

Hgkane
C

FISH


fish



Education as an Art

Vol. 32

Spring - Summer, 1974

No. 2

Cover: Page of a second grade writing lesson, Green Meadow School.

ERICH GABERT *The last teacher appointed by Rudolf Steiner to the faculty of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart. Class teacher and then history teacher in upper school until closing of school by Nazis in 1938. Helped to re-open it in 1945 and was instrumental in founding second Stuttgart school, Am Kräherwald. Dr. Gabert was the author of several books on education and was active in the training of Waldorf teachers. He died in 1968.*

GLADYS HAHN *Taught kindergarten in early years of Rudolf Steiner School, New York. Curative eurythmist, teacher of handicapped children. In recent years at Camphill Village, U.S.A.*

A. C. HARWOOD *Born in London; a Scholar of Christ Church, Oxford. A meeting with Rudolf Steiner at a Summer School in Torquay resulted in his joining a small group of teachers who founded the first Waldorf school in England (now Michael Hall in Sussex). Has visited the United States several times to lecture on educational and other subjects.*

ELIZABETH NOBBS *Attended Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School from nursery through 12th grade. M.A. in English, Edinburgh University. Came to this country in 1967 and is class teacher (seventh grade) at Highland Hall.*

BETTY KANE *Native New Yorker; educated in N.Y.C. public schools. B.A. in Psychology, City University of New York, Phi Beta Kappa, History Honor Society; there met Stewart Easton, professor of history, who introduced her to Waldorf education. Michael Hall Waldorf Teacher Training Course in England. Eight years at Sacramento Waldorf School as class teacher, crafts, kindergarten; about to go full time into the high school, teaching history and English.*

CAROL SOYBEL *Graduated in June, 1973, from the Rudolf Steiner High School in New York City. She is a student at Williams College, and plans to become a teacher.*

JOHN FENTRESS GARDNER *Has been Faculty Chairman of the Waldorf School, Garden City, New York, for the past 25 years. Is an Adjunct Professor at Adelphi University and Director of Adelphi's Waldorf Institute for Liberal Education, which offers a Masters degree in education. Most recently he has become President of the Myrn Institute for Adult Education. In addition to writing, teaching, and lecturing, Mr. Gardner has appeared on television, radio, and before New York State's Commission on the Quality, Cost, and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

Education as an Art

Published by the Waldorf Schools of North America

Contents

What Is So “Special” About the Waldorf Schools?	Erich Gabert
P. 2	
The Human Limb System	A. C. Harwood
P. 5	
A Discussion on Sex	Elizabeth Nobbs
P. 13	
Wish, Wonder, Surprise	Betty Kane
P. 16	
Does Waldorf Education Prepare Students for College?	Carol Soybel
P. 21	
<i>Education as a Social Question</i> , a Review ..	John F. Gardner
P. 25	

What Is So "Special" About the Waldorf Schools?

If you ask this of someone who is only slightly acquainted with the Waldorf schools, he will probably answer: that they lay particular stress on art — or that the children are not forever sitting at their desks — that they are always promoted to the next grade — that instruction is given in blocks, one subject at a time — that the children begin foreign languages on their very first day of school — that the actual learning to write and then read proceeds at a very slow pace — and much else of a similar nature.

This is all true; these are indeed some of the special features of the Waldorf schools. And yet all this tells very little about them. Almost every one of these characteristics has been met with before, in some form or other, in various forward-looking schools. Besides, all these things really belong to the external aspects of pedagogy. The fundamental character of the Waldorf schools can never be said to consist of external features alone.

An old school official of wide experience, who became well acquainted with the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, said one day: "You people have something that puts you ahead of many other schools, private and public, and that is, that you try to base everything — without the slightest compromise — on the nature of the child himself."

That observation, of course, points to much more, to something more fundamental. It is true: in accepting children, the Waldorf schools do not consider their social or economic or racial or religious backgrounds, do not consider even their talents or special intelligence. Nor do the schools consider external goals toward which some children could be steered because of particular abilities (that is, not in the elementary grades). Every child is given all possible help—equally—to unfold by his own efforts whatever thinking-capacity is latent in him, and especially all the hidden heart-qualities, as well as the will-forces and practical skills. The world today needs live

personalities able to cope with present-day situations, so-called "real people" with creative talent and plenty of initiative—not just intelligent citizens molded to some standard.

But there again, it must be pointed out, the Waldorf schools do not stand alone — thank God! They know that in these aims they stand on common ground with the best and most independent educators of the day.

No, — there is still more that has to do with this "basing everything on the child himself." Its most important aspect has to be added to all this, if one wants to describe the intrinsic character of the Waldorf schools.

Those of us whose work is in these schools believe that through Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy we have been able to build what we do on a deeper and broader *knowledge of the real being of the child* than can be found elsewhere today: an exact scientific knowledge, accessible to everyone, of childhood itself (and thus, the 'universal child'), of the successive periods of development, with their many variations of acceleration and slowness, of the interweaving of body, soul and spirit, with the one-sidedness that is individually possible and the hindrances that may happen. And then, in addition, a knowledge of each individual child as he stands before us with his strengths and his weaknesses — strengths that arouse in him happy expectation of the life ahead of him, weaknesses that reveal his need of help, because he cannot cope with his difficulties alone.

It is in this striving for knowledge of the child-nature, of the 'universal child' and of each individual child who comes to us, that the true character of the Waldorf schools can be found. This is the foundation and also the justification for all the special features mentioned — and many more besides. They have not been adopted out of some pedagogical fancy; they follow by strong natural consequence the knowledge that has been attained of the child and child development.

However, this striving for knowledge in which the Waldorf School teachers involve themselves needs something to

complete it, still something else. So much more could often be accomplished with the children, sometimes very much more, if the parents too would involve themselves more fully in their part of the task of their children's education — and theirs is the most important part — if they too would endeavor to grasp this fundamental knowledge. Then home and school would be working together in ever more lively co-operation, supporting each other, complementing each other. Together they would be shaping our schools into ever more beautifully rounded character and many-sidedness. The schools would then become stronger and more useful, for the benefit and the joy of those who have most to do with them: our children.

