



Imagination

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Editorial:

"I SEE MY IDEAS!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the supreme and outstanding master of German letters, had other interests besides literature. One of these was botany. He was fascinated by plants and their way of adapting themselves to all the moods of nature and varieties of terrain. He was never tired of studying them with all the concentration of devotion of a great and poetic mind. All the time, however, he was hoping to come upon something which was not there to physical sight—the secret of their plant nature. He knew it lay hidden, not in one plant but in all, not in their rigid classification into genus and species, but in the living panorama of their infinite variety.

One day his efforts were rewarded. He found what he was looking for. Being German, he called it by a German word, *Urpflanze*—which is practically untranslatable into English. It could be rendered 'Primal Plant', 'Master-Plant', 'Plant-Being', but none really fits the German. Anyway, it was the 'father and mother' not only of all the plants there are, but all that ever were and ever could be.

One day as he was going away from a lecture in Jena, he got into conversation with his friend Friedrich Schiller, and began talking to him about his discovery. Schiller listened attentively, but with mounting difficulty. It was obvious to him that this *Urpflanze* Goethe was so keen on, was no actual plant you could find growing anywhere on earth, and yet Goethe was talking about it as if it were. Schiller felt compelled to say something about it:

"But what you are describing," he said, "is surely only an idea."

It is not possible in the interests of historical accuracy to say that thereupon Goethe stopped dead in his tracks, looked at Schiller with withering scorn—or pity—and burst out with that remark that has since become famous: "But I see my ideas!" But at least the "I see my ideas" is accurate, and from what one knows of Goethe, the rest might very well have been also.

This was one of Rudolf Steiner's favorite stories about Goethe, and anyone familiar with Steiner's work can easily see why. Steiner was the apostle of the kind of thinking that *sees* ideas. Thinking was to him the means whereby we perceive the inner reality of the world around us: a faculty that could be

trained to be as reliable as physical sight. He had great hopes that the Waldorf education he founded would send men and women into the world who could not only cope with all the demands of practical and professional life, but who could think with inner vision, with—*Imagination*.

Imagination is not just 'making things up'. It is the power to think with such depth and clarity that the ideas which result become images in the mind that are as real as the things we see. Goethe had a word for that kind of thinking, too. He called it 'Anschauende Urteilskraft', the power of perceptive (seeing) judgment. We all bear witness to it in a way, for whenever an idea comes to us with crystal clarity, the exclamation that invariably springs to our lips is, "Ah! I see".

But we also have a saying that so-called practical, down-to-earth people like to use sometimes to discredit thinking. They say "Seeing is believing"; but they don't mean the kind of seeing that Goethe meant—or Steiner. What they're really saying is: "Only what I can see with my two physical eyes is real. Anything else is only an idea, and if I can't see it, it isn't real."

One wonders whether such people have ever realized what their seeing would be if they could *only* see, if they had no power of thought to illuminate what they see. Nothing but color and form . . . that is all. And not really that, for only the power of thought is able to see beyond the sense impressions so that we can *know* the one as form and the other as color and finally the whole as an object of knowledge. It is only because we can also think that the whole world of sense impressions becomes objectively real for us, the manifold inter-relation of visible objects and beings.

And so this whole wide world of sea and sky and mountains, of birds and beasts and flowers, of the faces of men and women and little children that we know so well, is really a great idea made visible, an image of the creative activity which would otherwise be visible only to the Creator himself: an *Imagination*.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech; and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

But there are other ideas which we can't see in that way, ideas which have not pressed through into physical form. Those, too, we can also 'see' when our thinking has developed itself sufficiently to realize its perceptive power, when our thinking is recognized as a nascent organ of higher vision.

It was because Goethe had first learned to look upon the world as an imagination of the gods; to look at it, as he himself said, as "a so-to-speak Divine Being", that he was able to perceive *images* of reality that for the rest of us are still '*only* ideas'. They do not manifest themselves in sense-perceptible form; they can only be *seen* by the inner eye of thought, transformed by its own purity and devotion, by the eye of the thinker who has become seer.

When God made the world, we are told that after it was finished, he too *saw*—and, incidentally, in whatever way we think of God, we certainly can't think of him as a physical being looking out upon his work with two physical eyes, although popular imagination (sic) often represents him as such. He "*saw* that it was good."

What relation has the seeing of God to the knowledge, the ideas of man? Almost the very next sentence in the Creation story makes that clear; for when the world was made, *then* God said, "Let us make man *in our image*, after our likeness." Could God have made man "in our image" to any other end than that man might be able to *see* as God sees? When our knowledge rises to Imagination, we do indeed begin to see as God saw, as a "so-to-speak Divine Being", as "gleichsam göttliches Wesen". A.H.

Imagination

*A Fairy Tale told by Felicia Balde in the third Mystery Play
by Rudolf Steiner, "The Guardian of the Threshold". ***

Once upon a time there lived
a light-filled child of gods.
It was akin to beings who with foresight weave
in spirit realms the web of wisdom.
Cared for by Father Truth, the child grew up
within its world to primal power.
And when it felt the ripened will
bestir itself creatively within its limbs of light,
it often looked with pity toward the earth
where human souls were longing for the truth.
Then spoke the child of light to Father Truth:
'Men thirst, O Father, for the drink
which you can offer them out of your springs.'
And Father Truth with earnestness replied:
'The springs which I must guard
let light stream forth from spirit suns;
and only those may drink the light
who never need to thirst for air to breathe.
On light, therefore, I have brought up the child
who feels compassion for the souls on earth
and can engender light in breathing beings.
So go, my child, and wend your way to men
and lead the light within them, spirit-kindled,
confidently forth to meet my light.'
Thereon the bright light-being made its way
to souls who feel their life by breathing.
It found good men in numbers on the earth
who offered it soul lodging joyously.
In faithful love it turned their gaze
unto the Father at the springs of light.
Now when this being heard from human lips
and happy human minds *Imagination*
as magic word, it felt itself
received with joy by friendly human hearts.
One day, however, there approached this being
a man, who cast on it quite strange and chilling looks.
'I turn on earth the souls of men
toward Father Truth, who tends the springs of light,'
thus spoke this being to the unknown man.
Then spoke the man: 'You weave wild dreams
in human spirits and deceive their souls.'
And since that day which saw this come to pass,
right many a man heaps slander on this being
that can bring light into the souls that breathe.

