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Education as an Art

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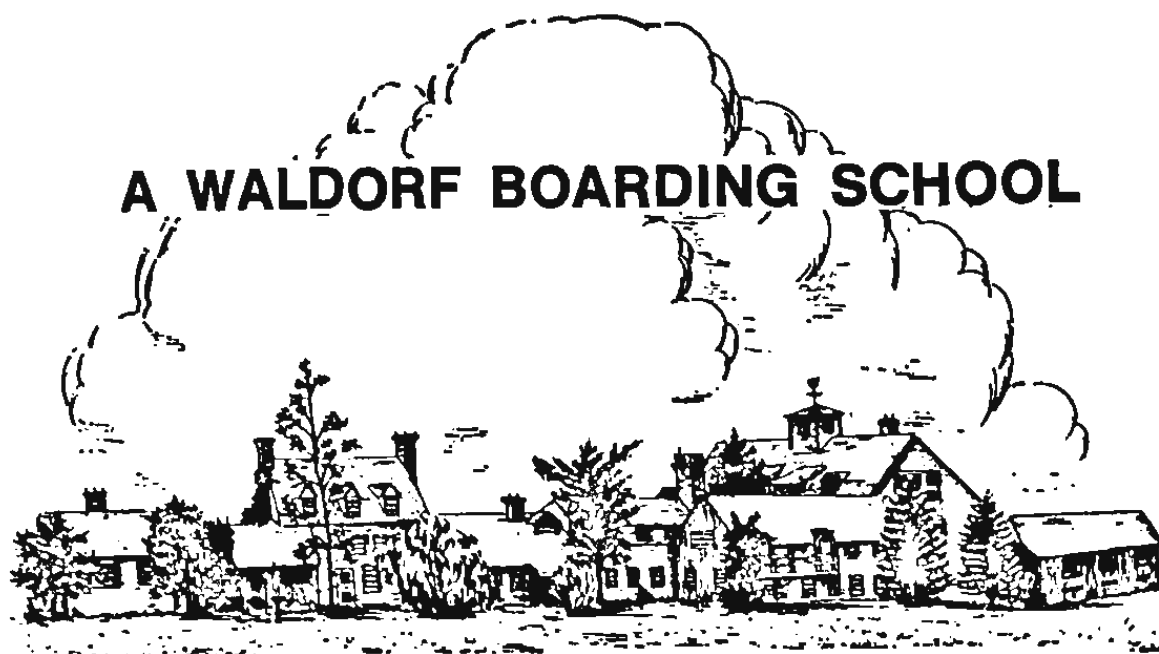
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Editorial:

Nature's Priests or Hell's Angels

When Wordsworth wrote,

*The Youth who daily farther from the East
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day,*

he was describing not only a cherished and poignant fact of his own experience, but one which is common to all mankind.

For he must be a poor man indeed who has never once in his early youth experienced that ineffable moment when the whole world seems 'apparelled in celestial light, the glory and the freshness of a dream'; and when he felt himself raised to conceptions of human purpose and possibility so that he hardly seemed to touch the ground as he walked the earth. A rare moment, too—even in youth; for youth-time also knows its measure of the mundane, the degrading, the rank material. Nevertheless it is invariably only in youth that we have the opportunity to experience this transfiguration of the real into the more than real.

What really was it, we wonder, when we recall it in our maturer years?

And all too often we conclude that it was an illusion, a *Fata Morgana*, a deception—and, traitors to our former selves, we dismiss in ignominy and ribaldry what, secretly none the less, we would still give a king's ransom, now we are old, to recapture if we could.

Have we not all experienced it to some extent? Ask yourself if life with all its later gifts has not robbed you of something you had then which was better than all. Deny if you can that you too once had 'intimations of immortality' as Wordsworth calls them, which were so deep and intimate that you couldn't share them with another soul, unless—

—Unless there was indeed one whom you knew, or perhaps only someone you never came to know in person, but whom you looked on from afar, as a sharer of your secret; someone who polarized in a partly-aesthetic, partly-religious, experience all you then felt; and who gave to you the first meaning of that word which we have prostituted to almost every other use save that to which its service should alone be rendered—Love.

But you grew up!

Love became absorbed in duty to family, friends, self (happy, indeed, if in that order), and the world a place where people bought and sold, acquired property, jockeyed for fame and position. And when you now see—not without a touch of envy—other young people about you, betraying by a look, a rapt silence, the burgeoning wonder at life, you perhaps smile sophisticatedly, whispering to yourself, “Ah, well! they’ll have to grow up, too.” And lest they should not do so as we have done, lest they should find and hold something we were never able to keep, we hurry them into that complicated modern process, fortified by duty, necessity and tradition, and implemented with all the power and machinery of the State which we call—Education.

Cynical? No; for the harsh reality of life is after all a fact for all of us, and obliges both young and old to share the burdens and responsibilities of this world with its ‘getting and spending’, its wars and rumors of wars. And yet—the tragedy of it all is that we can find so little room for the ideal, the Beautiful, the Good and the True—the ‘vision splendid’. *The world is too much with us*, as Wordsworth says again; and that vision, promising more than ever we can obtain on earth in one lifetime, we so often think it wiser in those who might still see it to ignore it altogether.