—ERICH GABERT

Translated by Gladys Hahn from an article in Erziehungskunst: Monatsschrift zur Pädagogik Rudolf Steiners, December, 1958, with the permission of the editor.

The Human Limb System

There are two opposite ways of considering the form and composition of the human body. In the first it is thought of as an instrument of survival, conditioned by the necessities of its own continued existence on the earth. In the second it is regarded as an instrument of spiritual expression, conditioned by the need of spiritual faculties to incarnate and express themselves in the sphere of physical matter. The first method of regarding the body is that of Natural Science, and its modern exponent is Sir Arthur Keith; the second is that of Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy, and its protagonist is Rudolf Steiner. Arthur Keith holds that the spiritual faculties of man arose by a kind of accident through the reserve of brain power with which man was intended to meet the emergencies of physical survival. Rudolf Steiner worked throughout his life to establish in scientific detail that imagination of man which could say of him: In *Form* and Apprehension how like an Angel!

It is, of course, true that whenever there is an interpenetration of matter by Spirit, whenever Mind is working as a formative force on matter, there are two points of view to be considered, and the question of *use* may be answered from the physical or spiritual standpoint. To take a crude example: a man who wishes to investigate the nature of music may begin by examining the inner works of a piano; or he may endeavour to experience spiritually the forms of music and the qualities of its notes and tones. You cannot say that the man who examines the piano is wrong, for there is a sense in which the piano creates and conditions the music. But there is a far more important sense in which Music creates and conditions the piano; and the man who has grasped that sense and that importance may be pardoned for sometimes feeling some impatience with his fellow who only examines the piano, however careful and painstaking his researches.

It is not very different with the consideration of the meaning and origin of the members and organs of the human body.

If we ask: for what are the human teeth? the obvious answer is, to bite with. If we ask: for what are the human legs? the obvious answer is, to go from one place to another. In fact, one might ask all the questions which Little Red Riding Hood asked the Wolf, and give all the answers which the Wolf gave to Little Red Riding Hood, and not one of them could be said to be a *wrong* answer. Yet these are not always the important answers; and the strange thing is that the important answers are sometimes the direct opposite of the unimportant ones, and yet both, at their different levels, are true. For the important thing about the human teeth is not that they bite, but that they are comparatively so little adapted for biting. They do not constantly grow, as they are worn out, like the teeth of a rabbit or a mouse; they are not again and again replaced like the teeth of a shark. The Wolf could say of his fine long teeth: "All the better to bite you with!" But if it had been her true grandmother whom Red Riding Hood had found under the bedclothes, what could she have said? Probably she had no teeth, or such as she had were ground down to useless stumps.

In the same way the important thing about the human legs is not so much that they carry the human body about, as that they are *not* adapted for carrying to the same extent as are the legs of a horse or of a frog; of the human arms and hands that they are so little calculated to serve the physical needs of the body as compared with the claws of a tiger or the prehensile hand of an ape. Indeed, it is precisely through this reserve of forces, the fact that his organs are not carried to their logical conclusion, as Dr. Steiner has shown, that man is able to develop in life his spiritual powers. His unspecialized hands, his undeveloped teeth, can become instruments of spiritual perception. His limbs are not only instruments of motion, they are the expression of one of the greatest of human faculties. Without his limb system man could not have developed his life of *Will*.

The intimate connection between the act of Will and the human limbs must be a matter of personal experience and com-

mon observation to everyone. Who has not instinctively planted his feet more firmly on the ground (put his foot down, in common language) when called upon to make some important decision? Who has not contrasted the firm step and broad gestures of men of determined will, with the feeble, uncertain movements of the irresolute? But what has not been understood, until the patient investigations of Dr. Steiner brought light on the subject, is the working of the human limbs as one part of a threefold system penetrating the whole human body, and the way in which the life of the human soul in childhood is centered in turn in each part of that threefold system, beginning in the earlier years with the limbs themselves.

For it would be altogether wrong to consider the limb system alone as separate from the other members of the threefold human organization, from the rhythmic system and the head-nerves system, or as bearing to these other systems merely the external relation of servant to master. On the contrary, the limb system penetrates every part of the body; it can only be separated from the other systems as one note of a chord may be separated from the rest for some special consideration. In this respect the systems of the body show an exact correspondence with the faculties of the human soul of which they are the expression. An act of will (for example) is in many respects the exact opposite of an act of thought. Yet in every process of thought there must be an undercurrent of will; every form of willing must be penetrated by some element of thought, on however low a level. The *Willing* must always enter to some extent into *Thinking*; and the limb system — the system of the will — has its representative in the human head. That representative is the human jaw, which is not a mere organ of mastication, but is of infinite importance for human spiritual life.

This close connection between the limbs and the jaw was once demonstrated in a very pathetic way when Dr. Steiner was in England. Some parents brought him a child who had some difficulties in its speech and asked his advice. He soon

brought to light the fact that some years previously the child had developed the habit of biting its nails and finger-ends so severely that at last they had felt themselves compelled to tie its hands down. The child had therefore failed to develop its natural freedom of movement, and in course of time the mobility of the jaw had been affected. The remedy for such a child was not to exercise its jaw, but to recover by movements of the arms the freedom which it had lost. For in children especially, all defects of speech are best corrected by suitable eurythmy exercises with the arms and legs — the larger movements of the limbs reflecting themselves (sometimes with extraordinary rapidity and effect) in the smaller movements of the jaw. With adults, too, it is interesting to observe how closely the character of a man's speech and thought corresponds to the way in which he walks. And much again can be seen of the quality of a man's thought in the set of his jaw. It is impossible to imagine an incisive thinker, a man with a strong *will* element in his thinking, except as the possessor of a firmly set jaw, which will again bear its relation to his whole limb system.

Coleridge's thought is torrential, tempestuous, choleric; Wordsworth's, calm, tidal, phlegmatic. It is recorded that the latter liked to compose his poems walking gently on a level path; the former rushing down steep declivities or breaking his way through thick undergrowth.