***The Guardian of the Threshold, Steiner Book Centre, Vancouver, Canada,
1973. Translated by Ruth and Hans Pusch.*

Imagination At Different Ages

A small child is entirely—as modern child-psychology would express it—a motor being: a being who lives completely in movement, in doing, who therefore is acting directly out of his will. There is not yet the slightest deliberation by his intelligence. Want, wish, impulse determine his actions. Everyone knows how useless it is to “explain” to him why he should or should not do this or that.

Every act of creation is Will. Even the Old Testament is witness to this fact. It was only *after* God acted that He “saw that it was good.” And moreover, not only the creating is Will but also the creation itself—however strange that may seem to be. When a new human being enters this world, the reality of the event is truly described by saying, a newborn child is materialized Will. The child has no capacity but willing, even though the willing is at first only a mirroring, an imitation of his surroundings. Only gradually in this will-being does consciousness arise, and ideation, and thinking. And precisely this awakening of ideation on the child’s will-foundation signifies the birth of imagination.

The child’s imaginative activity emerges spontaneously; it does not come through any external stimulus. The teacher’s task is so to guide this activity that when the child as a young adult has finished school and goes out into the world, he goes prepared to face the demands not only of modern technical life but of all modern life in general.

A human being’s imagination undergoes a metamorphosis in the course of a lifetime. If we want to follow its transformations, we must begin by observing its first phase, the small child’s spontaneous fancy. When a healthy three-, four-, or five-year-old plays, any bit of rag he picks up is the Princess’ gown or Mary’s cloak or Cinderella’s apron. A chair is a car, a house, a vegetable wagon. The child has his will at his command and also a world of images. These images are called forth primarily by the fairy tales and other stories the child is told by the grown-ups. They do not come from his perceptions as do the concepts of an adult. For the child it is quite unnecessary ever to have seen a wolf or a princess or a frog; he possesses nonetheless an inner image of wolf and princess and frog—not to mention gnome and fairy and witch. Nor does he need ever to have seen representations of them. External perception—which for an adult is the principal source of his images—is for a child entirely secondary. If a fairy tale has been told clearly and vividly, the child holds in himself the images it has evoked. And he has them to use in his play. So we see will-activity as the base, and crowding up out of it, a wealth of images which the child uses in free creative play.

Then at the change of teeth we see the child's feeling, emotional life begin gradually to establish its independence. In the small child it had been completely bound to his willing, and thereby to his organic processes. Feelings of joy and sorrow, comfort and discomfort, still have an immediate effect upon his digestion, growth and vitality. One can find adults, too, obviously, whose emotional life works deeply into the bodily functions. However, we can now observe that when the child reaches school age, there begins to take place in him an ever-increasing independence of the feeling life. We can even notice that whereas previously the feeling life was directly bound up with the will life, now it gradually connects itself much more strongly with the conceptual thinking. We can see clearly that the child's imagination is no longer entirely dependent upon his willing. The fostering of a rich, diverse feeling life will now give his imagination the nourishment it longs for. True, a healthy, strong will such as is developed by an artistic method of teaching will still provide the base; but now the depth and range of his feeling life will determine whether his imagination is rich or poor.

It would be interesting in this regard to compare the students of a school that prepares them in the traditional way for high school and college or technical school by focusing their entire attention upon "learning", that is, upon acquiring an intellectual grasp of the school subjects—to compare those students with those of a school in which a teacher, full of his subject and full of enthusiasm, is able to give his class a vivid experience of it. Suppose a student writes a report on some subject his class has been studying: if the subject has been presented with the express purpose of preparing the class for examinations, making sure that the subject matter has been properly grasped and thoroughly learned but no more than that, then the average student will certainly be able to write a satisfactory report, but the report will be dry, abstract, unimaginative. But if through a teacher's enthusiasm the subject has been presented in such a way that it has been a lively experience for the class, then the report will be enhanced by an imaginative quality.

And this is related to a remarkable secret, of supreme importance to every elementary and high school teacher. This is the secret: that every single object of study—plant, animal, geographical region, historical period, an aspect of grammar or arithmetic—any and every subject lies imbedded in a far larger whole, is by its nature the center of an entire world. A real teacher, wanting to build his subject into a bright experience for his class, will in his enthusiasm bring in a great deal of material from the periphery of the subject, particularly details which could easily be forgotten later but which at the moment will have a strong impact upon the feeling life of the children sitting there in front of him. The whole subject will come to life for them as their imagination is kindled; they will take it and keep it as a lifelong treasure.

It follows therefore that the personal contact between a teacher and his class can never be replaced by books, written assignments, cable TV or such; no matter how ingenious these may be. Only a teacher's personal relation can enrich a child's feeling life; it alone can broaden and deepen the child's inner life in such a way that the child's imagination grows with the child, becoming ever richer and more powerful.

When the young person reaches his third developmental period, in which critical thinking begins to play a dominant role, the danger arises that his intellect may destroy much that has been built up so carefully. Now it is of the greatest importance that the teacher should know the "secret" we spoke of above, and that he should put it to use. Also it is of prime importance that he should not neglect that part of his instruction that has to do with the *will*: "Now do it yourselves!" "Look it up yourselves!" With respect to the secret, take, for instance, a subject like *iron*: the students must, of course, be made acquainted with its compounds and its affinities with other substances, but they should also be shown the role iron plays in human blood, how it works in man, the importance of iron in the earth's soil, its necessity for vegetation, its role in cosmic phenomena, etc., etc.—and all this not only with respect to the substance itself but also with respect to its forces and movements.

This third period requires that the students be given practice in thinking, and that their insight be broadened. Undoubtedly one of the foremost tasks the teacher has is to see that when a student finishes school, he shall take away with him "a picture of the world": a world-view, however imperfect it may be, nonetheless a view in which the young person knows that he himself belongs as man. A picture that forms a *whole*.

At the same time the teacher's work-plan should allow plenty of time for "do-it-yourselfes" and "find-out-about-this-yourselfes" assignments. In mathematics, for instance, he can exercise his students' thinking, make it more flexible, if he requires them to discover the theorems for themselves, not just memorize them out of the book; moreover if he points out that there must be a relation of one thing to another—for instance, the transition from circle to ellipse, to parabola, to hyperbola—and has the students visualize all this first mentally and only later confirm it by rediscovering these transitions through the properties of the forms.

To sum all this up: In the first period the teacher must watch that he does not suppress the children's spontaneous imagination by premature intellectual measures. Nowadays the tendency is widespread to introduce adult skills in the kindergarten—for instance, reading and writing, exercises for the various senses, cutting, braiding, weaving—where only healthy play belongs, and the telling of genuine folk fairy tales and children's stories.