And so we demand of our young people that they *learn*—and that they learn *facts*: facts of science, of mathematics, of business, of economics—even, in our day, the ‘facts of life’ as we call them, as though ‘life’ were no more than the physical intimacies of animal copulation.

But are not ideals, visions, values also facts?

No; they are only subjective, we say; *we* must be objective. When shall we learn—and teach—that the ‘subjective’ is our greatest object and fact; that what can light up in the human ‘subject’ as the loftiest glimpse of human purpose is what alone gives relevance to all those other *facts* of science, mathematics, history and geography, whereby we might see them in the perspective of the evolution of the human spirit.

The real education of the adolescent, the teenager, is perhaps the most important area in the whole educational spectrum today. It is not enough to educate the intellectual man. We must imbue the intellectual with the moral and spiritual, with the ideal. We must bring *love* right into our mathematics, our science, our history, so that our young people can see life whole. Otherwise we send them out to a truncated existence, the intellectual man cut off from the being of feeling and will, who is left thereby to run amok wherever novelty and instinct lead him.

A superhuman task? Maybe. Then we must train superhuman teachers to cope with it, and seek out those who not only know all they have to know, but who have not lost the memory

of that 'vision splendid' which alone makes knowing worth while. Our science which has taught us how to carry ourselves across the heavens beyond the speed of sound, to dig the detritus of Creation out of remote planets, to sum the ledgers of the world's commerce faster than thought, must teach us now a science of *Being*. Things that should be our servants must not become our masters; nor the clear air of the spirit where visions are still to be seen be polluted by the fog of intellectual materialism which obscures them.

Otherwise, our fate is certain. The soul that lives by the 'vision splendid', having nothing to feed on, will rampage in lust, violence and self-destruction. Nature's priest will become Nature's avenger; and a new Götterdämmerung will sweep with arson, rape and murder (as it is already beginning to do in isolated instances) through those very citadels of the Arts, the Humanities and the Sciences which were erected to be a bulwark against it—our schools.

Then we shall only be able to hope that some 'silent sons of Odin' may still remain, who, preserved by the gods with the forces of youth unspoiled, will come forth from the ruins of our concrete jungles to build again 'the second Asgard', where—

*There reassembling we shall see emerge
From the bright ocean at our feet, an Earth
More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits
Self-springing, and a seed of man preserved
Who then shall live in peace, as now in war.*

But must we wait till then?

A. H.

The Adolescent Years

The transition from childhood to youth brings many problems. The critical faculty is awake but not yet maturity of judgment. The impact of life becomes deeply personal but the direction in life is in no way clear. The most familiar relationships fall subject to question. The young person needs guidance but jibes at authority. He guards jealously the little flame of independence of which he now becomes aware. There is a longing for self-expression and little ability to express—this gives rise to all manner of crudities. There is quick resentment over little things. Moods swing easily from elation to depression. The will to love and be loved brings confusing emotions and desires, if not actual eroticism, nursed to profusion by our 'sexy' age. Ideals and aspirations wrestle with worldly ambitions: 'castles in the air' are rife. Even the intelligent youngster is not secure from sudden follies. To understand is not to conform. Temptations come strong. Vanities play their part. In a chaotic environment where the adults themselves live in fear, anxiety and contradiction, what can these young folk do? The pronounced delinquent of the headlines covers incipient ills that are far more widespread than is generally admitted. There is much corruption everywhere. Moral appeals may bolster up 'the good' but they have little effect on 'the wicked.' Where is the *method*? Things that were once considered 'bad' are now considered 'not so bad.' Alternatively, placard morality is busily in search of scapegoats. Meanwhile the adolescent, no longer just a child to authority and not yet an adult responsible to himself, does as best he can: for the most part he seeks refuge in his own kind. But the sensitive and susceptible suffer acutely. A disturbed life of youth may easily wreck a whole lifetime. Theories do not help. For the youngster most of all, proof of the pudding lies in the eating.

Two questions occur: How can we best prepare for adolescence? How can we best educate the adolescent?

Rudolf Steiner education claims that childhood makes one whole. As surely as a plant has root and leaf and blossom and yet is indivisible in its unity, so surely does childhood comprise its three main phases, pre-dentition, elementary years to puberty, and adolescence, each succeeding the other in the one great process of becoming man. The ideal of such a school can only be to guide the child through all the years from kindergarten to college entrance. Exceptions there will have to be—children have joined our schools as late as the eleventh grade with happy results—yet the ideal remains. In this total range of childhood there is a natural progression from limb to heart to head. That which the little child can learn to *do*, that which the elementary

child can learn to *feel*, the adolescent can learn to *understand*. Almost sixty years of work, spread today through some 150 schools in many lands, have brought much evidence in their train.