Such a method of considering the powers of man in relation to the threefold organism of his body is of especial importance in the education of children for the following reason: whereas the adult enjoys all his powers in their full fruition together, the child develops them, builds his life in them, in a natural rhythmical succession. A child of a few years old (genius being excepted) does not solve mathematical problems; he is too preoccupied with the movements of his limbs. From the moment he wakes to the moment he goes to sleep his arms and legs are in a perpetual motion, and without this motion he could not build up his strength of will. If the adult who

always say "Sit still" to the child could have his way (fortunately he very rarely does, because a child has generally a much more vigorous will than an adult) the child could not develop a strong character in later life. Nothing is so important for the child during the first six or seven years of his life as that he shall be free to develop the right kind of limb activity.

But it must be the right kind of limb activity — it must spring (if this expression may be used) from the heart of the limb system itself. The system of the head and nerves penetrates into the limbs no less effectively than the limb system into the head. It is the function of the nerves, radiating from the head as their center, to incorporate a certain element of thought in the limbs. Therefore the human hand, for instance, may be used as an instrument of thought rather than as a member of the limb system proper. A clock-maker or a draughtsman *thinks* with his hands; a sawyer or a hay-maker *wills* with his hands.

It is one of the troubles of modern childhood that children, especially in towns, see less and less genuine limb activity for them to imitate, and in imitating to develop their own life of will. It is very instructive to compare two children, one of whom is pretending to drive a team of horses, and the other a motor-car; the former shaking and pulling at the reins, cracking his whip of string, and imitating in his cries of "Whoa!" those deeper tones of the voice which rise from the lower part of the body, with all the strength of the human will; the latter clutching an imaginary steering-wheel, buzzing through his teeth in imitation of the engine, and occasionally pinching an imaginary horn and uttering a "Toot-toot" — feeblest and most nervous of sounds! The former child is living in movement, the latter only in idea. Nor is it only in their surroundings that modern children are unfortunate. The characteristic toys they are given to-day are toys to develop the intellect. The child who uses his hands to fit jig-saw puzzles together, or to build with Meccano, or to construct with any of the hundred and one kinds of wood, metal, or plastic segments which

abound in children's toy shops, is working with his nervous system no less truly than if he were set to solve mathematical problems or cross-word puzzles. Only he is developing that intellectual quality in the sphere of the limb system, instead of directly in the system of head and nerves. In schools, too, a great deal of teaching apparatus is often brought to little children — boxes in which they can fit letters together to make words and many such devices — which are only calculated to develop the intellectual element in a child's movements.

Parents and teachers, however, who have once grasped the importance of the limb system as an expression of the human will, must endeavour to work in precisely the opposite direction. So far from bringing the thinking element, which belongs to later years of life, into the limb movements of young children, they will endeavour to bring the will element into the thinking powers of later life. In this respect, above all others, education must become a corrective, a healing, for the tendencies of the age. To speak in an example, a boy of seven years has been taught arithmetic considerably beyond his years, and the sums he does are both neat and accurate. He is a very quiet boy, and is found to have much less capacity than the average child for making pictures with chalks or water-colours. He shrinks from creating a picture of his own and would like to have something to copy. One day his teacher notices that, as the children march round the room counting some multiplication table, he cannot keep step with the rhythm of what he is saying. Taken later by himself, he cannot count his own paces as he walks, or the treads of the stairs up which he goes; his will, the system of his limbs, has never brought its movement into his imagination and thinking. Yet the judgment, the conclusion of thinking, arises from the will element in the thought, and if children do not develop a firm *grasp* of things in their limbs when they are young they will hardly develop a grasp of thought when they are older, the realities of life will elude their thinking. So that (if arithmetic may be taken as a typical example) the wise teacher will see that all

counting and reckoning grows out of movement as the trunk of a tree grows out of its roots. That little children should jump and run and skip and clap as they count, forward and backward, is far more beneficial for them than to do bookwork sums, when they have not yet sucked the honey out of their age, developed to the full that strength of will which only their earlier years can give them. There is a pretty story told of Isaac Newton as a boy bringing his limb activity into his mathematics. During the great storm which raged over England at the death of Oliver Cromwell, he wished to measure the force of the wind. This he achieved by first jumping as hard as he could *with* the wind, and then *against* it. The difference between the two distances he jumped gave him the means of making the measurement he desired.

When teachers and parents begin to look upon children in their development with a more artistic eye, they will find quite different standards for measuring their progress than those which now obtain. They will not ask of a child of five or six (before the change of teeth), Can he read and write, and do this or that kind of sum? Rather they will look lovingly at the way he walks and plays. Are his hands capable? Does he move with a swing, rhythmically? Do his feet seem to grasp the ground as he walks? If so, they will be happy in the knowledge that he has laid the foundation of a strong character. But if his movements are weak and agitated, if he trips excitedly more on his toes than on the whole of his feet, if his actions are checked and paralyzed (as they not unfrequently are with modern children) by his ideas, if his complexion is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," then they may be sure that, unless help is given him, he is in danger of growing up nervous or irresolute.

This education of the limb system, of the "limb-man," is not of course confined to the first seven years of life, although it is then of paramount importance. It must be continued into the second seven years of childhood, when the life of the rhythmic system, the life of feeling, should preponderate; and

into the age after puberty when the intellectual powers are awake and alert. But it is in this education of the limb system, in the first place, and of the rhythmic system in the second, as well as of the intellectual powers, that the answer lies to the modern problems of education. For the question, How shall my child be educated? becomes of ever-increasing importance for all classes of a modern society. On the one hand there is the deep and true feeling that every child should be helped to enter into the spiritual and cultural heritage of humanity, to realize and develop itself as an individual, as an Ego. On the other hand there is the experience that the education which has endeavoured to lead children into this heritage has often seemed unfit to them for the necessary tasks and occupations of life. Hence arises a characteristic desire that education should be more technical, that children should learn the elements of a trade or commerce. But what is needed for a child's spiritual and cultural life is not really in opposition to the practical demands the world will make of him. For, as the more far-seeing industrialists recognize, what industry needs is not children trained in technical processes which, as likely as not, will be out of date by the time they come to put them into practice; but children with an all-round capacity for undertaking whatever task the changing conditions of life may present them with. And when children are educated in such a way that their limb activity is fostered in their younger years, they are indeed preparing the will to enter into their thinking in later years, but at the same time they are becoming inventive, resourceful, adaptable in their limb activity itself. Hence it was that, although his methods of education are founded on a purely spiritual science, Dr. Steiner always claimed that the object of those methods was to produce *capable* men and women. The foundation of that capability lies in the fostering of the will, in the right education of the human limbs.

