



Education as an Art

Vol. 34

FALL-WINTER, 1975-1976

No. 1

*Cover: Ninth grade block printing,
Waldorf School, Adelphi University
Garden City, New York.*

EDUCATION AS AN ART

Published twice yearly

Subscription \$2.75

Single copies \$1.50

Back copies available

All communications should be addressed to
Education As An Art
Green Meadow School
Hungry Hollow Road
Spring Valley, New York 10977

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Education as an Art

Published by the Waldorf Schools in North America

Volume 34

Number 1

Fall-Winter, 1975-76

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Editorial

A Moral Conception of Man and the World

One of the things educators seem to do almost anything to avoid nowadays is that of giving children any positive, moral conception of man and the world with which they can live. By the same token they do not give them a negative one, either. They prefer to avoid the matter altogether. The fear of indoctrination is so strong in our time that conceptions, ideas about life, are something one avoids at all costs.

But can we really avoid them? Does not some conception or the other about life get in by default, as it were?

Even if education should be regarded as nothing but the teaching of certain items of knowledge, we should surely still need to answer the question of why we do even that; and if it is only that the student may be able to earn a good living, or make his way successfully in the world, or perhaps even become a good citizen, all these are reasons that are based on the educator's conception of life. They will pervade his teaching in one way or another, if only under exasperation or duress; for how many teachers can put their hands on their hearts and swear that they have never said to a student something like, "You'll never get on in the world if you don't do better than that", or "What good will you be to anybody if you don't learn all you can now?" Look at it which way we will, it is impossible to educate without some idea making itself felt of what we think life is all about.

The pretense of avoiding any such conception stems of course from a strong reaction to any kind of religious education. Religion is so important to religious people, and the differences in religious forms so divergent that it is impossible to do justice to it in school without upsetting somebody. Moreover, the idea that religion has no basis whatsoever in fact, which has caused so much opposition in our day from non-religious people to teaching it in schools at all, has made it easy to abandon it altogether. And with religion seems to have gone any extra-utilitarian conception of life, too.

But this has not necessarily rid education of any life conception whatsoever, nor enabled it to escape from the charge of indoctrination. We have simply changed the indoctrination of religion for something else. Children are no longer taught in

school to believe in God and to live a good life so that they can go to heaven when they die, but they are no less indoctrinated with ideas of a purely materialistic origin when they are told that the world is just a vast and complicated mechanism, that man is a higher animal, and that the only thing that persists is the operation of physical laws and forces. It is true that they are not gathered together at stated times of the day to recite a credo about all this, and to sing songs about it, and to hear homilies from their teachers about it, but this conception of the world and man is just as thoroughly accepted and promoted in all sorts of subtle ways in the whole educational process.

Even alternative forms of education cannot wholly escape this charge, including those radical ones that advocate perfect freedom and unstructured programs. They are based on a conception of life which can be just as arrogant and dogmatic as the old religious one. We all start educating on the basis of what we think education should be, and what education should be is determined entirely by our conception of life itself.

Seeing, therefore, that we cannot escape it, we ought to pay all the more attention to what conception we base our education on, which is all the more difficult because it is not easy to find something which does not lay us open to the charge of sectarianism.

There is therefore only one foundation on which to build such a conception, and that is on the experience of knowledge itself. After all, the business of education is knowledge; and unless we think of it only in terms of its immediate practical purposes we are obliged to look at its wider implications. If we do, then it is obvious that we cannot study the simplest thing without coming up against its relationship to the whole world both in space and time. And once that really gets hold of us — of the teacher first and then the student — a conception of the world and man must begin to take shape if we are not wholly deficient in imagination to let it do so.

We have to teach children, for instance, about what is happening in the world around them. But those things didn't just happen today. The people concerned in them are not the first people on the earth, nor will they be the last. Any item of our present experience and knowledge is linked by invisible threads to what happened yesterday and elsewhere to other people, and ultimately to the whole universe and the whole of time. Everything can only be seen properly in the perspective of evolution, and Man, as the end-product of that evolution, is an epitome of the whole evolutionary process, and the heir to all human experience. It all had to happen for him to be there. In other

words, the whole of what we do in education is centered in Man, evolving, ongoing, developing Man.

It might be argued that the same logic could be used to justify the existence of anything else in our environment — a stone, or a tree; and of course it could. But the point about man is that he can know this, the tree or the stone cannot; and knowing it, he is set apart from everything else which depends entirely on natural law. Man, however, is not just a creature of natural law. He himself discovered the law which explains his own natural being and that of every other creature. Knowledge therefore makes him free of that law *to the extent to which he is willing and able to take up the freedom and responsibility it endows him with.*

This is the fundamental truth which arises out of the concept of knowledge. This is the self-knowledge of man as a moral being, and we can only fail to see it in so far as we are obsessed by evolution in terms of external forces acting on us from without. They are now forces acting within us; indeed they are *us*, and quite apart from any divine being who may or may not be operating these forces, they are an expression of cosmic creativity on the part of something or someone in which we have become a partner. It need not have happened like this. Nature might have let us remain creatures like the animals without knowledge, living entirely out of instinct in accordance with external law. But it hasn't happened that way, and we know it. In knowledge we have got hold of one of the secrets by which the world exists. We know something of how it happens; and knowing that makes us different from all other creatures. We can begin doing something about it.

Naturally there may not be much we can do as yet. This is a comparatively recent development of evolution but awe-inspiringly real in its potential and responsibility. We shall make mistakes; have done so already—hideous and terrible ones, some of them; but we can learn, for as a knowing being nothing can keep man back but his own unwillingness and folly.

And this is a conception of life which can be talked about without fear of indoctrination or dogmatism, and one which allies itself with the highest conceptions of being. It sets at rest forever any excuse of man's ineptitude on the basis that he is after all nothing more than a 'higher' animal. The animal has some sense of being, too; but it is impossible that he has *knowledge* of being in this sense. That is why the animal must live entirely in obedience to evolutionary forces at work in his organism. Man need not; and just because he need not, he can set himself goals which have nothing to do with the natural process

of evolution. Only when we look at man as just an object of natural evolution is he insignificant. When we remember that he is also the starting point of a moral evolution, then he is something entirely different and higher. When we look at ourselves in the mirror we know there is a profound difference between the image and ourselves. We have to remember this when we look at ourselves in the mirror of our present knowledge of Nature.

Whatever our knowledge tells us of the world and ourselves, it is our knowledge, and in so far as that knowledge is true of Nature, it is true of us too. But if that knowledge does not include our self-knowledge as knower, then there must be something wrong with it. We must go over the figures again to see where the mistake lies, for it cannot be that we have evolved through countless ages to a point where *we* can know not only Nature but ourselves, only to discover that we — the knower — aren't worth knowing anyway.