In the second period the teacher should stimulate the children's healthy imagination by the artistry of his teaching, so that the children are creative in every way. He should present the various subjects in a broad, rich fashion, so as to make them vivid experiences for the children. In this way their feeling life is enriched and deepened.

In the third period he should help his students understand the world by giving them access to a comprehensive structure of ideas and by helping them to relate themselves to it.

If in this way a teacher holds such a transformation of the imagination in his consciousness, then through his teaching he will prepare the young people to meet the demands of the new age and to find a place in its social pattern where they can do fruitful work.

— I. van Wettum

(From *"Erziehungskunst"*, January/February, 1959. Translated by G. H.)



From "The Sense of Wonder"

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.

—Rachel Carson

Handwork in the Early Grades

We all know that handwork and crafts are part of the twelve-year curriculum of a Rudolf Steiner school, but why are they considered so important, and what do the children learn in the early grades beyond a few simple techniques of knitting, crocheting and sewing?

Rudolf Steiner said that play is to the young child what work is to the adult, the main difference being that play comes out of the inner needs of the child, while work is determined more from the needs of the outside world. The kindergarten child is extremely creative and puts tremendous force and intensity into all his play. This play, this inner force, properly guided, becomes the basis for truly creative work and thought in the adult. "It is the task of the school gradually to lead over from play to work" (Rudolf Steiner), and so to develop a real connection between the child's inner world and the outer world. One of the important bridges between these two is the handwork lesson in the early grades.

Making things, using materials from nature, makes one aware of all that the world has to give. For this reason it is important that the child be given natural fibers to work with. He should develop respect and appreciation for the earth out of which grows the cotton that magically becomes a potholder, wonder for the trees that give him his knitting needles, and great love for the sheep whose warm fleece becomes the wool he knits into his soft scarf. These are the seeds for understanding all that man and nature can do together and how human beings depend on one another. In this way, a true social impulse is born.

When a child makes something he can use or wear, such as a pair of socks, and makes a connection with something that would otherwise remain outside his conscious experience, he again becomes closer to the outside world and makes a step toward wholeness. It is a problem of our times that people feel cut off from their surroundings. To know how the ordinary things we use in life come into being makes one less of a stranger in one's environment.

But nothing can happen in a handwork lesson unless one works with one's hands! The will must be used, and happily for the child he can quickly see the results of his efforts. He gains confidence in himself as he sees a simple ball of yarn turn into a hat he can wear home. Why be afraid of the world when one can do so much with so little? I think it is important, therefore, that the children make things in which they can start from the beginning, and do every step themselves. No ready-made patterns, no hidden steps by the teacher. How does something get turned inside out? How did that cord get through the top of that

drawstring bag? Many things that children used to see and learn at home they are completely ignorant of today. They are thrilled and excited by these magical tricks. All this stimulates their inventive powers and the ability to have creative ideas when facing the unknown. We know how much they will need these capacities in the world they will face as adults.

What is handwork in a kindergarten? This question often comes up and I think has to be deeply examined in the light of child development. The sense of order, form, color and beauty in dealing with the materials of the world is expressed by the kindergarten child in the care with which he sets the table, chooses the mat to go under the candle, places his two shoes together in a row with others, or neatly folds his sweater before putting it away. That is handwork for the child before the change of teeth. Learning a real craft draws him away too soon from his imaginative, creative world. Far better that he will sit down with two sticks or pencils and imitate the adult knitting than that he learns to do one or two things with threads.

It is different when it comes to first grade. Something more is happening. The child has reached the dawn of his intellectual thinking and in the handwork class he now really learns to knit.

Rudolf Steiner said, "Thinking is cosmic knitting": the continuous thread of thinking weaves itself into whole thoughts. How can we enhance the cooperation between the hands and the head? We must call upon the feelings. Color awakens interest, enthusiasm and joy in the child. He should be given the beautiful colors he so eagerly responds to in nature. He must develop a sensitivity toward colors, really observe them, and be aware of how they affect one another. A bright yellow thread cries out to be made into a golden chain. The child responds and the activity of the limbs works with the feelings and stimulates the processes of the head. It should become a harmonious, rhythmical activity. The child must begin to be conscious. He counts his stitches; he must know when one is missing. There is a right way to hold the needles, a right time to put the thread over the needle. Such things slowly bring the child out of his unconscious world.

In the second grade, still using the continuous thread, we crochet shapes, a kind of early geometry—a rectangular potholder, a round pocketbook, a five-cornered mat. Are the sides equidistant? The child must develop judgment and a sense of form and space. Learning of this kind can have a real balancing effect on his whole being. It awakens feelings in the child who is one-sidedly intellectual, stimulates activity in the weak-willed child, and awakens the thinking in the dreamy child.

To bring about this balanced effort of all the child's forces is a tremendous challenge to the handwork teacher. She must call upon her own powers of imagination, enthusiasm and play. Then

the child will happily participate, and along with all the hidden lessons of life, he will learn the practical skills of knitting, crocheting and sewing.

“Children who learn while they are young to make practical things by hand in an artistic way, and for the benefit of others as well as themselves, will not be strangers to life or to other people when they are older. They will be able to form their lives and their relationships in a social and artistic way, so that their lives are thereby enriched.”*

—Patricia Livingston

*Hedwig Hauck, *HANDWORK AND HANDICRAFTS: Part I. Translated by Graham Rickett. Steiner Schools Fellowship, 1968.*



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The Bunch of Flowers

*A story told by Rudolf Steiner to the children of the
Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany.*

Two children took a walk one Sunday, and each of them carried home a bunch of flowers. One child said, "But *my* flowers are the loveliest!" The other said, "No, *mine* are!" Each one liked only his own bunch of flowers. But one child particularly disliked her friend's bunch: there were lovely flowers in it, full of sweetness, but also some every-day grass, and stalks of oats and barley—and even thistles!

The other child had only sweet-smelling flowers, nothing but sweet flowers, and this child said, "You know, you've put everything in the world into your bunch of flowers—I don't like it at all!" But the other did not like the bunch that only had sweet flowers in it, either.

Now how do you think, dear children, that the story continues? Well, the child who had the bunch containing grain and thistles told the other one a story. Listen to what he said:

Some time ago when I was out for a walk on Sunday, I fell asleep in a field and had a dream. What do you think I dreamed? Listen! I was lying in a meadow, and big animals and small ones came and talked to each other. There was a very queer, teeny-tiny little animal and a big one. The teeny-tiny one was a bee, the big one was a calf. And the bee and the calf talked together. The bee said, 'Oh, you Calf! you don't know anything about plants! But I do—I know everything. I know which plants are sweet, I sip honey from them. Then I take the honey to people who love honey! If I didn't fly to all the flowers with the loveliest smell, there wouldn't be any honey for people.'