The little child lives primarily by imitating all that is around him—his open consciousness, little aware of 'self,' allows the world to stream into him just as it is; in this sense nothing escapes him. For him the world is action: thoughts and feeling also act upon him. This immense receptivity and power to cope bespeak a devotion to life and a trust in man comparable only to a religious attitude of selflessness at its highest level. The power of the spirit in these years is strong. The little child grasps the world with fearless hands, transmitting all things to the depths of its own inner being: that which is thus received in infancy is uttered forth in latest maturity. The child that has learnt to pray in his earliest years will know how to bless in his old age, says Rudolf Steiner. The little child carries within him an unconscious faith that the world is grounded in *goodness*. The adult who admits the truth of this in heart and soul, striving to think, to feel, to act accordingly, striving also to create a harmony of life in the environment, removing all nervous influences such as radio, television and the rest, will be best able to help, guide and encourage these early growing years.

The child in the elementary school years lives first and foremost by his feelings. What we remember best in later years are the things we felt most, whether in people, in circumstances or events. In these years, education is of the heart, not by precepts but by an appeal to the imagination. The ideas of good and bad mean nothing to a child of seven; but a story with contrasting characters, the one 'good,' the other 'bad,' though the words be never mentioned (it is best to leave the story to speak for itself) will go straight to the child's heart. There are colours that live harmoniously together and others that clash; there are tones that merge in happy concord and others that are strident and discordant; there are actions that are beautiful in themselves and others that are ugly. The child, wakening from infancy, builds up an inner world of impressions penetrated with feeling; more and more as he grows older, does this become his refuge and his home. Even as he approaches the more thoughtful years from twelve to fourteen, it is still a 'felt' thinking, a thinking with the heart. For the adult this is the gift that makes him an artist or a poet; for the child in these years it is natural. The ideal that lives below words in these years is that of *beauty*. In all that is 'beautiful' in thought, in word, in action, in nature itself, we behold more than the outer eye can yield; here the spirit shines into the world of the senses. It was a scientist who claimed that 'art enhances consciousness.' The teacher must above all work as an artist—he describes all life with all its many faces, be it in

literature and history, be it in the kingdoms of outer nature; he brings the precious intangibles of the world to the child's powers of apprehension. The scribes and the pharisees of our times will regard this as fanciful; they are wrong today as they were of old. One who has witnessed health and strength and cheerfulness and confidence entering into a child's looks and gestures as the years go by must know them wrong. The story of man, rooted in depths, powers and dimensions of creative existence beyond his knowing, is itself the revelation of a mighty and transcendent work of art.

Then comes the birth of independent thought, the love of the abstract and non-sensory, following as near as possible the phase of puberty. Here disturbance makes itself felt at once. There is much on record to show that puberty may set in too soon and true adolescence correspondingly too late, making an uneasy gap where many harms arise. Then education needs to be alert and therapeutic—but we are concerned now with the normal.

The adolescent looks outward with a new gaze and also inward. All that he has quietly assimilated through his childhood years, all he has learnt and felt and practiced, the capacities he has been able to develop, the difficulties he has had to encounter—these now meet him at the level of thought—he has entered upon the phase of learning to know himself, of having to learn how to face himself. At the same time, his environment lights up for him with a new interest—it pulls him to itself. He recognizes *his* world, the world he is to enter fully one day, the world of enterprise in which he must play his part. This birth to a life of independent thought does not come overnight, nor does it come equally to all children: it is generally blurred in the ninth grade, comes to clarity in the tenth, and grows to relative strength in the eleventh and twelfth grades—but it invariably brings with it a force of personal enthusiasm for life: if it does not, then something is badly amiss already. The adolescent wants to believe in the world, he wants to love and approve his age, he wants to have confidence in life, to enjoy and admire and even idealize the achievements that confront him. He wants to be *modern*, to accept what is there as his right, his heritage, and careless opposition on the part of his elders will easily drive him to rebellion. The ideal he brings is for *truth*. The first assumption of his nature is that the world is built on truth. His spontaneous aspiration is to be a true man, to live in truth and to expect truth in others.

But now, by degrees, there come the contradictions. He reads the headlines and dives down beneath them, sees the inconsistencies in adult life, is first astonished, then bewildered, and then unhappily dismayed. In his first burst of confidence he

may easily mistake good for evil, evil for good. He meets on every hand with a presentation of life where spirit is denied and matter exalted. Is man an animal after all? The learned say so: true, he is something more, but how much? He begins to question his childhood faith—then he believed because others believed, but now he wants to justify belief. He questions his dependence on his parents—is he not *himself* and why should he not have *his own way*? He questions the authority of his teachers—are not they, too, *only men*? As he enters his most sensitive years at seventeen and eighteen, he nurses many a doubt and sorrow in secret. He wants a hero he can trust and follow—one of his own choosing. Where can he find him? *Is there truth*? If so, what *is* truth? What is life really based on? Youth is naturally introspective. Is there a soul? Is there a God? What is he *himself* apart from heredity and environment—is *he* anything at all? How can a man's statement be more than his opinion? Who *knows*?