But although all knowledge goes to show that man is the most favoured creature Nature has yet created, there is no indication that she will continue her favours. It depends on how we appreciate them. She will not be insulted; and the hopelessness of modern materialism, which pervades our culture and with which our children are ceaselessly indoctrinated, is the greatest insult that man has yet made to the Nature that brought him forth and gave him everything he has — including his ability to know.

It is on the basis of a reverence for Nature and a sense of gratitude and responsibility for the share man has been given in her further creation that Waldorf education was founded. This is a conception which we not only put before the students, but which animates every aspect of learning and knowledge that we touch upon. How susceptible this is to the charge of indoctrination we leave others to judge; how essential it is to promote, particularly in our day, is something about which we haven't a shadow of a doubt.

A.H.

Fairy Tale Hunger

The child's soul has an overpowering need to let fairy tale substance flow through itself, — just as the human body needs to let food substance circulate through it.

Rudolf Steiner

A true fairy tale speaks pictorially of transformation, enchantment, release, telling over and over in this way the secrets of human existence. Man's spiritual origin, his challenges, his victories and deliverances, all are described in child-language for a childlike humanity. And a child can accept the imagery as a foretelling and a forewarning. The so-called "gruesome" scene of the little goat-children dancing around the well in which the wolf has just been drowned, which an intellectual adult thinks he should regard as shocking, is to the child nothing else than the blessed victory of good over evil. A child proclaims this victory by the trust with which he is so marvellously endowed for his first steps on his life path.

A healthy three- or four-year old will listen a hundred times to the story of "The Star Pennies", with an interest that steadily increases from evening to evening. There is no more convincing proof than this that the child is experiencing an "Imagination", a soul-picture, from the fairy tale. It is only the intellect that has already had enough when it has heard it once. A work of art, a poetic creation, a religious truth, continues to move us, to stir us with ever fresh power. It fills us with a pure delight; we are uplifted and strengthened for whatever activity we are engaged in.

Everyone needs a field, a working space, for his inner life, for his willing- and feeling-soul, even for his thinking-soul. And a child needs such space in which his soul-forces can be active, just as much as any adult. If I do not offer him the imagery and the language of fairy tales, his soul-space will be filled by the vulgar and ordinary: auto and plane models, concern about money, empty, trivial commonplaces take over, and a field full of weeds is the result.

As a child's treasure of words increases, so too does his capacity for experience, and with it his creativeness . . . his inner wealth. The fairy tales the children hear over and over go directly into their imaginative play; they become the princes and frogs and giants. And it actually comes about that the children of a first grade that has had fairy tales do surpass their peers who have been deprived of the fairy tale world: they have a

greater range of feeling, they experience more, they are able to express themselves more fully in words or with crayons or perhaps "only" in the power of pure reverence that they possess. They are able to listen more carefully. And they can more easily unfold joyful, creative initiative.

—HELMUT VON KUGELGEN
Translated by Gladys Hahn

Translated by Gladys Hahn from an article, "Märchenhunger", in ERZIEHUNGSKUNST (published by the Waldorf schools of Germany), January, 1958, with the permission of the author.

The editor recommends to all teachers and parents the article by Bruno Bettelheim in the New Yorker for December 8, 1975: *The Uses of Enchantment* — an eloquent plea for telling fairy tales to children.

"... The idea that by learning to read one may be able later to enrich one's life is experienced as an empty promise when the stories that the child listens to or reads are vacuous. For a story to truly hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity. But for a story to enrich his life it must stimulate his imagination, help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions, be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations, give full recognition to his difficulties, suggest solutions to the problems that perturb him, and promote confidence in himself and his future . . .

"... But my interest in fairy tales is not a result of such technical analyses of their merits. It is, on the contrary, a consequence of my asking myself why, in my experience, children—normal and abnormal alike, and at every level of intelligence—have found folk fairy tales more satisfying than all other children's stories. The more I tried to understand why these stories are so successful in enriching the inner life of the child, the clearer it became to me that, in a much deeper sense than any other reading material, they start where the child really is in his psychological and emotional being.

"... I have known many young people who, particularly in late adolescence, come to a belief in magic, to compensate for their having been deprived of it prematurely in childhood. It is as if such young people felt that now was their last chance to make up for a severe deficiency in their life experience — that without having had a period of belief in magic they would be

unable to meet the rigors of adult life. Many of the young people who today suddenly seek escape in drug-induced dreams, apprentice themselves to a guru, believe in astrology, practice "black magic", or in some other fashion escape from reality into daydreams about magic experiences, were prematurely pressed to view reality as adults view it."

Dr. Bettelheim has seen the child in a clear, true light. His terms and reasoning seem at first to spring only from his psychological-scientific background, but from his wide experience with the normal and abnormal he has added the artistic, imaginative approach that Waldorf education sees necessary for a complete understanding of the child. Bettelheim stands tall and looks over the fence that most modern educators have erected—and he sees far into the distance. What has been described by Rudolf Steiner as the heavenly origin and spirit-birth of both child and fairy tale could well be a further step in understanding their close relationship.

Marionettes in the Kindergarten

In former days when most children grew up in large families and smaller communities, morning and evening devotions and Sunday worship was often a part of their early experience. Life then was less hurried and provided the child with many archetypal pictures, food for his urge to imitate, as he watched the adults go about their work.

Today's children are exposed to a multitude of sense impressions having little to do with their own everyday life's needs; hence many of their impressions are quite incomprehensible to them. As a result, our schools are filled with nervous, "hyper-active" children who can't concentrate, children with weak will forces. What the village community gave the growing child no more than thirty years ago just by its own everyday functioning, we must now create for him in a different form.

The marionette show is a tool to bring into the life of today's child a reverent mood, archetypal pictures as expressed in the true fairy tale. A simple melodic experience, expressed in lyre playing and singing in the pentatonic mode, can accompany it.

The performance of fairy tales by string puppets can be soul-festivals in the lives of small children, particularly when they accompany the changing seasons of the year. In a pre-school of various groups they can be the joyous gathering of 75 to 100 children, full of quiet anticipation as they enter the room where the stage has been arranged. When everyone has settled down, the sounds of the lyre ring through the absolutely quiet room. Soon the children recognize the songs they have learned in the weeks past, and when the lyre has ended they all burst forth to join in the songs. Then another hush falls as some of their teachers move to the puppet stage. The string puppets are guided by teachers behind a stage but in full view of the children. The experience of the puppet being guided from above is an archetypal image that should not be mysteriously hidden. The stage is primarily a symphony of colored veils that suggest in their various greens and browns the woods, in their royal reds and purples the King's palace, according to the needs of the fairy tale. The puppets themselves are a bare suggestion of the human form, but made from colors carefully chosen to give the right image of the character portrayed. As Rudolf Steiner suggested: "The puppets do not talk". Another teacher will read the fairy tale to which the puppets move. In its selection and in the songs the children sang together the mood of the season can speak to the children's imagination.