The Calf spoke up: 'You know, I couldn't live if I only had the sweet-scented flowers that taste so good to you. All the plain ones you fly over so carelessly—I have to eat them, too. If I didn't eat all of them, there wouldn't be any milk in the world. And without milk people wouldn't be nourished. Then no honey would be needed, for there wouldn't be anyone to enjoy it!'

The children talked this over. And the one who had the bunch of sweet flowers realized there was something for her to learn. The other one had already learned what was right from his dream. What the child with the sweet flowers learned was that there cannot be *only* sweet flowers, there must be all sorts of different flowers, all working together. And so she learned to love the bunch that held every possible kind of plant. And the child who had gone to sleep and had the dream could say, "Yes, that is what the calf said. There are certain kinds of flowers and then there

are other kinds of flowers, but all of them are necessary, and therefore a bouquet that contains all kinds of flowers is much more worthwhile and precious than one that contains only sweet flowers."

Now, dear children, when you go to school, it is as if you went for a walk on a beautiful Sunday; from school you will take with you all the most precious things out into life. And when you can take with you into life a bouquet of flowers from everything your loving teachers have taught you, you will have the greatest joy in such a bouquet. But it must contain all the flowers, not only the sweet-smelling ones! This you must learn, that you sometimes have to take in something that is not exactly sweet. If you study and learn eagerly, you will notice that you can bring into your later life not only a bunch of sweet flowers but a bunch of all those life-filled flowers upon which your own life depends.

Think about this, dear children, so that always when your teachers ask something difficult of you, you can obey them lovingly. From school you will receive the most beautiful bouquet of flowers for your whole life, and it will give you the most pleasure if it contains all the different plants of life. Every memory of school will give you strength for life itself. For when human beings are grown up, they possess the most wonderful forces for their lives when they can take with them from their school such a bunch of flowers. They are life forces that endure until death, and even beyond death.

—*From Der Sonne Licht, a reader for the second and third grades, edited by Caroline von Heydebrand (not yet translated in its entirety).*

Adventures in the Park

There could not be a better playground for a city school than a park. The Rudolf Steiner School in New York City has the good fortune to be only a half block away from Central Park; the kindergarten children and I could roam around it in all directions. We knew it well and loved it. In all sorts of weather, cold or hot, sunny or windy, we went to the park (except on rainy days) and we had our favorite spots. One of them was "our big rock."

One day a little boy told me his father had read him the story of Moby Dick. It must have been a children's version—but I thought, Those fathers! can't they wait until the time is right? But the genius of childhood takes care of many things, and so it happened that most of our little boys turned into Captain Ahab and in the park were forever searching for Moby Dick. Our big rock turned into a whaler, manned by all those Captain Ahabs. Once as I was sitting on a bench below the rock, watching the rest of my little flock playing about me, an urgent call came down, "Come up! Come up! We saw Moby Dick out there!" I called up to them, "I have such a comfortable little boat: couldn't you make it safe for me?" I can still see the heavy coils of rope with which they fastened my boat by an intricate process to their larger one. I was declared safe, and they climbed back to continue their search.

There was another rock, long and low, just like a boat out in the meadow. Several children were playing there when a little fellow ran excitedly towards me, yelling, "Did you know Peter almost got drowned?" "Oh no!" I said, "You didn't go out into those deep, dangerous waters where the whirlpools are?" "Don't worry," he said, in a fatherly way. "We saved him! We threw him a life preserver."

At the school fair a mother and father had bought their little son a wooden sword, almost as big as he was and heavy. He brought it to school, of course, and begged me to let him take it to the park. "No," I said, "It's much too heavy and you will want me to carry it." "I will carry it," he assured me. "I will!" I decided to take a chance. When we had crossed the street and entered the park, up went the sword. He had turned into King Arthur with Excalibur, and in his wake followed all the Knights of the Round Table. This game lasted not only for days and days but for weeks.

In the park at Easter time we met the Easter bunny, that is, we found the eggs he had left for us. I had to tell the children how many each could take, for there were quick children who would have gathered them all; the slower ones would not have had any. As we approached our big rock, around which the eggs were hidden, a hush fell over the children. Who knows? The Easter

bunny might still be near! One of the little boys, with lower lip protruding, said, "My parents don't believe in that stuff." Then his face lighting up, he exclaimed, "But I do, I do."

We had favorite trees. One was a grandfather tree, a mighty sycamore. It took six children pressed flat against its trunk and holding hands to give it a good hug. There was a climbing tree: one had to stretch a bit to reach the lowest branches, but the higher ones were arranged in easy steps like a circular stairway. Some of the children were up like squirrels to the top of the tree in no time at all; there were others who hung on the lowest branches like bags filled with water. Whenever one of the slow, heavy ones reached the top, everyone rejoiced loudly.

Once in the spring, we passed a tiny tree in full bloom. A little boy pointed it out to me: "Look! a little girl tree!" And so it was, all dressed in pink.

We discovered two locust trees close together, which in the fall dropped an abundance of beans. We brought shopping bags to collect them and on a rainy day, we peeled them. The kernels are hard, brown and polished. Our school secretary came into the room and asked, "Whatever are you going to do with all those beans?" Why, they can be stirred in little pots and cooked, they can be dropped into little boxes and cans, they can be weighed or put into equal piles, they can be served in the doll corner as a meal—just to hold them in your hand is fun!

On a glorious day in May we went to our little valley. It has steep sides and a tiny brook flowing through it. If it ever could receive some care, it would be a small paradise,—but we liked it as it was. We could float small pieces of wood in the water, build bridges and dams, jump across the little stream and slip and get our shoes wet, throw pebbles into the water. Two of my girls approached and asked, "Could you be our mother?" "Of course, I will be your mother," I said. "Can we go to the woods, Mother?" they inquired. "Yes," I said, "You can go to the woods but don't go too near the witch's house and if you see the wolf, don't talk to him." And off they went. Two other little girls had been listening and now they too wanted to know whether I would be their mother. "Of course, I will be your mother, too." "Please say the same thing to us," they begged. So I said the same thing all over again: "You can go to the woods but don't go too near the witch's house and if you see the wolf, don't talk to him."

