mixers, to see the skillful gestures of workmen's hands . . . at a safe distance. The workmen were a fine crew who enjoyed the children's interest and gladly answered the eager questions. The dreaded delay turned out to be an extremely valuable — and lively — educational experience for all concerned.

—CLAUDINA WINTER

GREEN MEADOW SCHOOL, the Threefold Farm, and Ramapo Central School District were hosts for ten days in August to six hundred attendants of an INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE, addressing itself to the theme: "Self-development and Social Responsibility." Participants came from England, Germany, Scandinavia, Switzerland, India, Africa, and the United States. The conference was organized on the basis of seminars, sessions in painting, eurythmy, music, modeling, or speech, and evening lectures. It was an ambitious, courageous, and highly successful event.

* * *

... What about the self? I am convinced, and I see it manifested in almost every phase of modern living, from the corporate to the Woodstock ends of the spectrum, from the hardhat executive to the professional revolutionary, that we are a culture of the denial of the self.

In its increasing collectivization, modern society offers every conceivable escape from the realization of self. Participation in the collective rites, such as mass-spectator sports, rock and pop festivals, is a stage in the loss of self, which has assiduously been rubbed off from earliest childhood by the collective-conformist eraser.

What the collective offers is the hypnotic notion that just as others are, and always will be, so one is and will continue to be; that one cannot fail because only individuals, setting standards for themselves, fail. The collective, at worst, only underachieves. As if betraying a profound guilt, the collective jargon sometimes tries to rescue a single face from the blur of the crowd. The phrase "doing one's own thing" is really no more than a mockery uttered by people whose own thing is to be part of an amorphous supergang.

The entrapments of collectivism are overwhelming: TV and radio, which permeate our privacy and destroy the aloneness out of which it becomes possible to learn to build a self; drugs, which smash the mirror of personal identity; the virtual disappearance of creative self-employment, and of professions and opportunities which ask for the use of the self; the terrifying featurelessness of the modern physical environment; the debilitation of the arts; the great gray educational machine; the devaluing and

disparaging of the imagination: the "own things" of the eroded self.

*Some of us claim to have the courage to give our lives if the need arises.
Few of us have the courage to face it as it comes to us day to day.*

—JERZY KOSINSKI

*Novelist, author of "Painted Bird" and "Steps,"
reprinted from the New York Times.*

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BOOKS ON EDUCATION BY RUDOLF STEINER

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Essentials of Education

The Roots of Education

The Education of the Child

The Four Temperaments

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Elisabeth Grunelius, Early Childhood Education and the
Waldorf School Plan

Karl König, The First Three Years of Childhood

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Please ask for further information.