It is not always easy to find a tale suitable for string puppets and expressive of the season. St. George and the Dragon is a wonderful story for Michaelmas and the children enjoy it more and more as it is repeated. The confrontation and overcoming of evil is a theme in many fairy tales suitable for the fall. A tale that brings the mood of Advent without being a Christmas story is harder to find. Some of the legends of St. Nicholas might be suitable. A fine story that can be adapted for the purpose is "The Golden Footprint" by Henry Barnes, in which the essential elements are giving and receiving. After the Christmas holidays the Three Kings story must be brought to the children with particular vividness. In our time the Christmas mood carries very little into the new year. But the beaming of the star and the gifts of the Kings are both themes that speak deeply to the children's hearts. The story of King Casper and the Lion (taken from Jakob Streit's *Dreikönigsbuch**) has these two motifs and can be very adequately performed by string puppets. What story then can better depict the late winter mood with its hope of spring than "Mother Holle" (Grimm)? A fairy tale of transformation, such as "The Frog Prince", leads us into the wonder of spring; and the ripe mood of midsummer fills the story of "Jorinda and Joringel" (both Grimm). These are only a few examples of the content that string puppets can give us as we progress through the year.

At the end of a performance, the children's singing, preceded once more by the tones of the lyre, will bring the festival-gathering to a close. When the children return to their individual groups to play, they are nourished in their soul and strengthened in their will. Thus a contribution can be made to the religious needs of the children in their pre-school years.

—KUNDRY WILLWERTH

*Waldorf teacher in Switzerland. Can be ordered through St. George Book Service, Spring Valley, New York.

Rudolf Steiner spoke of marionette theatres as "healing remedies for the ills of civilization." He himself, at a time during World War I when his work on social and political questions was most harassing, gave many hours of help to the creation of such a theatre for children at a day-nursery in Berlin. It was the project of several artists, one of whom — Hedwig Hauck — became the crafts and handwork teacher at the first Waldorf School. Leopold van der Pals composed the music played before the curtains rose and at "certain important moments such as transformations." There were three front curtains of different

colors, raised one at a time so that the child-audience would come slowly into an imaginative realm far removed from the everyday world.

"The marionettes must hang on strings and be guided from above; this is the only kind of puppet to use for fairy tales. The strings should be fastened to the fingers, not hang from a cross-bar." Perhaps the most important advice of Dr. Steiner was: "Someone should read the tale quite simply and naturally, characterizing each creature or person with a pleasant voice; she should sit in front of the audience in a big special chair and should look charming!" . . . "Colors and textures of the costumes are important; for instance, the Prince's gold tunic or robe has to convey the image of the ego. The Bad Fairy must have a dark grey dress. Gnomes and dwarves should not be caricatures but show immense liveliness. The stage-lighting must be carefully worked out: for example, every time the Wicked Queen appears, a strong red light should illuminate the stage."

After much effort in Berlin to produce "Sleeping Beauty," the transformation of the hedge of thorns into roses had to take place from the top downwards. "Well, in fairy tales," remarked Rudolf Steiner, "roses do grow from heaven down to earth!" He was concerned about the smallest details, so that stage and performance would be absolutely right. "We must do everything in our power to help the children develop imagination." In his fourth Mystery Drama, The Souls' Awakening, he let Felicia Balde, the teller of tales, speak out this hope:

*. . . "I saw in spirit all my fairy princes,
my fire souls, too, dance merrily on thousands
of puppet-stages, shaped with artistry.
And so, with inner happiness, I left them,
to find their way to many, many children."*

—R.P.

A Pitfall of Commitment in Teaching

I may be accused of unpardonable indulgence. In an era of educational aridity, should anyone question the oasis of commitment? Perhaps the fact that knowledge of the potential danger of commitment comes from insight into my own experience as a teacher will soften nascent criticism. And the insight is finally constructive, since it illuminates the neglected strength of a committed educational community such as that which exists within the Waldorf schools.

But commitment to what? Not to the teaching of a subject for itself, or improvement of students on objective tests, although these results may follow from more important gains. Rather, to a belief that each student ought to be helped towards a sense and respect for himself as an autonomous human being with feelings and ideas that are his own and could, with encouragement, respect, and discipline be articulated and creatively developed. The source of what began for me as an intuitive conviction is undoubtedly traceable to the fourteen rather rebellious years I spent as a student at the Rudolf Steiner School where this conviction was taken for granted. Only a brief sojourn in a public High School taught me that such commitment was not universal. Until a gym teacher there bitterly lectured an enormous class on the injustice of her salary, it had never occurred to me that teaching involved anything other than considerations of the welfare of the students. While adolescent self-centeredness may have accounted for my naiveté, my narrow assumption was also a tribute to the dedication of which I had been the beneficiary.

I do not wish to criticize the gym teacher. The conditions under which many teachers teach deprive them of the human satisfactions necessary to motivate them to thinking about their students as human beings. Lesson plans, sterile mandatory workbooks which do all the thinking, petty regulations generating endless clerical work, administrators bent on hyping the reading scores and insistent on pretty bulletin boards, all these things interfere with creative teaching. It is difficult to believe in, act by, and communicate a conviction of human autonomy when one is crushed by a system which makes one feel less a human being than a member of a production line. Surely in the gym teacher's complaint lay concealed a plea to be considered a person of worth.

A long recognized principle of reciprocity is at work. The anger unvented against regulations and administrators will out,

if not in loud complaints, then deviously, in inordinately long homework assignments, or authoritarian demands for conformity, or resigned indifference. These attitudes, in turn, stimulate bitter resentment in the students, generating a cycle of education-in-anger which is a continually reinforcing one. It is rather a miracle that many teachers still struggle against this demoralizing cycle to remain committed and creative.

Anonymity is another kind of demoralization, one endemic to universities. I do not mean sheer bigness. One may be known to colleagues, sit on committees with them, even eat with them, but the academic community, organized around specialized knowledge, is only incidentally a community of teachers. Often determined by administrators, common concerns tend towards the latest publications, course enrollments, and departmental budgets. The doubts, satisfactions, insights, and ideals evolved *from* teaching often remain unshared. While benign neglect has certain advantages, and is infinitely preferable to a rigidly imposed curriculum, it nevertheless leaves the teacher feeling unappreciated. There is something lonely about a passionate commitment unrecognized. When entirely other criteria for measuring one's worth, notably publication, are utilized, loneliness, too, turns to anger.