When it was time to go "home", we passed a long azalea hedge in full, flaming bloom. The sky was blue with spring clouds. "Mother, where are we going?" the little girls wanted to know. "We are going back to our castle and we will eat from our golden plates and drink from our golden cups." We walked a little above the earth.

—Lona Koch

Comment

Plink, plunk—. What comes next? Plonk? Plank? This is not, however, part of some verbal intelligence test. It's the name of a school. Plink Plunk is a nursery school, not a hundred miles from Spring Valley, N.Y., as the stork flies, although you might expect it to be in a place like Flin Flon in northern Manitoba. They take children from the age of two and give them creative play at \$1.50 an hour by the hour. Or they give them pre-ballet training, introduction-to-art and musical appreciation at \$4.00 the hour. And people like it. "Then we learned of Plink Plunk," as one ecstatic parent said, "and Adam loves it, and has progressed so much." But imagine Adam in twenty years' time having to give the details of his educational career, saying, "Then after graduating from Plink Plunk, I went. . . ."

To Hyde School, Me., perhaps? There for \$4,700 a year he is likely to be called a "gutless chameleon" if he gets out of step, or made to dig a trench six feet by six feet and then fill it in again, or have a placard hung round his neck saying "I AM A BABY" by a principal whose name one would expect to be 'Creakle' but isn't. And all this and many other things are done in the way of character training, which is the primary objective of the school. Fifty children run away from it every year; and twenty of them never come back, which, according to the authorities of the school, is entirely the parents' fault who fail to *make* them come back. The techniques employed there are "nothing less than demoniacal" according to Doris Vladimiroff, director of an Upward Bound program in Maine, whose son went to a summer session at Hyde.

All of which goes to show that you can still do almost anything in education and get away with it. For Hyde School has very loyal alumni. Ninety-five per cent of them have gone to college; and some parents say that the school has not only improved their children, but has changed their own lives for the better, for they have to attend two weekend seminars annually at which everybody criticizes everybody else.

Of course if you have a good name for what you're doing, that carries a lot of weight. Take for instance, at the other end of the scale, 'affective' teaching. One of their approaches is to involve the children in non-verbals. "I encourage them," says one 'affective' teacher, "to close their eyes and pretend they are bicycles. . . . Then we share our inner fantasies." But why stop at bicycles? I'm sure if I were a child there I wouldn't want to pretend I was anything less than a Cadillac.

And speaking of educational jargon, I like the story of the Grade Seven boy told by Angela Thurlow in *The Educational*

Digest. He had been labelled by the experts as having LD (Learning Disability), and of course knew it. Fortunately he got into the hands of a teacher who knew how to communicate with children, and who realized that his chief disability lay in the way he had been taught, not in the boy himself. He began to make real progress. "I guess LD means 'Lousy Diagnosis', huh?" was his not altogether inappropriate comment.

And so the battle goes on as to what education really is, and makes it possible for all kinds of ideas and methods to be tried out. The major engagement, of course, is between the traditionalists and the progressives. Ten years ago the Plowden report in Britain, the result of three years' study, welcomed the introduction and proliferation of progressive teaching methods. Things like "the open classroom", "the integrated day" and "child-centered education" became all the rage. But just recently a research team from Lancaster University under Dr. Neville Bennett has taken a different line in a study called *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress*, which has set the British educational world by the ears. They have found that students taught by traditional methods are better in every way in the basic skills and knowledge, AND "no worse at imaginative story writing than children in progressive classes." They do not advocate putting the clock back, but they do believe, "If you can get a structured curriculum within the informal classroom, that would be the ideal to strive for."

Ideal to strive for! But they've got six Waldorf schools in Britain that have been doing this for the last forty years. Haven't they been heard of yet?

Second thoughts about traditional education, however, are not only being had in Britain. Lexington, Massachusetts, the New York Times says, is wondering how to cut down on the educational budget in view of the diminishing enrollment (9,609 in 1969; 7,547 in 1976 and 5,692 expected in 1980). There is a move on foot to effect this economy by closing the older and smaller schools. But the authorities have raised a hornet's nest about their ears. There is widespread opposition. A committee has got to work and published a two-hundred-page local best-seller which shows that it is just these schools that are Lexington's best schools. It would be "educational folly" to close them.

And, reverting to Britain a moment, the best news from there is that the House of Lords Judiciary Committee—the highest court in the land—has just decided by a unanimous vote that the government has no business to ask a school district (Tameside, a suburb of Manchester) to abolish its system of selective education. When one realizes that the British government's—a Labour government—policy is to abolish all forms of selective and independent education—which would include Waldorf schools—and send all children to the same school, and even has a bill before the House of Commons to this effect, that is news indeed.

As part of the shift towards the traditional, the simple value-for-money estimate of much of our education still rankles in many people's minds. It is spoken of in terms of 'consumer education'. It costs—in Lexington, for instance—\$1,921 per student per year by 1976 figures; and yet eight out of ten Americans between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-six can't even balance a check book. Half of them aren't able to fill out a simple income-tax form without a mistake, according to an impressive study by the *National Assessment of Educational Progress*, a federally funded effort to measure the level of American knowledge. Fifty-nine out of every hundred of the nation's seventeen-year-olds couldn't work out seventy per cent of 4,200!

And finally I wish I could quote in full a delightfully satirical article by Russell Baker on *School vs. Education* from the New York Times; but I hope the editor will find room for the following:

"By the age of six the average child will have completed the basic American education and be ready to enter school. If the child has been attentive in these pre-school years, he or she will already have mastered many skills.

From television the child will have learned how to pick a lock, commit a fairly elaborate bank holdup, prevent wetness all day long, get the laundry twice as white and kill people with a variety of sophisticated armaments.

From watching his parents, the child, in many cases, will already know how to smoke, how much soda to mix with whisky, what kind of language to use when angry and how to violate the speed laws without being caught. At this stage, the child is ready for the second stage of education which occurs in school. . . ."

You can probably imagine the rest.

—Alan Howard

Book Reviews

THE YOUNGER GENERATION: EDUCATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL IMPULSES FOR LIFE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. Thirteen lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in Stuttgart, 1922; translated by René Querido. Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, 1976. Paper, \$3.95.

“may my mind stroll about hungry
and fearless and supple,
and even if it's sunday
may i be wrong . . .
for whenever men are
right, they are not *young*. . . .”

e. e. cummings

Poets such as e. e. cummings have expressed their reaction against intellectualism, against scientific “proofs”, theories, and abstractions. These have made men old, he implies. Men want to be young again, young in their thinking, young in approaching life in an artistic way.