—A .C. HARWOOD

Reprinted from an early number of "Child and Man," London (undated) with the permission of the editor.

A Discussion on Sex:

How one teacher tried to meet Sixth Grade problems.

If it had been possible I would never have discussed the subject of sex with my class at all — but when I found that members of the class were purveying accurate but quite unfeeling information, I felt that something was necessary by way of supplement. I lightly suggested to the class that we should talk about it, and they not only took me up on it, but insisted on it. Some would have preferred not to be present, but I assured them that they would not find it too uncomfortable. This is a rather more formal version of the ground we covered.

“I don’t suppose I’m the best person in the world to talk about sex with — I’m not married, not a mother, and all I can give you are my own views and feelings, and every adult you meet will give you a different view to some extent. There is no one on earth so wise as to understand all that there is to know about sex. I’m very glad at any rate that you can talk to your teacher a bit about it; I know *we* didn’t want to at your age. There’s no doubt that with advertising, movies and the way life is nowadays, you have to become aware of sex and its problems long before it’s necessary. There was a time, of course, in the dim past, when things weren’t so, when Man was still in a state of paradise. It is a prehistoric time, preserved for us only in the great picture language of history, in the story which you see every year as the prelude to the Christmas play. At that time man was not conscious of a separation into male and female; Adam and Eve were as one, and it is only when *both* have eaten of the apple that both feel the effects in their souls. A little of that Paradise state still remains to us with little children who are quite unself-conscious about being naked, or in the primitive tribes who

wear little or nothing. But now Adam and Eve have the knowledge of Good and Evil, they know that they are naked and alone. Eve must bear children, Adam must toil, and as God has driven them out of Paradise they must look to each other for their comfort.

Since that time mankind has longed for the old Paradise and yet has rejoiced more in his god-given freedom to be himself. It is with this freedom that as modern people we have to try to rebuild a bridge over the gap which separates the sexes. A man can never entirely feel how it is to be a woman; a woman can never entirely feel how it is to be a man. Yet people must make the struggle to try to begin to understand the other sex. Love isn't something that produces happy endings and romantic scenes in movies — this struggle to understand the other person is love. Nowadays a father can really help his wife to look after the children, not like a Victorian father whose children were scarcely seen and definitely not heard. Women can go out to work, men can do housework too. Nowadays fathers often like to be there when a baby is born and help to care for it from its first moments. The bridge is being built, but never can be completely built on earth.

Sex is something which concerns our earthly life — at the gate of birth no one knows what we shall become, but a mother always wants to know if her newborn baby is a boy or a girl. At the gate of death we leave our earthly body and our sex behind. Last year we talked of the castes of Ancient India, and how the souls came to earth again and again, and learned from their earthly experiences. It is a part of these experiences whether they are born into a male body or a female body. Even if they did not remember those experiences consciously, such a thing would help to build the bridge between male and female too. In the life after death sex has no place — angels are neither male nor female! Before we are born we look down to earth for the parents we need — a Bach chooses a family with a musical ear, for example. They give us the physical basis for our life and give us the surroundings

we need also.

We talked a few weeks ago about Michaelmas and how whenever mankind must struggle with the most devastating world problems, Michael is there fighting that dragon, and somehow beauty and good come again out of the depths. Certainly in our time sex is one of those problems: it can give rise to tremendous joy and good, it can also lead to many difficult problems. But it also truly has its funny side: that snake in the garden of Paradise really made a fool of Man, so some of the best jokes are sexy ones, and you can't help laughing at some love scenes.

I certainly can't give you the answers, all I can say is that the problems will change for you: what is a problem at twelve is no longer so at fifteen; what was a problem at fifteen is not at twenty-one, and so on."

One person was anxious to know where he stood as an adopted son — obviously in a special position. He may have chosen one set of parents for their physical gifts, another set for the environment they could provide, but what is even more special is that the adoptive parents chose *him*. But the problems arising from divorce and remarriage are beyond my wisdom to understand!

After this we drew pictures for a former teacher, mother of a baby born the previous day. The people in the room relaxed, and the drawings were truly delightful, many showing the descent of the soul to a beautiful earth. When the drawings arrived at the hospital, a nurse chanced to look through them, and after some thought said to the mother: "At first I thought the children had been brainwashed! But really there is something special here!"

—ELIZABETH NOBBS

Wish, Wonder, Surprise

In seventh grade English lessons, a study is made of the themes, Wish, Wonder and Surprise. Rudolf Steiner indicated that these would be important avenues of exploration for young people just reaching adolescence. In teaching seventh-graders, one becomes quickly aware of the richness of their emotional life but also of its chaotic quality. They are up one minute, down the next; they love the world, hate the world; laughter and tears come tumbling out, one after the other. How is the young person to find balance? How is he to learn to find perspective in his dialogues with the world?

The breadth of the Waldorf curriculum tries to meet these problems from many vantage points. This intriguing study of Wish, Wonder and Surprise, I discovered, is one of the most direct ways. We can ponder the three words — wish, wonder, surprise — for many hours. We can ask ourselves as teachers what is really expected of us here. The study goes under the guise of a writing block, so certainly it is a means to study the difference in style between a wish, a statement of wonder, and the description of a surprise. But soon, as one begins with one's students to explore these themes, these attitudes of life, a whole mysterious landscape comes into view.

Wish, — what really is the nature of the wish? Where does it come from? Where does it go to? The wish, we established, comes from within oneself and goes toward the outer world. We began to discover the many kinds of wishes. The most obvious, of course, is the wish for oneself, and here we could begin to distinguish between this and its extreme, desire or greed. Then we could see that one can wish for something for someone else. This could take the more subtle form of a prayer. Further, one can make an impersonal wish that could affect the world at large.