A teacher who works under such unfavorable circumstances yet wishes to work for his students' autonomy thus labors under the additional burden of his own resentment; moreover, it may smolder far beneath the surface, pushed from recognition by the intensity of the commitment to ideals. A dangerous situation arises: the teacher's only professional satisfaction comes from the success of the students in developing the qualities he deems important. Their success confirms his worth, and confirms it no matter how dehumanized or anonymous he may feel.

The danger in this interdependence lies in the correlation between the teacher's satisfaction and the student's success. Since successful results are those that the teacher deems important, this is hardly the best path towards the development of autonomy. In addition, it is the bright, quick student, the easy learner, who is most likely to respond to an enthusiastic and interesting teacher. What of the student who is afraid to try, who is confused or less confident, or who is threatened by the teacher's intensity? Such a student is in more need of the fruits of a teacher's committed patience. Unfortunately, given the interdependence between the success of students and the teacher's need for satisfaction in a cold environment, the student is less likely to benefit and more likely to evoke the hostility lying dormant beneath the commitment. He is the student who defensively will *not* respond, who sulks in a corner, fiddles with his fingers, looks

defiantly bored, and silently declares war. His weapon is a good one, for intuitively understanding the teacher's needs, he withholds desired satisfaction by his lack of success. An indifferent teacher will meet his indifference tit for tat. A teacher who cares is likely to be hurt and angered.

Such provocative behavior, whether subtle or overt, needs compassion and understanding. Students who provoke in this way need a teacher secure enough of his own worth to accept expressions of anger so that a mutual trust can be established. Yet how often can a teacher who derives sorely needed satisfaction from a student's success understand and respond to failures? From whom can he draw the needed emotional reserves?

Few of us ever attain the inner strength and security to surmount a need for appreciation of our work. Thus, when a barren educational environment belittles the teacher so that the only satisfaction available to him resides in the student's response, that environment sends the teacher into the classroom seeking self-verification. And the smaller he feels, the more the need for self-verification verges on a need for self-glorification.

Conversely, in an educational community where teaching is a means by which teachers work together towards the realization of the students' autonomy, teaching may become participation, may become a richly shared experience rather than an isolated way of handling angry feelings of insignificance. Common endeavor of this kind furnishes a sense of dignity, worth, and satisfaction outside the classroom, so that the teaching within it is free to serve the students' needs rather than the ego of the teacher. The purest and most consciously constructed example of such a community is undoubtedly the "therapeutic milieu" of the University of Chicago's Orthogenic School where counselors embark on a voyage of self-discovery to learn the way in which their own needs influence their work with the seriously disturbed children in their care.* At each Waldorf School, of course, there thrives an educational community of a different kind also capable of sustaining purpose and providing satisfaction. While no organizational system can abolish human frailties, such a shared and dignified commitment makes the pitfall of the title considerably and happily less likely.

—GAIL SIMON REED

*See generally Bruno Bettelheim, *A Home for the Heart* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974.)

Valedictory Speech

June 6, 1975

On another Friday morning, last fall, just about the time of day at the school that Mr. Root would abandon our history text to point out the evils of American politics, I found myself sitting across a large teak desk opposite a college admissions officer. As this was not my first college interview, I was already accustomed to gathering up all the odd and distinguishing characteristics of my life and education into a neat and attractive looking package for public display. Just as I was discussing high school, this gentleman, who was being unusually attentive, asked me how many there were in my graduating class. I told him there were twenty-four of us, and after raising his eyebrows, he asked if all our classes were that size. I said that they were, more or less. Well, he looked at me very intently, the way those interviewers seldom do, and he kind of leaned over that enormous teak desk toward me. "Now, I know you're a good student," he said, "otherwise you wouldn't be applying here. So tell me what it is about this tiny school of yours that made you stay there for fourteen years." Well, this was not one of those questions I'd been expecting, so I had to think about it for a while. I thought for so long that when I finally glanced back in his direction, he was looking at his wrist watch to see how much of my precious half hour was left.

"I go to a most remarkable school," I said. "You may know that it is based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, but exactly what that is I can't tell you, for I know very little about it directly. In fact, I think that part of the philosophy is that the students shouldn't know anything about it consciously (that made him chuckle). All that I know of what Steiner intended is how it's worked out with me and my class.

"Certainly such a long period of time in the same school has had an influence on my personality, yet I think that I have been given a chance to develop my character as an individual in a freedom that is scarce. To take advantage of it fully, I think it was necessary for me to stay in the same place for all those years, for elementary school is a foundation without which the freedom of high school never sets quite right. The way I see it, in the elementary school I was given a certain picture of the world through my teachers. In high school the aim was to allow me to develop an individual outlook on life (maybe that's why they never told me anything about Steiner's philosophy), so in that sense I was very free. Now this is not to say that at the end of eighth grade these are the reasons I decided not to send myself to another school. My parents had something to do with all of this. But looking back on things now, I can understand them in this way and be glad I stayed."

"I see . . ." said my admissions officer — by this time he had removed his glasses and was rubbing them earnestly with his handkerchief, ". . . but the disadvantages of such a small school, surely they must have bothered you after a while?"

"I confess there was a time when I thought seriously of leaving," I told him. "In tenth grade, right around the middle of February, when things have a way of really getting to you. Sure I was bothered. I began to wonder whether I wouldn't be better off someplace else. Some place where I could go to gym more than once a week and not have to take the bus there, or choose my own courses from a thick catalogue, or have a modern, spacious, air-conditioned classroom. So I looked around at other schools, and some of them did have enormous electives programs, and swimming pools and tennis courts, but all of them lacked something — and shortly it occurred to me that none of my friends in these other schools knew anything of their teachers more than the drone of their voices at the front of the room. Nor did they care to. In these larger classes very few were acquainted with all the others. How could they hope to build the familiarity and unity that I felt so important? So I stayed. Besides, I'd gotten kind of attached to my class."

"Has everyone in your class been there as long as you have?"

"Of course not! We'd be a mighty peculiar bunch if they had! No, as important to me as the unity of my class are the influences of its newer members — people coming in with new ideas and fresh insights. They are as vital as the ones who have been around for fourteen years."

"So I guess you could say that you are very much a product of the Steiner system," he ventured.