Not all will place their questions as radically as this or as consciously. Some will, but all carry them in mood and feeling—this is the bond of communion the young have with one another—fellows in adventure, and the loves follow. This is where the problems begin for the adolescent himself, for his parents, his teachers. What can life offer? At the same time life *does* offer many attractions and rouses many desires and longings—healthy youth is virile and has wants and tastes and appetites. Even these bring inner conflicts and moral doubts and scruples. One of the most honest lads I knew confessed he thought himself a liar and he suffered from it. Another, realizing for himself that all desire was selfish, fled from love and then asked whether desire for an ideal was not also selfish. At eighteen, beginning for some with the thought of national service and all its implications, life suddenly seems conditioned against one's will. The reverse is to abandon oneself to mere living, taking all things as they come. Are there not theories today to excuse almost any line of conduct? Chastity, it is taught, belongs to the Middle Ages. Gratification relieves repression. How are the young to know? Some turn religious; many go the other way. We adults must admit that life is a welter—we do our best, but our own premises are often none too strong. Life is sadly inconsistent, yet we want strong men and gracious women and a generation that loves the truth.

All this puts the greatest possible burden of responsibility on education itself. If the adolescent has been rightly protected in his kindergarten years, if he has been rightly guided through his elementary school years, if in these earlier years he has felt the force of *goodness* and the strength of *beauty*, he will also find his way to *truth*. Then the security of the heart will come to meet the doubts of the head and the turbulence of the will. He

has been taught through art and can be further taught to develop a *sense of fitness* in life itself. He is taught in such a way that he can clearly discriminate between fact and theory—the fact will always hold the truth in itself but theories have changed and will change again. He sees as a matter of course that life is a conflict and always has been and that it must be so. There are thoughts that add to the content of life, that make it nobler, and others that take away, reducing man to an ignoble thing. There are dragons to fight in this age as in all ages and the call for knighthood is as strong as ever.

The animal lives by desire; man can acquire motives to combat desire. The plant lives by necessity; man can call to his aid powers of self-determination. The crystal is bound to its form; man can strive for inner form and he can also transform. Creation is bound in law, and man is also bound but he can unbind. Defeat is not the end but only the spur to further effort, and there *have* been victories and man has never yet been finally defeated. In the end all rests on the initiative of man, whether he can draw up from the depths of his own being the powers he needs to humanize existence. Goodness, beauty, truth—these are his attributes, his childhood faiths before he is a man: these he can apprehend in consciousness and translate into life and so declare himself and find his way to freedom. The greatest have known that freedom can be born only from within even as manhood itself must be born from within—nothing can make for true manhood other than man himself. But then goodness, beauty, truth, expressed in religion, art and the search for knowledge, themselves give evidence of man's real being—he has engendered them and through them he is related to his source. If education can lead to this synthesis of confident striving within the soul of man, it has surely led to something.

In a Rudolf Steiner school, instruction is a means for education, and education has to do with a right growing into life. There is no indoctrination, only the aid a child needs at the different levels of his growing to discover his own inherent powers, that in adult life he may truly find himself. For the adolescent the teacher should be a witness for truth—his knowledge needs to be rooted in the realities of human nature, realities that far transcend the light of common day. The knowledge that Rudolf Steiner has given, of man as a being of body, soul and spirit, that knowledge the teacher can make his own, and with that he can work. It is a knowledge that brings illumination to human life and shows the way to inner freedom, a knowledge that enables the teacher to address himself in confident mood to the highest potentialities in the child, making of him the gardener of the most precious plant of all. The perilous years of adolescence require such a knowledge in the teacher; then the stability en-

gendered in the first years of childhood, the training in social relationships and heart-fitness of the middle years with the class teacher, flower into a right independence of outlook, right discrimination and judgment, right confidence and right initiative in the adolescent. But that this may come about at its best, we need to guide the child progressively through all his years of schooling.

In the ninth grade the child begins to waken to himself, in the tenth grade he begins to waken to the earth as a whole, in the eleventh grade he begins to question into the meaning of life, in the twelfth grade he may come to the assurance that the ultimate answer rests in man himself. He has learnt to understand the descent of man to earth, he has learnt to love the kingdoms that surround him, and now he can foresee the means for man's reascent. He has learnt to appreciate the scholarship of his day and to view it as a transition process to an age of new discoveries when religion, art and science which appear to have fallen apart will one day be reunited to give new insights to the meaning of life on earth. He has learnt to see that the contradictions which surround him are of man's making and may be resolved again; that in this lies the task of evolution and that life is a call to action. He has learnt to value each man for himself. This his childhood will have given him to take into adult life—the details he will by then have forgotten but the attitude and the endeavour he will remember. He will have been prepared to enter life.

—Francis Edmunds,

(Founder and director of Emerson College,
in Sussex, England)

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ALBRECHT DÜRER:

Left: Self-portrait at thirteen, 1484.
Silver-pencil drawing, The Albertina,
Vienna.

Right: Self-portrait at twenty-one about 1492.
Pen drawing, Erlangen University Library.