The students dug into the personal wish with gusto. Most of their stories were deviations from the archetypal personal wish expressed in "The Fisherman and his Wife." This theme

of man or woman wishing to have more and more power until even God is challenged, repeats itself in most cultures. In the Old Testament stories it appears with Lucifer, who tries to take over God's throne and who finds himself, with St. Michael's help, transformed into the serpent. It appears again in the Tower of Babel, where men's desire for God's power results in the division of the one tongue into many languages, thus making communication more difficult. The theme can be enlarged to include curiosity: the wish for knowledge that is forbidden, — the Fall of Adam and Eve or the legend of Pandora's box. This whole subject of extending wishes into rebellion of authority is very close to the adolescent's heart, and it was interesting to see what terrible endings were the result of this for their heroes.

When we turned to wishes for someone else, the class was confronted with a greater challenge. Now they had to step outside themselves and deal with another realm of experience. There was no gusto in this assignment. The mood was pensive and quiet.

We turned next to surprise. O what a relief! The class found this to be easier, more familiar. Everyone loves a surprise, a mystery. They wrote these with relish and loved a sneaky twist at the end. Where did the surprise come from? Outside — from the world. It came onto or at the person. What a totally different experience from wishing! Whereas the wish streamed out from the heart into the world, expressing a yearning or need, the surprise came from the world and superimposed itself on the person.

The most subtle of the three themes was wonder. When I introduced wonder to the class, it was very hard to distinguish it from a certain element of surprise. The students had to look at it completely differently. They had to distinguish very carefully, had to go through a certain refinement of the emotional life to see if they could experience wonder. Waldorf education is built around the sense of wonder. Surely, from the nursery years on, we try to foster the sense of wonder at

the world. But now, in seventh grade, as we consciously examined these emotions, we looked at it as if for the first time. Where did wonder come from? Well, certainly it came from within the human being, but it also came as a meeting with the outside world. Some of the students felt that they could not really feel wonder. We discovered that you can talk about wonder but it is quite another thing to completely feel oneself in an act of wonder. We learned that one has to be open to the world or one could not feel real wonder.

We tried writing compositions about wonder. Some students could bring to birth a real feeling; others were having great difficulty. We left this study, but I was not completely satisfied that we had done enough. We certainly learned that to fully explore wish, wonder and surprise, actually meant to sense the world, the human being, and the meeting of the two. It was in essence to begin to have a feeling for the universe and man's place in it.

After pondering this study for several weeks, I decided to try something more. We took one week, the last week of school. On the first day I told the class something of the lives of Henry David Thoreau and his friends, Emerson, Alcott, Hawthorne, and a bit of the times they lived in and how they met their challenges. The students became caught up in the biographies of these fascinating individuals. In connection with Thoreau's journals kept at Walden Pond, I told them that we were going to do something similar. Every day we were going to go to the bog on our school land, find a spot, and sit silently at that spot for twenty minutes. They could bring no pencils, no paper, — and there had to be absolute silence. Their first reaction was, "How could they possibly sit quietly in one place for twenty minutes?" They were sure they would see everything the first day. I then showed them studies that people had done over a lifetime of one small aspect of the world. There was a collection of hundreds of photographs of different snow crystals.¹ We looked at them and talked about

(1) W.A. Bentley and W.J. Humphreys, *Snow Crystals* (New York: Dover, 1962)

the subtle differences, about their similarities to geometrical drawings we had done, with plant forms they had studied. Then we looked at a book which delicately treated the subject of water.² We looked at the photographs of water in motion, of the imprint of water on sand, the similarity of the map of water in a delta to a tree and to the lungs of a human being. This recalled our earlier study of physiology, when we studied the development of man and his relationship to nature.

In order to feel the quality of the journal they were going to keep, I showed them a beautiful book, Gwen Frostig's *For Those Who See*. The delicate drawings of nature, the wispy treatment of ferns and butterflies, the interesting quality of the paper, all of it aroused the enthusiasm of the students. By now they were wondering whether twenty minutes a day at the bog would be enough.

I explained that after we came back from the bog, we would quietly sit down at our desks. On the board would be two short quotations from Thoreau. These were to be written on the left-hand page of the small book each was making. We would discuss these quotations the next day after they had had some time to think about them. On the right side they would write their own observation or thought that had come to them at the bog. They would frame the page with illustrations, leaf prints or designs, so that there would be a continuous feeling throughout the book of what we were experiencing. We would call it *The Book of Nature*.

We left and walked down to the bog. Everyone found a spot and the adventure began. Absorbed young people, sitting on logs, lying under trees or berry bushes, camouflaged in tall grasses, could be seen. At the end of twenty minutes they felt it wasn't enough time, but we adhered to the rules. When we entered the classroom, we discussed Thoreau's statement, "We are what we see." This became the theme for the week.

Day by day the experiences deepened. The young peo-

(2) Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos*, trans. by Olive Whicher and Johanna Wrigley (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1965)

ple's conversations changed radically. They became very sensitive to the differences in their spot of bog because of the change in clouds or temperature. They spoke of how much one could observe when one was very quiet. Furthermore they were intrigued by the effort of condensing a thought into a few meaningful words. By the last morning they definitely felt this was only a beginning. Their books were beautifully done, and I as teacher felt that we had really experienced wonder. As a class, we were deeply changed by the experience. A sense of stillness and reverence settled over our otherwise active, bustling group of twenty-five. For a time we felt united in beauty, in awe — an inkling of what Rudolf Steiner might have hinted at when he suggested the study. In contemplating our Waldorf education and him who inspired it, I, too, was overcome with wonder and could only utter a heartfelt thanks.

—BETTY KANE

Does Waldorf Education Prepare Students for College?

Having weathered the fluctuating, growing, rather unsettled time of a freshman semester at Williams College, it is interesting to look back on the many years I spent at Steiner and consider how well a Waldorf education prepared me for college life — not only for academic work, but for the social interactions that confront one in adjusting to a whole new way of life.

Although I was dubious, at first, and rather anxious about how one could handle the experience of living with hundreds or thousands of students after growing up with only eighty or ninety in high school, I found that the smallness and familiarity of an education such as ours was really beneficial. Living with the same twenty or so classmates and in contact with all the other classes in such a crammed and close-quartered building as ours, almost unconsciously teaches one to be able to cope with close proximity. There are four of us here in our tiny suite, and it is no more difficult living with our diverse temperaments, problems, pleasures, and struggles than it was with the twenty-two in our class. A small class gives a student not only the benefits of the individual care and work, but teaches the lessons of sharing, tolerance, and the acceptance of others about him. Not only does our education encourage and stress this awareness of others, but even more important, there is the constant attempt to give the student a consciousness of himself, his potential, and his relation to his class and society.