"I am a product of the Steiner pedagogy," I said, "inasmuch as I have been educated in accordance with its principles. but as for my character as a human being, I would say that I am a product of myself. I think that all my teachers hoped to do was unlock my own individual nature, not to impose on me theirs or any other. I suppose that's what you could say a product of the Steiner system is, an individual who is true to himself."

So we conversed in this manner, the admissions officer and I, and as it turned out, that interview lasted an hour and a half. Later on, I walked outside into the cool October air and wondered to myself just what this individual nature of mine I'd spoken of was; while all around me stood the centuries-old buildings of the college, covered with ivy, and exuding wisdom.

—THOMAS SOYBEL

The School Smithy

Report on the crafts work in the Waldorf School
am Kräherwald, Stuttgart, Germany

"But where are all the boys?" exclaimed the third-grade teacher as the class came back from lunch; after seeing that the girls were settling down quietly, she rushed out to find the boys. Soon a sharp rhythmic hammering drew that wise lady to the cellar. Yes, of course! There they were, all the lot of them, the rascals — crowding around the forge, staring wide-eyed at the fire, watching entranced as the soft iron changed its shape under the mighty hammer-blows of a big ninth-grader. She took in the situation at a glance and ran back to get the girls, so that they all could see how the older boys made their hooks and chains, their chisels and screwdrivers. And while the youngsters watched, it was as though *they* were the fire, *they* were the melting iron, *they* were the anvil and the hammer.

This is a simple incident from our school life, but it takes us to the heart of the problem of present-day education. Children are imitators, but where can they find anything now that is worth imitating? Adolescents want activity, but where can they find any activity that is meaningful and that can be learnt by observation, as used to be the case with the old crafts? Factories with locked gates, assembly lines of mechanized work, machines and more machines! And how rare is a pottery, a weavery, a smithy or a carpenter shop! To have a healthy understanding of our present mechanized world and to keep a healthy relation to it, a child first needs these old crafts where objects are produced directly by a human being's skill and strength. We must bring into the schools the fundamental crafts — for they are dying out — as a living experience. This is the basic thought out of which our crafts work has grown.

Relevant to this are the observations we made in our ninth and tenth grades, that is, among our fifteen- and sixteen-year-old students. Individual students, even groups of students, suddenly "copped out" and lost their initiative; they no longer wanted to learn anything. What followed depended on their temperament: either they were apathetic or they were rebellious. Some dropped out of school and got a job and tried to make good in it; others simply sat through their classes without interest. And yet all of them had gone through eight years of elementary school participating in the classwork with complete enthusiasm. We had to face the question: what has happened?

Children develop up to their fourteenth year in conformity with general laws. Therefore a unified curriculum is right for those years, a curriculum built on those very laws of inner development. But with their fourteenth year the children become differentiated, in their talents and interests as well as in sex. They grow out of the closed world of childhood into the life around them. With respect to talents two main groups emerge: one leans more toward intellectual pursuits, the other toward practical work. Both groups must be encouraged and helped to follow their own bent; at the same time the one can share the other's interests, giving to each a healthy balance. Their most important need, however, is that they should have their education *together* until their eighteenth year.

"And you will see, if some day the students of cabinetmaking and mechanics sit together in the same history classroom with the student who is perhaps going to be a teacher, then something new will have been established . . . And this kind of school will then contain everything a young person is going to need for his life — which if it were not there would by its omission bring us still further into social deterioration than we are already. Knowledge essential for life situations is what all education must now provide."*

"What we need for the student who is steering toward an intellectual profession, is to give him as broad a picture as possible of practical work — and on the other hand for the student who thinks he wants to go into practical work, to make him acquainted within certain limits with the various professional careers. But I must make it quite clear here that the practical work should first be taken up in school. Manual work should not be taught by suddenly throwing young people into a factory among a lot of adults. We must make it possible to present the practical side of life within the school itself. Then a young person can carry away the small amount of experience and practice he has had in a model situation for his work out in the world. And making use of a model-situation can immediately be so practical that articles the students produce in school are placed directly on the market. If prisoners are allowed to work at producing things that are then thrown into the general economy, I see no reason why things should not also be made in student workshops and then sold in the everyday world. The young person should stay as long as possible within his school environment; this is the healthiest possible procedure. We must realize this. For it is in keeping with man's inner nature to enter only gradually into life, not to be thrown suddenly into it."*

**Rudolf Steiner: Drei Vorträge über Volkspädagogik, Lecture I, May 11, 1919, in Stuttgart, Germany. (Not yet translated)*

This advice and our own observations led then — in 1952 — to our establishing from ninth grade on an intensified crafts course for students who showed particular talent for crafts. We felt that our program up to that time had not been altogether fair to this group of students. And simply to add this course to their other subjects did not make sense either: they would be hopelessly overburdened. It was therefore decided that those who elected the new course would discontinue their French course (they had acquired a foundation in French through eight whole years in elementary school); they would still continue the other foreign language, English. In all their other courses the two groups would still be together as formerly. The choice, special crafts or continued French, was to be made by the parents after consultation with the teachers.

The special course is given eight hours a week, from ninth through twelfth grade. The following crafts alternate in "block" periods: carpentry, ceramics, ironwork, metalwork, and tailoring. The course begins in the woodwork shop; the students have already received a good foundation here in the regular handwork instruction they were given from fifth grade through eighth grade, therefore they can now be led fairly quickly through the first steps of fine carpentry, planing of boards and the making of simple joints. The second half of the term is devoted to ceramics: the careful shaping and glazing of various kinds of pottery. During the third quarter they have their first ironsmithing and other metalwork. For the last quarter the boys are again in the carpenter shop, to put whatever skill they have so far acquired into a small cabinet-making project, while the girls work in the tailor shop. These blocks are repeated in tenth grade; smithing and metalwork take on increasing importance, and in all the crafts the students work more independently. For instance, in ninth grade carpentry the manual work is performed first and the technical drawing of the task is made afterward, but in tenth grade the work is usually done from the working drawings. In eleventh and twelfth grades the crafts are still the same, but more and more stress is laid on independent work, even to making the drawings for the projects assigned.

Throughout the four years, two of the eight work hours each week are used for the students to write up their work reports, including calculations and drawings, also for instruction concerning tools and materials. For this is really our purpose: to follow in thought what the hands have already accomplished in action — as the saying goes, "from doing to understanding."

**Rudolf Steiner, Lectures to Teachers, Dornach, December, 1921, Lecture 14.*
op

What we want to accomplish can perhaps be seen most clearly in the smithy — the place that to some people would seem farthest removed from schoolwork! But whoever has once hammered at a forge, or even watched a blacksmith, will understand what intense interest this particular craft can arouse and also what discipline it requires.