Self-Portrait of a Boy: a study of adolescence

There is a story told about Giotto that when he was a boy he tended sheep, and to while away the time he would decorate the stones lying around the pastures with sketches of his flock. One day Cimabue came upon him while he was amusing himself in this way, and Cimabue lost no time carrying the boy off to his studio to teach him to paint. If this is a true story, what would one not give to have seen those child-drawings! Rarely have such early treasures, by Giotto or by any other famous artist, come down to us. For this reason the self-portrait of the boy Dürer from the year 1484 is unusually important.

When Dürer—at a riper age—was one day putting his drawings in order, he found this sketch he had done with his silver-pencil, and he wrote in the upper corner of the paper: “I did this in front of a mirror in 1484, when I was still a child.”* He was thirteen years old in 1484, learning the goldsmith craft as an apprentice in his father’s workshop.

One sees from the soft strokes that the hand doing the drawing was accustomed to use a pointed engraving tool in fine goldsmith work. The boy was proceeding cautiously, with painful precision: the line does not flow, it stops, breaks and starts again. The engraver’s technique of that time, which the boy was learning, is apparent in the clusters of very fine crisscross lines that point up the tiny creases and the large folds of the garment. Surely the boy had already developed a strong admiration for Martin Schongauer, the master engraver of that fading Gothic era, a feeling which is said to have taken him six years later to Colmar—where he did indeed find the master, although no longer among the living.

The boy’s work-smock hangs loosely from his slender shoulders in large and small casual folds. The small hand stretches out awkwardly at an angle, with the long thin forefinger pointing into space—and yet saying plainly, “This is I, look at me!” But it is only a timid gesture. And uncertainty spreads like a veil over the boy’s sober face, framed as it is by the lopsided cap above and loose-hanging hair on one side—on the other, rough strokes to depict what must be the tassel of the cap. The curving nose and full lips stand out from the soft cheeks. The eyes have followed the direction of the hand—as if they were afraid to look straight into the mirror—and are glancing dreamily into space.

*“*Das hab ich aws eim spigell nach mir selbst kunterfet im 1484 Jor do ich noch ein kint was.*”

The boy who has sat himself down in front of a mirror to make an honest study of his features is not finding it a very comfortable undertaking. He looks away as though he were caught doing something forbidden. He seems to be feeling that to look directly at himself would reveal something that he does not yet want to acknowledge, either to himself or to a chance stranger.

Looking into a mirror can prove to be a dangerous enterprise: it may indeed disclose new knowledge, but it may also shatter the security of dreamy unselfconsciousness. Kleist describes in an essay "On the Marionette Theatre" his acquaintance with a boy fifteen or sixteen years old whose charm continually delighted Kleist's friends. One day at a swimming party the boy quite unconsciously assumed the pose of that famous Greek statue, "The boy pulling a thorn out of his foot," with such grace that he seemed to be a living replica of it. Kleist then tells of the boy repeating the pose before a mirror, consciously, deliberately,—and with no success. On the contrary, the more he tried, the more awkward, the more affected and ridiculous it became. From that day the youth himself changed completely: he lost his natural charm almost immediately.

Artists like Dürer and Rembrandt are not drawn to the mirror by vanity, but rather by an urge for self-knowledge. In their repeated self-portraits they are trying to come closer to the secret of their own individuality. The meeting with one's own genius must surely bring intense shock. One is entering a holy place, and the warning "Know thou thyself!" confronts one at the threshold. A thirteen-year-old, in whose soul the seed of conscious selfhood is just stirring, will surely draw back from it. On the other hand, a twenty-year-old no longer fears the confrontation. Dürer's sketch of himself at the age of twenty-two (in the University Library at Erlangen) shows this contrast to the boy-portrait in Vienna.

The Erlangen portrait was not drawn with a soft silver-pencil, the strokes of which could be erased, but with a pen and the lines therefore could not be altered. "There it is, take it or leave it." Here the face is supported by a hand; the youth is not glancing timidly away but is looking straight into the mirror. He braves the confrontation, but at the same time shows deep alarm for the self that is so exposed. One could even think that just his passing glance into the mirror had then held him fast, that the expression he encountered there held him captive until finally he stretched his hand out for the first sheet of paper he could reach and dashed off the entire sketch at a single sitting. The flashing eyes bore into the observer with the stubborn, searching question, Who are you? Inner turmoil surges

up into the features, into every stroke of the pen. Like stars piercing a cloudy sky, the eyes peer out of the dark foreboding of this soul landscape. There are signs of anxiety, also of an emerging will-force that seems uncertain of the direction it must take but that already by its power is creating tremendous inner ferment. As in a lightning flash the youth is suddenly face to face with his genius, on the threshold of the fourth seven-year period of his human development—a gladdening experience but also a shocking one.

In contrast, Dürer's boy-portrait shows clearly the characteristics of a boy who is arriving at puberty, in the transition from his second seven-year period to his third. Feelings stirring in a human being at this critical time are the beginning of a realization that he has a soul life within him of his very own. What there is unfolding, he at first wants to keep secret. He feels that it is threatened by the world around him. Goethe described his state of soul at fourteen years of age in his *Autobiography*. "I lost that conscious joy of going about unknown and uncared-about, of thinking that no one noticed me even in the largest crowds. Now the fears of a hypochondriac began to assail me; when people looked at me, it felt as if they were fixing their gaze on my inmost being, to hold it fast and examine it and censure it." He wanted to flee into solitude, into a deep wilderness, to "put a fence around himself," to "separate himself from the world."