From first grade through elementary school, each child had some particular task to fulfill regularly during the day, whether it was watering the plants or turning off the lights or getting the teacher's coffee at 10 a.m. (everyone fought for that job). Each student was responsible in some way to the whole. In high school this responsibility took on a more personal aspect. Students were constantly encouraged to share their experiences with the rest of the school body. Many an

assembly was devoted to listening to some student's experience — a Farm School incident, working with retarded children, a musical performance, an ecology dissertation. In many cases a Steiner student might feel less inhibited about joining campus organizations or working in the college environment because our education has stressed so strongly the importance of individual contribution.

Related to this is the emphasis placed on oral participation in academic work. In each course, there was usually some sort of oral presentation in which the student had to share his subject material in front of the class — something quite different from, and more difficult than, a written report. In small college seminar discussions, whether in economics, literature or language, it is imperative that the student partake in a meaningful, vocal interchange, and the fact that this form was so developed at Steiner may make the student much more secure about voicing his opinions and verbalizing his thoughts in a concise, comprehensive manner.

The Main Lesson system at Rudolf Steiner was often debated by many of us students; its pros and cons are vast. To be sure, many of my friends felt that tackling a subject for only three to four weeks and then not touching it until the following year, left too wide a gap. But the fact that there *are* so many different courses presented during the year, which are required and not elective, broadens the whole scope of the student's education. In this way, one experiences the many connections between the different fields of learning. In studying geometry in seventh grade, for example, our teacher pointed out the symmetry and geometric perfection in the petal arrangements of flowers. Thus, two seemingly distant subjects, math and botany, were related. This was so in most of our courses. The relationships and differences were brought out and one realized that no one subject is totally divorced from other branches of learning. Having to choose courses quite independently is at first disconcerting, but the fact that we were given a taste of so many diverse subjects perhaps gives the

Steiner student a fuller understanding, and makes it easier for him to know what he would like to delve into in college. After all, it is something to be the only one to boast, in a literature class of 100 or more, that one has read *Parzival*; and I know of not one freshman here who has taken four consecutive years of physics, chemistry and biology.

Consider the advantages we are given in having eight years of both German and French through our earliest years. By the time we are ready to study grammar our ears are attuned to the sounds of the language, and unconsciously we have absorbed much of the culture and personality of both languages. Thus we had the advantage of being able to take advanced language courses immediately as freshmen, and the background given us was invaluable in the sciences, history and literature.

Steiner education also gives a child the opportunity to learn not only with his mind but with all his senses. This is one of the finest aspects of the Farm School — the children can see what they are studying about, taste the bread they make themselves, touch and care for the animals they may be learning about in Man and Animal. All during the elementary school years, a child's ability to work with his hands is cultivated through knitting, embroidery or cross stitch, and he learns to use space around him gracefully and meaningfully in eurythmy. All this, combined with the Main Lesson system, opens the student to the world around him, enabling him to appreciate the diversity he will find in college life.

I know that many students feel a lack of science training at Steiner, and are concerned that too much emphasis is placed on the arts. However, Williams is basically known for its pre-med program, and in exploring the science courses offered and in hearing what students here have to say, I find that we have been well prepared. How many schools incorporate botany, physiology, and zoology in such fullness and depth as we had them? Even I, definitely a non-science oriented person, am completely familiar with the work being done in

the first two semesters of biology offered to freshmen here. Not only were we taught the facts and practical workings of science, but an effort was always made to present the history and responsibilities of science to society. This is something a college or university level course, preparing students from freshman year on for medical school, can not have time to achieve.

One thing I feel our school overlooks though is the importance of Advanced Placement tests. Since I think the Steiner student *is* basically so well prepared in so many areas, he can skip some of the introductory college courses that are often required. In my English course last semester, I had to suffer through the rehashing of literature that we had covered in depth in high school simply because I never took an A.P. in English. Achievement tests are different. They indicate a certain level in aptitude in a particular subject, but one does not receive credit for a high score.

Of course, this article is a personal one. I am sure that other students might not agree with me, and would have many additional relevant remarks. But in my college experience thus far, the fourteen years I spent at Steiner have given me only positive reinforcement. For many of my classmates, with whom I am still in contact, and for me, the kind of care, involvement, commitment and philosophy behind our education have given us a deeper outlook on the values of learning and the initiative to explore life for ourselves.

—CAROL SOYBEL

Reprinted with the kind permission of the Rudolf Steiner School Newsletter.

EDUCATION AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM*

A Review and an Appraisal after Fifty-five Years

Any series of lectures by Rudolf Steiner brings enlightenment and an inspiring force. The present book is no exception. It addresses itself to social and educational issues that Steiner has treated elsewhere, yet the particular occasion brings forth quite new emphases, unexpected insights, and above all, a powerful impulse to action.

As Doris Bugbey states in her introduction, these particular lectures seem extraordinarily appropriate to the latest developments of the present time: its anarchy, its confrontations; its deep confusion, uncertainty, and fear. The chaos in middle Europe immediately following World War I foreshadowed the disasters mankind is now facing and which the seer could clearly perceive on the road ahead.

We have just passed through a long war. This will be followed by prolonged, perhaps very prolonged fighting by mankind in general. Many people have said that this war, which has been experienced throughout the civilized world, was the most terrible experience of its kind since the beginning of history. We cannot say that this judgment is wrong. The battle which will have to be fought by this or that means, and which will follow this war — the battle between Orient and Occident, between Asia, Europe and America — will be the greatest spiritual battle ever waged by mankind.

Steiner's forecast is gloomy and threatening; but as always, he wastes no time in lamentation. He passes, rather, in the most direct way from diagnosis to prescription; and his prescription — the threefold social order, freedom of education from the state, and the new methods soon to be embodied in the Waldorf School — are full of hope.

(*) Rudolf Steiner, *Education as a Social Problem*, six lectures given in Dornach, Switzerland, August 1919. Transl. by Doris Bugbey. (New York, Anthroposophic Press, Inc. 1969).