From their very first attempts in ninth grade at stretching, shortening, and bending iron, the students make important discoveries. They make them as soon as they start to heat the iron: if it is too hot it splatters; if it is not hot enough, it cannot be shaped, it becomes brittle and cracks. They have to find the happy medium — an image of what they must find within themselves at that age, fifteen. Then when they have brought the iron on the anvil nearly to white heat, they must make an instant decision and summon instant strength to hammer it, for it must keep its heat as long as possible under their shaping hammerblows, and they must keep hammering it as long as it is hot! This strengthens their power of decision. Strength alone accomplishes nothing in the smithy; what is essential is a strong feeling for form and for material. The students are constantly learning that the best smith is not he who is strongest but rather he who can feel most vividly what form is needed and who knows how and where he must strike with his hammer. We once had a student who could re-hammer all the poor forms his classmates turned out, and he was by far the smallest boy in the class. He was a remarkably lively fellow and right down on his feet for practical life, but when it came to intellectual matters he was almost hopelessly ungifted. Nevertheless, just because he outshone all his classmates in the smithy work, they always relied on him to calculate the so-called circular arcs, in order to cut the material into the proper lengths — a mathematical task that presented enormous difficulties to him. And so it was precisely in his practical work that he came to realize that even arithmetic is not wholly unnecessary, and he finally began to exert himself to study seriously.

In tenth grade each student forges his own tools: hammer, chisels and screwdrivers, center-punches and plain punches. This has a significant result. If someone has made a tool for himself, he treats it tenderly. He never has to be told to be careful of the tools; he takes care of them as a matter of course. At the end of the year the tenth grade students were allowed to choose whether they would take home their beautiful drawn-copper mug or their hammer. Surprisingly the majority chose their hammer — with this kind of reasoning: "If I take my hammer, I'll always be able to make something at home."

The eleventh grade smithy assignment is a task that is difficult as well as beautiful: the forging of fire tongs — a piece of

work that demands quite a little skill, also endurance, also a steady visualizing of the form.

For twelfth grade we usually give large assignments to be carried out by the whole class as a cooperative piece of work. There are many opportunities to be found in the school itself for this kind of task, particularly contributions to a new school building, as for example, iron railings for a bridge, a terrace or steps.

One can realize the particular value of ironwork training if one remembers that originally all work was performed in rhythm. One can still experience this occasionally in isolated rural districts, or in a small village where grain is threshed by hand. Work is easier when it is done in a definite rhythm; instead of tiring the worker, it actually enlivens him, strengthens him. And for ironwork, rhythm is very important indeed. And so one might say, the smithy is the heart of our many-sided crafts activity.

And now, of course, it could be argued that just this many-sidedness in our crafts program must lead to a shocking diletantism. Admittedly, that danger exists. On the other hand we have had the experience that just because of the variety, each single craft feels supported and encouraged by all the others. In this connection one might point to the fine results they are getting at the vocational training school Hibernia in Wanne-Eickel, which is organized on a similar plan of a many-sided fundamental training.* Our purpose is not to present an isolated body of knowledge in this or that field, but to use the practical work as a pedagogical tool, to use the disciplines of a craft — such as precision, objectivity — as a means to develop character. The work extends beyond mere physical performance; it includes a training of thought that stays close to reality. That a fine general dexterity is gained precisely from the many-sided training is of great value to those young people who go out afterwards to an apprenticeship. We always expect their try-outs to show that the usual contract time can be shortened.

It is still too soon to assess the results of this practical crafts program; it must be observed for several years. But one can already state definitely, it is obvious that the practical work influences the students' will-to-work in their other studies. Another particularly happy result is that former students who participated in this program and who were not always the easiest

*For this, see article "Apprentices to Culture: the Hibernia School" by Alan Howard in "Education as an Art," Winter 1965, Vol. 25, No. 2 (single copies available, 35 cents.)

students to handle have been able to hold down outside jobs very satisfactorily. And this is the moment to mention with gratitude that many of these former students now come back to school one evening of each week to contribute their skills toward the expansion of our workshops. Already they have given over a thousand work-hours to the school.

It is also apparent that the practical course has a good influence on the craftwork of the entire class. In eleventh grade there is a workshop "block" that gives a short introduction to smithing. Both groups have this together, the French group as well as the crafts group. Here the craftsmen really help the others, behaving like assistant teachers; naturally this is very important for the social structure of the class. But the influence spreads beyond the single classes. A third grade teacher who was teaching housing took his children down to the smithy and let the boys forge a clamp under the expert supervision of some eleventh grade students. The older boys held the hot iron and watched the little smiths with fatherly concern, for the youngsters had to hold the big forge-hammer with both hands as they struck the iron to stretch it and bend it. Enthusiasm and deep satisfaction among the young boys! One result of this visit was described by a parent: her young daughter came home from school, threw her schoolbag in the corner and — muttering to herself — vanished. After quite a search, the mother found her in the cellar in front of the open door of the furnace, a hammer in one hand and some iron — getting pretty soft — in the other. To her mother's anxious questions she gave this laconic answer: "He wouldn't let us girls hammer at all!"

—MICHAEL TITTMANN

(Translated by G.H. and reprinted with the kind permission of Erziehungskunst, September 1961.)

Book Reviews

THE EXPERIENCE OF KNOWLEDGE: ESSAYS ON AMERICAN EDUCATION by John Fentress Gardner. Waldorf Press.

"In the core of his being, man is eternal spirit. Inevitably, he will try to live from this spirit. Inevitably, the goal of the education he gives his children will be to help them activate this deepest center of being in themselves. He will seek methods that show promise of being able to awaken, draw forth, and strengthen what lies in them as the seed of all creativeness and joy in living."

A newly published book of essays on American education penetrates to the foundation of what ails modern schools. Does it matter for teaching: whether man is only a biological organism or "a being of body, of soul, and of spirit"; whether or not we can really know anything of the world except its surface appearance; whether man's individuality is what distinguishes him from all other men or is exactly what unites him with others; whether education is properly a function of the state or belongs to the area of private conviction?

This book is *The Experience of Knowledge: Essays on American Education* by the former Faculty Chairman of the Waldorf School, in Garden City, New York. The writer identifies a fundamental misconception about the nature of man and the nature of thinking. He then examines the consequences of this misconception for teaching methods, for discipline, for human freedom, for schools within a democratic society, and for America's position in the world. What he has to say is important for educators but equally so for thinking people in any sphere of life who are concerned about America and the awakening minds of young people.

This is not a superficial, easy-going book, nor can it be lightly summarized. On the other hand, it is written with clarity and beauty; nothing in it is abstruse or superfluous. It brings to light many painful problems facing America; yet it is, also, a hopeful book. As diagnosis is the starting point of healing, a realization of the nature of the problem carries with it the possibility of wholehearted change.