When the upper grades were started at the first Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner pointed out to the faculty this particular characteristic of puberty. He said, "It is the essential characteristic of sensitive boys at that age: they want to withdraw into themselves. And a teacher can help this kind of boy immeasurably if he will try with great delicacy to gain admittance to the secret hiding place—which really every sensitive boy-soul possesses. He must not knock too loudly at the entrance; rather he must show somehow by his whole manner that he takes such a precious retreat for granted."

One could add here that in contrast to this desire in the boy "to withdraw into himself," the girl at this time "becomes in a certain sense bold, self-assured, self-confident, asserts her personality, certainly does not draw back into herself." These observations are confirmed daily by every teacher of children of this age; they show one how to handle one's class properly.

Dürer himself possessed a fine understanding of pedagogy. This is evident in his concern for the education of young artists. His "Nurture of the Young Apprentice Painters" has not only to do with their professional training; one feels the warm hu-

manity of the master in the many suggestions he gives for their general education. So his eye must have rested understandingly on the timid accomplishment of his own self-portrait in his own very young years. It received the inscription I mentioned earlier and lay among the other sketches not intended for publication.

The two portraits, side by side, present a dramatic history of adolescence. The distance between them lets us experience the whole dynamic development of those years: as between dormant seed and unfolding flower.

—Heimo Rau
(Former teacher in the Waldorf School
at Stuttgart, Germany)

*From "Erziehungskunst", publication of the Waldorf Schools of Germany,
Vol. 14, January 1950; translated by G. H.*

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Senior Literature: Perspectives for Life

As parents and teachers we long to give young people perspectives which will help them in the years to come. As parents we are especially close to all their experiences as they change and grow during their high school years. As teachers we are not so close, but we have certain other privileges. One of these is that, at least in the field of literature, we have at our beck and call the greatest teachers of the world and of all time. One could hardly want more. What, then, is there really left to be done? There is, of course, an enormous task of selection, of finding those works and passages which are most telling and of presenting them when the student is hopefully most ready for them.

Then comes the challenge of leading him to grapple actively with the thoughts of these men so that with them he climbs to heights from which he can see deep and far from his vantage point on an Eastern mountain or a Western hilltop. If he makes such inner journeys, not only do his horizons broaden but the muscles of his thinking are strengthened, become enlivened and more pliable. If he relives with a great novelist the struggles, heartaches and victories of human beings from an altogether different culture, his capacities of heart, his tolerance and understanding, grow and deepen. Solzhenitsyn, in his *Nobel Lecture*, says that in this way world literature is probably the most effective means of bringing about unity of understanding in a world in which transportation and the media have brought us outwardly so close yet they neither bridge nor dissolve the barriers of nation, race, and creed.

It is therefore fitting that the curriculum of our Senior year calls for modern world literature. But at what point does modern literature begin? It is our thought that it started during the last century. Men who have the force to break new ground with their new attitudes have a power of insight that carries their relevance far beyond their own day and into the future. We are only now coming fully abreast of some of these pioneers. Both Emerson and Tolstoi warned the world of the dangers inherent in the fragmented view of life then gaining ground under the name of modern science. Now that we are faced with the consequences of this fragmented thinking in the ecological ruins that surround us, we are ready with a new urgency to turn to an Emerson or a Tolstoi. They knew well that nature and society would rebel against a thinking which did not penetrate beyond what is measured and weighed. It takes a trained objective power of imagination to grasp the wholeness of a universe which is vitally living.

Emerson, as an admirer and student of the poet-observer Goethe, saw with his eagle-like vision into the polarities, compensations, and correspondences of man and universe. He was at home with the laws that work in all that is vitally living, infinitely interrelated, and delicately balanced. He explored the great cyclic order of these worlds in which even chaos has its appointed task.

He and Thoreau understood with Goethe the laws of metamorphosis at work in nature. Most significant of all, especially as an educational factor, they both reveal how man alone is able to take upon himself his own conscious metamorphosis, how he can carve, mold and remake his own capacities, irradiate and objectify the very quality of his soul with which he looks out upon the world and the human beings that surround him. To quote Thoreau:

It is something to be able to paint a picture or carve a statue . . . but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.

There are two pillars, two main lesson blocks, that support the senior literature curriculum. The first is the American literature block in which, as Lewis Mumford says, "The glacier of Emerson gives rise to the white mountain torrent of Thoreau which spreads out into the wide-bosomed lake of Whitman." These are the poet-observers of the mirrorings and transformations of man and the universe, the Western writers. The other pillar, in the second half of the year, consists of the Eastern novelists and poets from Pushkin to Gorky, even including Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn, but focusing on the giants Tolstoi and Dostoevsky. With all the intensity of the Russian soul, these men plunge their readers into the dramas of human struggle. They explore the borderlands of consciousness in illness, crime, atheism, even insanity, and follow the poor and the down-trodden. Almost always they are seeking for the redeeming spirit in man's essential nature; and because of this they succeed, like the ancient Greeks, in welding passion into compassion, that heart-substance which lies at the basis of the true Russian's ideal, human brotherhood. Dostoevsky, in his famous Pushkin Address, led nationalism past its limiting barriers and over into what is universally human when he said, "To be a true Russian is to be the brother of all mankind."