In *THE YOUNGER GENERATION* Rudolf Steiner exposes “oldness” as a quality of modern science and calls on “youth” in those who would help education to be an art. In 1922 he had been asked by a group of young people to answer questions science could not answer, “questions of the heart”, not just the head. This he did in these thirteen lectures.

The young, he says, will crowd around those who teach in an artistic way. By such teachers, young people will be nourished inwardly. Their moral potential will be able to unfold if the personal, creative approach to education is not forced out of the classroom by “objectivity”, by abstract systems.

“If you educate the human being by what is abstract and scientific, he experiences nothing of your soul. He only experiences your soul if you approach him through art. For in the realm of the artistic everyone is individual, each one is a different person. It is the ideal of science that everyone should be alike. . . .” (Page 141)

The microscope makes man a spectator, limits his unfolding to his head. With the microscope, external sense perception has become the scientifically accepted approach to understanding man, understanding life. But it is an approach that has “oldness” as a quality; the uninvolved observer preserves proof after proof, objectively, in archives and textbooks, growing more and more alienated from life, more uninvolved. This approach, however, is ineffective by virtue of its own method, that of observation; it cannot change anything.

"It does not worry the plant that it is not the product of the laboratory which modern science makes it out to be. It still goes on growing. . . ." (Page 120)

What if reality happens to be an artist, Rudolf Steiner asks, and scorns our elaborate dialectical and experimental methods?

"What if Nature herself works according to artistic impulses? If it were so, human science, according to Nature, would have to become an artist, for otherwise there would be no possibility of understanding Nature. . . ." (Page 9)

Science would have to become an art, education an art. A "new, *young* science must be there," he says, "a new spiritual life, able once again to unite with the soul."

It is a science of the heart, as well as the head. This kind of science is one involving man, so that he can be a participator as well as an observer. Based on the development of the teacher's potential as well as the child's, the human being's capacity for moral imagination unfolds.

Confidence between teacher and child, Rudolf Steiner says, is the basis for moral development. Young people are looking for human beings to teach them, in whom they can have confidence. The young are "thirsting" and "hungry" for something *human*. Without this, neither the teacher nor the pupils can benefit.

"It is of the greatest importance that we should have forces of growth within us. What we have in us as a child is of the utmost importance. But to this we are led back in inner experience through true knowledge of man. We really become childlike when we acquire the right knowledge of man and thereby qualify ourselves to meet those who are young and those who are still children in the right way." (Page 164)

Dr. Ernst Lehrs was one of those young men who approached Rudolf Steiner in 1922 and asked him to speak about the "Younger Generation," about a new science of nature, about education as an art. In his *Man or Matter** Dr. Lehrs says:

"Anyone who learns so to see nature that his ideas can be taken up and understood by the living, lively soul of the growing child will thereby be training himself . . . in just that kind of observation and thinking which the new science of nature demands. . . ."

*Ernst Lehrs, *Man or Matter*: an introduction to a spiritual understanding of nature on the basis of Goethe's method of training observation and thought. London, Faber and Faber. 1951.

THE YOUNGER GENERATION—Rudolf Steiner's answer to questions asked not only from the head but also from the heart. What does it mean to be young? Rudolf Steiner says:

“Whoever comes to an understanding of the human being in such a way that he imbues his knowledge with artistic perception, will remain young.” (Page 164)

This is education as an art.

—Susan Roberts

Seven-Year-Old Wonder Book

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD WONDER BOOK, Isabel Wyatt, published by Dawne Leigh Publications, California, 1975 185 pages.

To be seven years old is a state of grace. To be seven years old and live in a world where the divine ground of the year is cultivated and all the unseen but ever-present beings of this world are given space in the life of imagination—this is a blessing that carries its healing power well beyond the period of grace.

How fortunate is Sylvia, the little girl in the *Seven-Year-Old Wonder Book*, to live “with her mother in a white cottage at the edge of a dark wood.” What warmth there is in her mother's solace whenever Sylvia experiences those rough incidents and anxious moments that are a part of a child's life. Wouldn't every child like to have a mother who can turn the day's events into a marvelous bedtime story? And does not every child have—at least *in potentia*—a “Sister-in-the-Bushes” who, although invisible most of the time, stays nearby to warn of danger and give friendly advice?

“Sister-in-the-Bushes, how long have you lived in the bushes?”

And Sister-in-the-Bushes answered:

“As long as you have lived inside a house.”

Then Sylvia asked again:

“Then why have I never seen you before?”

And Sister-in-the-Bushes answered:

“Perhaps because I am shy. But today I forgot to be shy because you were in danger. Come and look!”

The danger is a branch on a tree that Sylvia wanted to climb, but one which would have fallen if she had climbed astride it.

"Mother, did *you* have a Sister-in-the-Bushes, too?"

And her mother replied:

"Everyone has a Sister-in-the-Bushes, only sometimes they never find her. But she is always there, watching over them, like the Princess Helia with the Princess Gay."

And Sylvia cried:

"Oh, Mother, do tell me about them!"

And her mother promised:

"When bedtime comes."

Later, after every bedtime story, Sylvia puts out her Wonder Book on the bedside table and softly chants her poetry spell:

"Rhyme-Elves, rich in ringing words
Won from winds and waves and birds,
Lisping leaves and rustling rain,
Sing—sing—for me again!"

The next morning there is always a new poem written in the Wonder Book and a picture from that evening's story—gifts of the Rhyme-Elves, of course. And so it goes, adventure after adventure, story after story, as long as Sylvia continues to allow the Rhyme-Elves space to live in her imagination. But one day she will forget about them, to be sure. For on her seventh birthday she loses her first tooth.

"Oh, how lovely it is to be seven years old and to have given your first tooth to the fairies!"

"Oh, how lovely it is to be starting school next week!"

And the book ends with these words:

Goodbye, Sylvia—Just For Now.

And we grown-ups know that the magic of being seven years old will give way to another kind of magic—the magic of learning about the world, and slowly the memory of the Wonder Book will fade, but hopefully it will transform itself into the living Wonder Book of life.

Whether the teacher at school reads the Seven-Year-Old Wonder Book to a whole class of first graders, who will also turn seven in the course of the year, or whether the parent reads it to the six-or seven-year-old child at home, a little bit of planning can make the book into a happy experience of the fall and winter seasons. Sometimes one story a week, sometimes several, can

coincide with the different festivals: the festival of St. Michael ("The Dragon in the Sky"), Hallowe'en ("Sylvia's Turnip-Lantern"), Advent ("Sylvia's Advent Wreath"), St. Nicholas Day ("The Visit of St. Nicholas") and Christmas (here there are several stories including "The Story of the Apple-Tree that Bore a Star", a story of Adam and Eve).