The root of the catastrophes of our times is found primarily in education; and the remedy for education, in the training of teachers.

The great problem of the future will be that of education. . . . Social demands will remain chaotic if it is not seen that at their base remains the most urgent problem of the present time: the problem of education.

Education can only base itself upon the understanding men have of the meaning of life: the essential nature of man himself, his relationship to the other kingdoms that compose this planet in this universe, and the course of human history. As long as understanding in these matters is superficial, the culture will incline to materialism; and while materialism reigns, schools will fail to develop full-fledged human beings. Any renewal of education must therefore begin with the deepening of the world outlook of teachers. Teachers must be shown how to transform the passive thinking we call intellect, which sees the world as a machine, into the active thinking that penetrates to the life, the soul, and the spirit of things.

In a few weeks from the period during which these lectures were given in Dornach, Switzerland, to the friends and co-workers of Rudolf Steiner, he would journey to Stuttgart, Germany, to conduct the training seminars for teachers of the Free Waldorf School there to be inaugurated. In these courses, especially in the lectures now known as *The Study of Man*, he would develop comprehensively the insights into human development and the psychology of learning that appear in germinal form in the present cycle. One can already feel them gestating, and in this form they are especially full of life, peculiarly inspiring, as early utterances often are.

Education as a Social Problem is full of the seed corn of intuitive thought, of aphorisms that speed shafts of light into the heart of social problems, of education, and of the intimate, unexpected relations between the two. One example may suffice. Steiner simply states it as a fact: "*Experience will prove that if there is to be socialism [read 'democracy'] in schools, it*

will not be there in life." If children are to approach their teachers as equals, and the curriculum is to be arrived at by democratic consensus, a generation will grow up that will not support democracy. If we wish as adults to end with a strong feeling for the equal rights of man, says Steiner, we must start as children with the strong feeling for authority, the authority of parent and teacher.

All education in this period of life [the elementary school years] will have to be consciously directed toward awakening in the child a pure, beautiful feeling for authority. . . . [People] will never become ripe for these equal rights if in childhood regard for authority has not been implanted in them. In the past a lesser degree of feeling for authority might have sufficed; in future it will not be so.

The connection between a vivid willingness to acknowledge adult authority and a later readiness to participate in democratic process is not immediately self-evident. To the doctrinaire progressive it will not seem to be there at all. Yet does not Steiner's indication help to explain how it can happen that much of post-World War II youth, reared so understandingly, so permissively, and so 'democratically,' at home and in school, is currently spurning the very premises of democratic society?

In 1919 thoughtful men were aware, as they are now, that something drastic must be done if society is to be saved.

A chaotic economic life without direction; a life of rights become a mere striving for power; a spiritual life degraded to hollow phrases: this is the threefold character of the social life we have had and of which we must rid ourselves.

Thus Steiner characterized European society in August of 1919. What can be said fifty years later? Economic life still rampages without social control, but with productive power enormously expanded. It ravages the earth in its greed for materials; it enslaves men through the insatiable appetites it artificially stimulates. The political life still is not the parliament

of man but the jealous jockeying of power groups. And as for the degradation of the spiritual life, has this improved? Is it the living spirit that psychologists, philosophers, ministers, scientists and artists offer the young today?

In 1919, as now, the idea was that *institutions* must be changed. Steiner saw the necessity of making fundamental changes in social organization, but he was aware that something more basic was needed if social reform were not to be a case of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. Unless concepts and ways of thinking were transformed, new social inventions would be the same as or worse than the old. This was not recognized then, as it still is not recognized.

Men today are entirely unable to free themselves from their accustomed concepts. But it is more important that we do not merely believe that single external establishments have to be transformed, but that it is our ideas, our concepts, our feelings that have to be transformed. Indeed, we may say that we need different heads on our shoulders if we wish to approach the future in a beneficial way.

One of the most impressive of these lectures deals with the reason why *thought itself* must be transformed if we are to achieve a sound and good social order. In a treatment of the historical evolution of consciousness, Steiner observes that the intelligence that is now ghost-like was once concrete and alive; the mentality that is now alienated was once in touch with the whole cosmic environment.

You see from this that I assume it is not correct to think intelligence is intelligence, that only one kind is possible; that whoever has our intelligence is intelligent, and whoever does not have it is un-intelligent. This is not correct. Intelligence passes through metamorphoses and transforms itself.

At the heart of modern culture lies the modern form of intelligence. In suggesting what Steiner has to say about this intelligence in comparison to its predecessors in the Greek

and Egyptian ages, one runs the risk of merely presenting a riddle. But this risk is worth taking if it will cause the reader to seek out Steiner's own words. His view is that instinctive rightness, instinctive spirituality, instinctive rapport have faded from the modern intellect. It has become not only alienated, but false; not only moribund, but destructive. If it is not diverted from its present path of evolution, it will inevitably lead us from now on into disaster.

It is not for nothing that [the intellect] fills modern man with pride and haughtiness. This is the pre-taste of intelligence becoming evil in the . . . age which is now beginning. If man were not to develop anything else but intelligence, he would become an evil being on earth. If we want to think of a wholesome future for mankind we must not count on the one-sided development of intelligence . . . This is something about which mankind should have no illusions. In an unbiased fashion humanity should reckon with the fact that it has to protect itself against this one-sided development of intelligence.

"Pure intellect," said Emerson, "is the pure devil." Even in Emerson's day the modern form of intellect clearly showed a tendency that Steiner says will increase over the next centuries: "a tendency to grasp what is error, untruth, deception; a tendency to ponder only what is evil."

We may say it is still barely possible, if men exert their intelligence and do not bear especially wild instincts in themselves, to look toward the light of what is good. But human intelligence will more and more develop the inclination to plan evil, to bring error into knowledge, and to insert evil into man's moral life.

Scientific intellect has led men during the last hundred years to call themselves animals. Schools teach children that man is descended from animals, is an animal, and maintains his precarious ascendancy in the competition with other animals only by use of his cleverness. The more recent finding of intellectualistic science is that man, along with the other

animals, is essentially a machine. Especially his cleverness is machine-like. It can be abetted (and bested!) by machines. The most contemporary ideal is to teach the mind by machine.