There is another privilege which we teachers have. Whereas as parents we take a few young people through adolescence, as teachers we see, over the years, groups of them progressing through the four high school grades. Through watching this

progression and with the help of insights from Rudolf Steiner, we come to recognize stages of development characteristic for each of the four years. Though these may be delayed or accelerated, or obscured by personal gifts and problems, the same general traits continue to emerge.

After the eleventh and going on into the twelfth grade, a kind of consolidation seems to take place within the students. The self is more focused, more centered; and from this center they are able to look out at the world around them with a somewhat greater detachment, a more mature perspective. As a senior once put it to me, "We are more sure of ourselves this year and so we are more tolerant of each other and enjoy our differences."

At the same time their thinking undergoes a change in quality. It is not that they have become more brilliant. They may even have been cleverer in the earlier grades, but then thoughts were to them a little like objects in a picture. Now it is as if, as seniors, they step into the picture itself. They can walk around their thoughts as around tables and chairs, feel their weight, test their reality, pit themselves against them and experience them more intimately. In a sense they are now for the first time ready to think for themselves, to have their own thoughts. But what does this mean? Thoughts, after all, are hardly our own. Each one is thought by thousands. A new thought appears possibly once in a decade. Isn't it only the clarity, love and intensity with which we experience thoughts which make them ours? Now the students welcome them as guides which can help them find direction in life problems, help them find their friends and themselves. Thoughts that, like Emerson's, have a vigorous grip on truth bring troubling questions into the light and help make them transparent and permeable to solution.

With this new firmness in thought they feel a growing certainty and self-reliance. This is the time—when they are themselves experiencing new perspectives and a new power of self-direction—that they are especially ready to interest themselves in the perspectives which great pioneer natures can open out to them. It is a time when they can respond with an almost musical enthusiasm when they open the pages of Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and read there the words, "Trust thyself, every heart vibrates to that iron string," words that have the magic to awaken and sustain that very trust in its truest and most basic sense.

—Christy Barnes

(Former High School English teacher,
Rudolf Steiner School, New York;
author of a volume of poetry; translator and editor)

Reprinted from the Rudolf Steiner School Newsletter.

Authority and Freedom

Paralyzing questions are continually arising for teachers: How can I possibly be everything I should be? How can I be an example to the children? What is the basis for any authority?

Rudolf Steiner has shown us the goal of education: it is to lead the way—for a time—on the path towards freedom. And we teachers do not merely take hold of the child as he stands before us, here and now, but we work with what has future in itself, what will some day develop. In the same way, the teacher as he is today may be a very poor example for the young, but the essential thing is: what is he becoming?

The growing and developing in the child listens to the growing and developing in the teacher. The "finished" part of the teacher does not speak to him. And just as much as the teacher is working on himself, he can work on his pupil, can teach him. Here education and self-education are one and the same.

This knowledge takes away the paralyzing, torturing sense of inadequacy. It consoles and at the same time spans all one's efforts to the utmost. I can be sure: to the same degree that I work on myself, I can give the child what it needs and become the authority for which it is longing. And this kind of authority will never freeze into hardness or do damage to the liveliness of the child, because it is not there in an old, stiffened form but must be created ever anew. It arises out of the understanding between the still unborn, free human being in the child and the educator. The authority I have over one child or over a group of children I can have only over them, and I cannot carry it over to another group—it must always be struggled for anew.

But something else keeps this kind of authority alive and prevents rigidity: within itself there is a queer conflict. The more it becomes what it wants to be, a guide to freedom, the more it will develop in itself the effort to abdicate, to make itself unnecessary. The final aim of true education is the moment when it no longer is necessary, when the teacher can say, "Now you don't need me any more." There will certainly be a bond between teacher and pupil, but it will be a relationship between two adults.

If education truly sees this goal for itself, its whole method will be a step-by-step withdrawing, a gradual making-independent. Each time that a child's being becomes independent—or is 'born'—the teacher must take a step backwards, even though his professional egoism rebels. One feels this painfully, again and again, in adjusting to the first years of adolescence. However, the decision must be struggled for: to want to step back and to respect, even reverence, what is trying to be born. This is the greatest help that one can give to young people of this age.

—Erich Gabert

(Dr. Gabert was one of the first teachers at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany. The excerpt is translated from his book, *Autorität und Freiheit in den Entwicklungsjahren*. Though his words were directed to teachers in Waldorf schools, they may also be regarded as helpful advice to parents.)

Comment

(Critical Observations On Matters of Moment in Educational Notions Today)

The above title is a slight, but no doubt ineffectual, protest, as the result of sifting through a pile of press cuttings, against the modern practice of using long-winded titles for things, and then reducing them to often unpronounceable words made up of their initial letters.