Here is a book that *can* make a difference.

—CORNELIA SCHWARTZ

From "Morality and the Experience of Knowledge," Chapter 7 of *The Experience of Knowledge*, by John F. Gardner

A man is replenished through love. "What a man loves, that he has" When one loves the environment he lives in, the people he meets, the work he does, the world fills him with its own positive content. He grows generous and charitable. His overflowing goodwill is felt by others as a blessing, which they gladly return in their goodwill to him.

But the man who does not love has not this ever-renewed fullness. He is like a well whose water not only does not overflow as a spring, but whose water level is progressively dropping. Because this man looks upon the world around him from a distance, with indifference or distaste, he finds nothing in it to touch his heart. For him, events do not yield their secret life. They are all mask. Masks cannot be loved. When love fails, the wellsprings of the affirmative self sink. The receding waters create a kind of suction that we may call negative selfhood, or selfishness. The self does not flow outwards into life, but seeks to draw life in towards itself. It tries to fill its lack of being by much having. And this is a chief characteristic of modern Western man. He is addicted to possessions. He seeks happiness primarily through the quest for money, power, and prestige.

The difficulty is, a dying spring cannot be replenished by pouring into it more water, but only by a renewed upwelling from its own depths. No amount of desire to possess things can make up for the failure to love things. "What a man loves, that he has; but by desire he robs himself of that love." Desire is selfishness; its suction comes from inner emptiness. This emptiness is a state of non-being. Non-being is a hunger that asks to be fed. The only food that would genuinely still the hunger of non-being is being. But our culture, instead of recognizing what is wrong and learning how to remedy it, has hastened still further along the road that brought it in the first place to hunger instead of satisfaction. It pursues its insatiable appetite for material goods and services, with a drive that threatens to devastate the entire earth.

Who does not love, cannot create. And the man who can neither love nor create is no real man. To become creative one must know how to rise above personal limits and take inspiration from the other and the higher. And then one must know how to find his way back, allowing this inspiration to flow through himself into deeds of initiative. To bring power from beyond the self into the self, that it may flow out again through loving acts, this is to become creative. This is the gain of right cognition, and the loss to be expected from wrong cognition.

"The man who can enter and leave at will is at home," said George MacDonald. Through right cognition man finds the way out of himself lovingly, and back into himself creatively; and thus he makes himself at home, yet free, in the universe.

*BETTER LATE THAN EARLY: A NEW APPROACH
FOR YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION*

by Raymond S. Moore & Dorothy N. Moore.

Reader's Digest Press, New York, 1975. \$7.95

As we have reached the middle of the 70's, common sense seems to gain ground. Out of the chaos of the decade, we are gradually coming to our senses. We have learned to question practices long taken for granted. We preserve and protect more than we have done in the past.

One of the positive symptoms of this shift is the fact that Reader's Digest Press has published *Better Late Than Early*. This book takes a hard look at the prevailing attitudes towards early schooling. It advocates the child's need for protection, warmth, "parenting", "homing" (vs. schooling) for a much longer time than the accepted norm in this country; and school learning should begin "better late than early", after the child has reached an integrated maturity level, because premature intellectual teaching results not only in an enormous amount of wasted effort by parents and teachers who feel compelled to teach the young child facts and skills for which he is not yet ready, but it will also result in actual damage to the child, possibly leaving him scarred for life.

The authors have all the ammunition needed to make their points. They present the most complete and the best organized research material available in the field of early education. (The bibliography lists 161 entries.) This represents the mature fruit of a lifetime's work. The evidence is so solid that the foreword can challenge the reader: "If . . . you find any research contrary to the evidence and conclusions presented here, we will be in your debt if you will send it to us."

The text is permeated with life experience. All the common objections, theories, and doubts, are painstakingly answered. In addition, valuable suggestions are given concerning the young child's learning power of imitation in such fields as play; discipline; language; character building; forming of habits; suggestions, for example, for letting the child help alongside the mother in the daily housework, until he will later assume independent tasks within the family life.

The book is divided into two parts. While Part II provides some interesting advice, it is Part I that gives the book its unique value. A list of its chapter headings may help to convey its scope:

1. Behind the Early Childhood Scene
2. Making the Laws
3. Some Common Fears and Questions
4. When They Are Ready for School
5. Developing Attachments
6. Opportunity for Parents
7. Time and the Senses
 - Vision
 - Hearing
 - Intersensory Perception
8. Learning to Reason
9. Comparing Early and Late Starters
10. Comparing Home and School Costs

The material presented in this book will be invaluable to those parents and teachers of young children who really want to know about the issues of early childhood education. Waldorf teachers will find detailed research support for their firm stand against early school entrance, and for the artistic, non-intellectual approach in their kindergartens and primary grades that can fortify them against the ever-recurring pressures for early reading. The book should also provide them with incentives for continuous close work with parents through study groups, workshops, conferences, or private discussions, so that home and school can work closely together for the welfare of the young child.

—GISELA T. O'NEIL

A newspaper reports on the ever-increasing intelligence tests for Pre-school and Kindergarten children. Sometimes, however, the adult has to admit that tots' replies show greater wisdom than the examiners. There was the picture of a cat, for instance, a cat without a tail, looking somewhat mournful.

Question 26: What is missing in this picture?

"They forgot to give Pussy his bowl of milk!" was the answer of a good-hearted little girl.

A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA, by Ursula K. Le Guin, Parnassus Press, Berkeley, California, 1968. 205 pages. Also available in Canada as a Puffin Book.

A class teacher often wishes to set aside some time in class during the week — perhaps an extra lesson — to read a book aloud to his children. Or sometimes the opportunity presents itself to suggest a book to a child to read on his own, for instance over the summer vacation. If the child or children are about eleven or twelve years old, a book that can be highly recommended is Ursula Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*.

Earthsea is an imagined archipelago comprised of many central islands surrounded by four Reaches. In the northern sea on the island of Gont, a land famous for wizards, a young boy called Sparrowhawk begins his career, which is to culminate in his becoming both dragonlord and Archmage. In the *Deed of Ged* and in many songs his life is told, ". . . but this is a tale of the time before his fame, before the songs were made."