Especially for school classes or groups of children, several stories lend themselves very nicely to little plays (for example, "Hugin and the Turnip", "The Story of Lordly Cock"). And certainly—perhaps very obviously—the whole idea of the Wonder Book can be adopted so that the children can themselves make a Wonder Book, taking over the job of the Rhyme-Elves, at least as far as the pictures are concerned. The present edition, printed on parchmentlike paper, makes a beautiful "treasure" of a book which should have a special place on the bookshelf. The illustrations by Margaret Rowe and the dust jacket by Gladys Morison enhance the stories by Isabel Wyatt.

Perhaps some of us parents (and teachers) will be inspired by this book to create our own Wonder Book of living imaginations, thus adding to the healing power which will be much needed by our children in the years to come.

* * * *

The publishers of the Seven-Year-Old Wonder Book, Dawne-Leigh Publications, have also brought out several beautiful posters that would lend enchantment to any child's room or to a classroom up to about third grade. "Guardian Angels" by Nancy Jewel is a symphony of colors and forms that bring to life the animal, mineral and plant kingdoms. Two children in the picture, ushered into the world by beings of light, are filled with wonder and joy at what glorious things await them. A shining castle in the distance seems to be the goal of the children. Is it spiritual enlightenment that is thus represented? the adult might ask. For the children who are fortunate enough to be able to gaze upon this work, the colorful print can be the stimulus for wonderful flights of the imagination, inspiring awe and reverence for the journey that lies before each one of them.

—Mel Belenson

The Uses of Enchantment

THE USES OF ENCHANTMENT. The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales by Bruno Bettelheim. Alfred E. Knopf, New York, 1976. 323 pp., \$12.50.

Books and articles in favor of fairy tales have been written before. Readers of "*Education as an Art*" are aware of the efforts by various writers, repeated over the years, to point out the importance and meaning of fairy tales for the life of the young child. But the readership is small and the effect is limited compared to the impact this book will have.

For it does not only matter *what* is said, the *how* is even more important; but most important is *who* says it. When a world-renowned child psychologist writes a book, advocating the telling of fairy tales to young children, and when this book is reviewed within a short time by all major national publications, then the voice of authority reaches a wide audience and can effect changes in the climate of childhood.

In the past, children were told fairy tales; but today, these old tales have fallen into disrepute. The modern adult intellect tends to be put off by their 'irrational' element, and is no longer capable of grasping the internal truth and moral message in a seemingly absurd tale. Waldorf teachers have experienced that one of the most persistently attacked features of the education are the 'gory details' of fairy tales that are told to the young children. A few tales are still known to most American children, but only in the prettified, expurgated form of Disney cartoons, where they become meaningless entertainment. Instead of being given soul-pictures—in fairy tale form—that convey inner realities, modern children are drenched with the here-and-now trivia of vacuous realistic tales and the false fantasy of TV entertainment; or they are fed scientific information at an age when the organ to grasp abstract explanations has not yet matured. Thereby, the inner being of the child receives no nourishment, the child's native imagination dries up, subconscious life questions remain unanswered, and the development of the moral life is left ignored.

How does a young child think? What does he feel about himself and the world? What does he want to know about growing up? And foremost, in which form can he assimilate communications?

Once it was the classical fairy tale that spoke to the child in his own language of fantasy, that nourished his needs, answered his unformulated questions, guided him to love truth, beauty, and goodness. The memoirs of outstanding individuals often point to

the central role of fairy tales in their own childhood, giving them the language of moral substance in later years.

Turning now to Bruno Bettelheim's book, which states in the introduction: "My hope is that proper understanding of the unique merits of fairy tales will induce parents and teachers to assign them once more to that central role in the life of the child they held for centuries", we can only hope with him that his message will be heeded. Bettelheim validates profoundly this central role of the fairy tale in the life of the child, approaching it from many aspects, based on a lifetime of work with young children. The eloquence, beauty, and illuminative power of his language is eminently quotable, and congenial in many ways, especially where Bettelheim, the psychologist, speaks. His concept of the child in need of fairy tales is a lesson to learn for every teacher and parent; in fact, for every adult in contact with young children.

A few examples might convey some of the flavor of the book.
—First, one on the moral influence of fairy tales:

The fairy story communicates to the child an intuitive, subconscious understanding of his own nature and of what his future may hold if he develops his positive potentials. He senses from fairy tales that to be a human being in this world of ours means to have to accept difficult challenges, but also encountering wondrous adventures.

—On why the fairy tale answers the questions of the child much better than scientific explanations:

From an adult point of view and in terms of modern science, the answers which fairy tales offer are fantastic rather than true. As a matter of fact, these solutions seem so incorrect to many adults—who have become estranged from the ways in which young people experience the world—that they object to exposing young children to such "false" information. However, realistic explanations are usually incomprehensible to children because they lack the abstract understanding required to make sense of them. While giving a scientifically correct answer makes adults think they have clarified things for the child, such explanations leave the young child confused, overpowered, and intellectually defeated.

... To tell a child that the earth floats in space, attracted by gravity into circling around the sun, but that the earth doesn't fall to the sun as the child falls to the ground, seems very confusing to him. The child knows from his experience that everything has to rest on something, or be held up by something. Only an explanation based on that knowledge can make him feel he understands better about the earth in

space. More important, to feel secure on earth, the child needs to believe that this world is held firmly in place. Therefore he finds a better explanation in a myth that tells him that the earth rests on a turtle, or is held up by a giant.

Why is it that the traditional fairy tale, in its unabridged, unadulterated form, with the often 'gruesome' ending that might repel adults, is so much more satisfying to the young child than modern tales, or 'merciful' and expurgated endings?

In the traditional fairy tale, the hero is rewarded and the evil person meets his well-deserved fate, thus satisfying the child's deep need for justice to prevail. . . . Chesterton once remarked that some children with whom he saw Maeterlinck's play *The Blue Bird* were dissatisfied "because it did not end with a Day of Judgment . . . For children are innocent and love justice, while most of us are wicked and naturally prefer mercy."

One might rightly question Chesterton's belief in the innocence of children, but he is absolutely correct in observing that the appreciation of mercy for the unjust, while characteristic of a mature mind, baffles the child.