As long as men think as they do now, they will regard themselves as brainy animals or as complex robots. So long as they are of this mind, their deeds will diverge ever further from truth, beauty, and goodness. And yet they will not and cannot turn from this desperate path, in Steiner's view, until they can think in a new way. This way will open for those who make a wholly new beginning. St. Paul's statement: "Not I, but Christ in me" must supplant "Not I, but the animal and the machine in me."

Teachers today often encounter a strange phenomenon. The children of finest human and moral development rather often appear drowsy, or dull, or disaffected as far as school tasks go. They show neither inclination nor aptitude to make progress intellectually. From Steiner's presentation one can better understand what is happening in such cases, and the challenge they place before the teacher. The souls of children of intuitive and creative capacity, sensing the desolating and immoral propensities of intellectualism, prefer to remain stupid. In order to awaken in them any longing to learn, the teacher must inspire them by the example he sets in his striving for the redemption and rebirth of his own intelligence.

What if mankind should fail to accept these indications for the strengthening and spiritualization of thought, which destiny offered just when the crisis of modern times demanded? What if education continued under the sway of natural science, and civilization were therefore to be increasingly dominated by the industrial machine spawned by this science? Steiner's answer is given in a few words, but these words speak volumes. If mechanistic thinking and a machine culture were to prevail, men would be robbed of their humanness: "Human spirits would become mechanized; human souls vegetized, sleepy; and human bodies animalized." When this pro-

phesy was made, the radio and television were not yet purveyors of culture, computers had not made their appearance, and no one dreamed of children being taught by machines. The Hitler era was still to come. The mania in the West for drugs and sex and violence had not yet developed.

"If mankind does not comprehend the fact that it possesses thinking in order to apprehend itself as spirit," observed Rudolf Steiner, "it does not take hold of the task of the modern age. Mankind must therefore be urged to penetrate beyond ghost-like thinking to a knowledge of reality that does not stop with the perception of nature but enters into the spiritual behind nature." Only a strengthened thinking directed toward the spirit can bring new meaning and vitality into the human will that has become directionless and weak. "We seek tasks that stem from the spirit," said Steiner, and added:

Through the stronger, more conscious emphasizing of willing and of the spirit we establish a counter-image to the senseless willing of industrialism . . . Thus industrialism, with all its devastation of the human soul, is given us in order that amid this devastation we may rouse ourselves to will out of the spirit.

There is meaning for man's evolution toward freedom in the fact that we are given the choice and the task of changing what we do not like. By making the decision, by doing what we must, we win maturity.

Most men, however, cannot yet see where the issues lie. In their confusion they can find no basis on which to act.

Truly, the most striking fact of modern life is that there are so many torn human souls; souls full of problems who do not know what to do with life, who ask again and again, "What precisely is my task? What does life mean to do especially with me?" They start this or that and yet are never satisfied. The number of these problematic natures increases daily.

These words were spoken more than fifty years ago, and yet they are in the very accent of the present alienated genera-

tion. How tragic it is that Steiner's words have not been heard and that we have therefore not roused ourselves to give youth what it must have and what can no longer be postponed. The meaning of life, the joy of life, and the will to live cannot be found without the renewal of religious experience through an expanded consciousness. "The great and full importance of this enlargement of human consciousness in the present time should be deeply inscribed in the soul of modern men, for upon this depends whether they really understand how to live in the present, and how to prepare the future in the right sense."

The future was not prepared in the right sense, and therefore our children today give themselves to drugs. They know that consciousness must be awakened and expanded, but they do not know that there is a right way to do this. They do not know that the way through drugs is suicidal, for mind, for heart, and for will.

As a series, these six lectures of Rudolf Steiner are perhaps a bit loosely organized; as a treatment of particular themes, they are necessarily abbreviated. But all the more do they ring with vitality and the sense of urgency. All the more human do they seem. Their appeal is the greater because in them, more than in some other lecture cycles, we sense Rudolf Steiner as the caring, striving, laboring man, rather than as the perfected, objective teacher whose personality is almost lost in the universality of his message.

The first World War was the beginning of the mortal challenge to the human spirit that has continued and increased in its terrible seriousness into our own time. We are deeply moved, through every page of *Education as a Social Problem*, to behold the indomitable will, the anguished love, and the incandescent wisdom that came from at least one man to meet that challenge.

—JOHN F. GARDNER

Reprinted with the kind permission of JOURNAL FOR ANTHROPOLOGY, Autumn, 1969

BOOKS ON EDUCATION BY RUDOLF STEINER

The Education of the Child
The Four Temperaments
Discussions with Teachers
The Study of Man
Education as a Social Problem
The Younger Generation
Human Values in Education
A Modern Art of Education

BY OTHER AUTHORS

Eva Frommer, Voyage through Childhood
John F. Gardner, The Experience of Knowledge
A. C. Harwood, the Recovery of Man in Childhood
Elizabeth Grunelius, Early Childhood Education and the
Waldorf School Plan
Karl König, the First Three Years of Childhood
H. von Baravalle, Rudolf Steiner as Educator; Geometric Drawing
C. von Heydebrand, Childhood, a Study of the Growing Soul
Please ask for further information

THE WALDORF SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICA

Detroit Waldorf School

2555 Burns Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48214

Green Meadow School

Hungry Hollow Road, Spring Valley, New York 10977

High Mowing School

Wilton, New Hampshire 03086

Highland Hall

17100 Superior Street, Northridge, California 91324

Kimberton Farms School

Phoenixville, R.D. #2, Pennsylvania 19460

Mohala Pua School

Niu Estates, 350 Ulua Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96821

Rudolf Steiner School

15 East 79th Street, New York City, New York 10021

Rudolf Steiner School

3241 Brush Drive, Falls Church, Virginia 22042

Toronto Waldorf School

9100 Bathurst Street, Thornhill, Ontario, Canada

Sacramento Waldorf School

3750 Bannister Road, Sacramento, California 95628

Vancouver Waldorf School

2260 Philip Avenue, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Waldorf School, Adelphi University

Cambridge Avenue, Garden City, New York 11530

Washington Waldorf School

Hearst Hall, Wisconsin Avenue and Woodley Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016