Young Sparrowhawk realizes his powers early and is apprenticed to Gont Island's Master Wizard who gives him his true name, Ged. But Ged is impatient to "enter at once into the mystery and mastery of power" and so leaving the Master Wizard, who proceeds too slowly to suit Ged, and his home island he joins the School for Wizards in the south. Driven by pride and jealousy Ged is tempted to try certain dangerous powers too soon and a terrible evil shadow is let loose by him in the land. The shadow pursues him and tries to take hold of his very being, to turn him into an instrument for evil, "devouring him out from within, owning him", turning him into a *gebbeth*. After some perilous journeys Ged returns to the old Master Wizard, Ogion, who tells him: "There is no safe place . . . the shadow seeks to destroy your true being . . . you must turn around . . . seek what seeks you . . . you must hunt the hunter."

And Ged goes hunting. The last third of the book tells of his quest and in good literary style (which pervades the whole work) maintains a rhythm of breathtaking suspense and relief-giving release. Finally Ged sails out beyond the islands of the Eastern Reach in his little boat *Lookfar*, out on the Open Sea "beyond the sources of the sea and eastward behind the gates of daylight." He comes to a place where the Open Sea seems land and he walks away from the boat. A shadow comes towards him over the sand.

"At first it was shapeless, but as it drew nearer it took on the look of a man." Indeed, it took on the shapes of all the men who had played some part in Ged's life. As the shadow becomes blacker and more grotesque, Ged lifts his staff which burns ever

whiter and more radiantly. "In silence, man and shadow met face to face . . . aloud and clearly Ged spoke the shadow's name, and in the same moment the shadow spoke without lips or tongue, saying the same word: Ged. And the two voices were one voice . . . Light and darkness met, and joined, and were one."

Ged's quest ends with the conquering of self and so the story ends, but presumably this is just the beginning, for Ged now enters upon his legendary career, begins his real work. This interlude was merely the preparation before taking up his life's task. How apt for a child just about to enter that period of his life when intellectual independence and pride play counterpoint with emotional turmoil and struggles of the soul, when inner development and refinement are preparing the way for possession of the threefold being of man by the ego. In this mythical, pre-Christian narrative, replete with dragons, witches and wizards, the religious striving to discover the nature of one's true being is presented to the reader in a highly readable and satisfying way.

To quote from *The Creation of Ea*, which tells how the islands of the Archipelago and the Reaches were created:

Only in silence the word,
Only in dark the light,
Only in dying life.

—MEL BELENSON

A mother has solved the violence-on-television problem in her home. Her children may watch an evening show until someone gets hurt or killed. Then the TV has to be turned off. Every evening shouts of "Don't hurt him! Don't hurt him!" come from the family room.

Time in front of the set is down to about 5 minutes a night.

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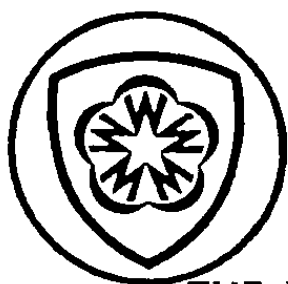
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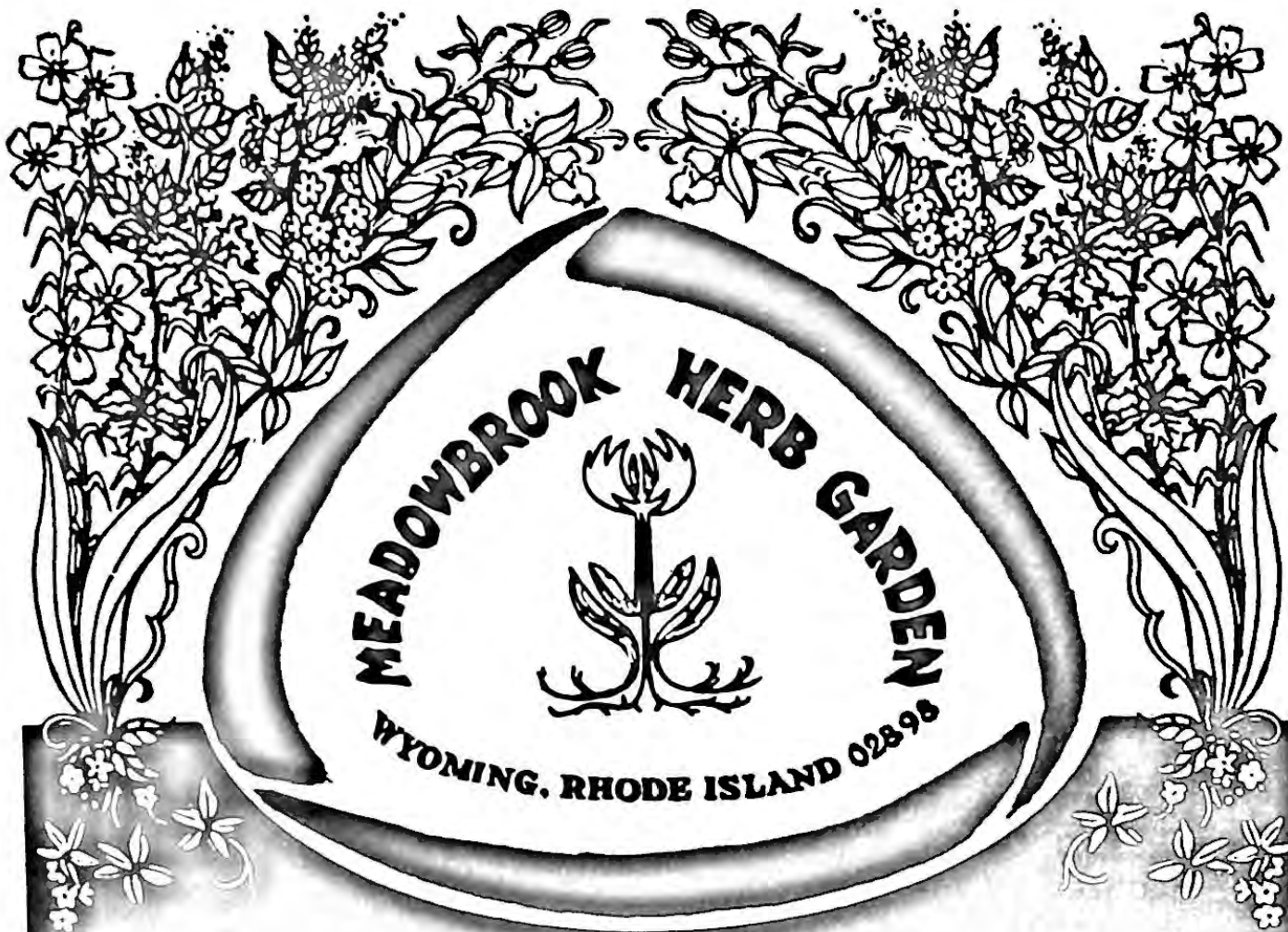
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