In our age of consumerism, where the modern child is often showered with possessions, with material gifts, at every occasion, but the inner needs of the child are too often ignored, one can deeply ponder Bettelheim's classification of a genuine fairy tale:

To decide whether a story is a fairy tale or something entirely different, one might ask whether it could rightly be called a love-gift to a child. That is not a bad way to arrive at a classification.

In order to bring a 'love-gift' to a child, the adult who communicates this gift must become inwardly involved:

To attain to the full its consoling propensities, its symbolic meanings, and, most of all, its interpersonal meanings, a fairy tale should be told rather than read. If it is read, it ought to be read with emotional involvement in the story and in the child, with empathy for what the story may mean to him. . . .

That is why it depends largely on the narrator's feelings about a fairy tale whether it falls flat or is cherished. The loving grandmother who tells the tale to a child who, sitting on her lap, listens to it enraptured will communicate something very different than a parent who, bored by the story, reads it to several children of quite different ages out of a sense of duty. The adult's sense of active participation in telling the story makes a vital contribution to, and greatly

enriches, the child's experience of it. It entails an affirmation of his personality through a particular shared experience with another human being who, though an adult, can fully appreciate the feelings and reactions of the child.

The way in which Goethe's mother used to tell fairy tales can stand as an ideal for every adult who wants to communicate with a child :

Goethe's mother recounted in her old age: "Air, fire, water and earth I presented to him as beautiful princesses, and everything in all nature took on a deeper meaning," she reminisced. "We invented roads between stars, and what great minds we would encounter. . . . He devoured me with his eyes and if the fate of one of his favorites did not go as he wished, this I could see from the anger in his face, or his effort not to break out in tears. Occasionally he interfered by saying: 'Mother, the princess will *not* marry the miserable tailor, even if he slays the giant,' at which I stopped and postponed the catastrophe until the next evening. So my imagination often was replaced by his; and when the following morning I arranged fate according to his suggestions and said, 'You guessed it, that's how it came out,' he was all excited, and one could see his heart beating."

Not every parent can invent stories as well as Goethe's mother—who during her lifetime was known as a great teller of fairy stories. She told the stories in line with her listeners' inner feelings of how things should proceed in the tale.

Most adults today lack the empathy, spontaneity, and native gift so abundantly present in Goethe's mother. Modern intellectual consciousness separates us from the magic world of wondrous imagery and makes almost impossible this intuitive rapport with the fantasy life of young children. Some of it must be recaptured now consciously through an understanding of the importance and meaning of fairy tales.

Besides being a psychologist—with a sensitive and intuitive understanding of the child's needs based on a lifetime of experience—Bettelheim is also a psychoanalyst. The interpretations in the book of the symbolic meaning of the imagery are to a large extent founded on his intellectual schooling in Freudian terminology and Freudian concepts. His picture of man supplies him with the conceptual light with which he illuminates and interprets the stories. When two figures in a tale stand for the higher and the lower natures of man, the lower being gradually chastened and transformed as the tale unfolds, this is still useful to readers who have a different, perhaps spiritual world conception. But the abundance of oedipal struggles, phantasies and anxieties, sibling rivalry, sexual connotations, etc., can easily become too

much for some readers, and may, in the end, spread more darkness than light.

In reading this immensely valuable book we may ignore some of this interpretative material which particularly fills much of the second part; but we can learn from Bettelheim's efforts and painstaking thoroughness to interpret these marvelous tales for ourselves, as he himself suggests:

Innumerable interpretations besides those suggested in the text may be pertinent; fairy tales, like all true works of art, possess a multifarious richness and depth that far transcend what even the most thorough discursive examination can extract from them. What is said in this book should be viewed as illustrative and suggestive merely. If the reader is stimulated to go beyond the surface in his own way, he will extract ever more varied personal meaning from these stories, which will then also become more meaningful to the children he may tell them to.

More cognitional work of this kind needs to be done. The adult must do his 'homework' in order to experience in conceptual form, for himself, the spiritual power permeating genuine fairy tales. Feelings and inklings are not sufficient. The adult's soul-sweat, expended in wrestling again and again with the deeper meaning of the imagery, to reach an intuitive grasp of the message of each tale, kindles his fantasy and gives wings to his telling. It greatly enhances the quality of 'the love-gift to a child.' This also gives weight and the ring of conviction to his voice when advocating to other adults the telling of stories. Those qualities are absent when the cognitive effort is left undone.

Waldorf schools will no longer need to justify the telling of Grimms' fairy tales to the children. On this front they have won a powerful spokesman in Bruno Bettelheim.

—Gisela O'Neil

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School Report: Pine Hill

The Pine Hill Waldorf School, located about fifty miles from Boston in Wilton Center, New Hampshire, opened its doors in the fall of 1972. The beginning was modest. A dedicated and experienced eurythmist and kindergarten teacher had the dream of beginning a Waldorf school with a kindergarten and organically letting the school grow a grade at a time out of its own merits until it could reach the grades offered by High Mowing. Such a careful plan was not to be the destiny of the school, however! Twenty eager children arrived ready for the kindergarten and with them came pleas for a first grade.

A neighbor offered to remodel a hundred-year-old, one room schoolhouse which he owned and would rent to the school. The attached woodshed was integrated into the building and made into a classroom for the five children of the first grade. The school was launched!

The second year saw two experienced Waldorf teachers move to the area. The parish house of a nearby church was rented and now the school had a kindergarten, grades one and two, and a combined third and fourth grade. A total of fifty-one children were now in the school and we were going about twice as fast as had been anticipated.

The school began to take root in the community. More and more parents started to investigate the school. Most parents came seeking an alternative to public education; however, all were ready to listen and to seek an understanding for our work.

The third year saw yet another giant leap forward. Two grades were added and two more trained teachers moved to Wilton. The physical space had become inadequate and finances were very tight. Miraculously a large fifteen room house with a barn and outbuildings on twenty-seven acres became available just around the corner from where the school presently existed. The hills were filled with tall pine trees and in the front yard stood a grand old copper beech which seemed to plead to have children climb upon his low limbs.

Through the generous loan of a friend, the faculty was able to purchase the property and Pine Hill had found its home. Parents and faculty spent a furious summer painting, decorating and building. The doors opened to one hundred and six children from southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts. At the end of the year we had our first "graduation", moving our sixth grade on to the seventh grade of nearby High Mowing.

We now plan to hold steady and to develop from within. Presently we end with the sixth grade. High Mowing offers grades seven through twelve and together we offer the area an uninterrupted flow of Waldorf education from kindergarten through the twelfth grade.

David Mitchell

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