And, to take an easier one to start with, there's HELP (Home Education Learning Project) of Brenton Harbour, Michigan, but which is run by the OCDHSP (Office of Child Development's Home Start Program). This is heralded as something really new, "a move away from the notion cherished by a number of professionals that parents should not meddle in teaching." The reason for it, we are told, is the epoch-making discovery that "the missing educational link—come upon anthropologically, sociologically and pedagogically—is the family"!! And so parents are to be encouraged to assist in the learning process. Granted the projects the children take home are a little more imaginative than 'ten spellings' or 'learn the names of six rivers in America'. This program includes such things as "reading reinforcement" where the children have to "find the b's on all the soup labels", or find objects that rhyme with given words on a trip to the grocery store, like "I need something that rhymes with rope, please go get the cake of—". But haven't we heard of this somewhere before as—homework?

Then there is the South Bronx YTP (Youth Tutoring Program), where slow readers in the third grade are taken out for separate reading instruction with competent fifth grade readers who became their tutors. This works pretty well; as, of course, was known and practised in the nineteenth century when whole schools were taught by the 'monitor' system — something like eighty to a hundred children of varying ages being taught by one teacher, who used his brighter and older pupils to teach the others. It was a great saving in teaching staff, too—for the monitors weren't paid, of course.

But the really latest idea must be KEP (Kindergarten Economy Program), which is a scheme for teaching Economics, or 'Kinder-economy', to kindergarten children; the rationale being that children can't be accustomed too soon to become familiar with modern economic concepts. So, "when there aren't enough crayons to go round in a drawing lesson, the teacher should switch to talking about the concept of Scarcity." It is

being tried all through Utah and California with the help of a substantial grant from Chevron Standard Oil Co.! And its value is said to be obvious from the fact that "when a kindergarten kid comes home and talks about Cost-benefit Analysis at the dinner table, many parents get threatened and learn about the stuff." I should be inclined to fetch a doctor to the child myself.

And on to MACOS (Man: A Course Of Study), a widely used middle school social studies program sponsored by the NSF (National Science Foundation), which is running into trouble through lack of federal support and because of the dubious nature of its content. "The course, 'revolutionary' by its own claim, addresses the questions: What is human about human beings? How did they get that way? How can they be made more so?" which seems all right as far as it goes. But when "the questions are dealt with by way of detailed study of salmon, herring gulls, baboons and a group of Eskimos who practise infanticide, adultery and turning old people out to die," I, at least, begin to get worried. My age makes me a little apprehensive of that last item.

Incidentally, *size* is now likely to become a new criterion for humanness—at least where embryonic human beings are concerned. Dr. Henry Morgentaler—the Canadian abortionist who's been so much in the news lately—implied as much in an interview with *Macleans*. "Up to five months," he said, "the embryo is such a *small* (my italics) entity that it is definitely not a baby. You can call it a project." To be classified from now on, no doubt, as PNPHP (Pre-Natal Potential Human Product).

For a quarter of a century, YU (Youth Understanding) has been arranging exchange programs for American and French high school students. "In France," as *Le Monde* reports one of this year's returning American students saying, "teachers talk and students listen. In America contacts between teachers and students are a little easier. The drawback though is that you hardly do any work in American high schools." Another said, "Back at my school in San Francisco we spend the day having fun." While still another, commenting on the scope of the work covered in the Lycée, said, "I thought I was already in college. I even learned a lot about America." And French students returning from America seem to agree that the American high school is "often a bit like a cheerful day-nursery." Or, as a seventeen-year-old Parisienne put it, "Lots of fun, but nothing to do." None the less, most of the American students seemed to have had no trouble with their baccalaureate examinations, passing them with flying colours.

The most encouraging news of all, this time, however, is a statement by Dr. David Elkind, a psychologist at the University

of Rochester. He believes "that life-long problems with reading instruction happen because reading begins too early, in the first grade or before." He would put most formal reading lessons off until second grade.

Dr. Elkind, by the way, is a devoted follower of Jean Piaget, about whom the *Guardian* ran an interesting article to commemorate his eightieth birthday last year. Piaget started his scientific life as an indefatigable collector of sea-shells, and was even offered a job, as a young man, as curator in a Swiss museum. But then he read Bergson and realized that "the problem of knowledge (properly speaking, the problems of epistemology) suddenly stood revealed in an entirely new light as a fascinating subject for study. This led me to decide to devote my life to the biological explanation of knowledge." And that led to psychology, and particularly the psychology of children acquiring knowledge. He discovered "with stupefaction that the simplest kinds of reasoning presented difficulties—for normal children up to the age of eleven—undreamed of by adults." And in spite of all Piaget's subsequent work those difficulties, and the way of overcoming them which he suggested, are still undreamed of by many adults.

Incidentally, Piaget never obtained a doctorate in the subject he was so famous for; but he wrote so much about it that he was sometimes known to thank colleagues for sending him "what he felt were excellent articles" only to discover subsequently that they were pieces he had written himself — and forgotten!

Finally, something which will make new Waldorf schools particularly turn green with envy, is a few sentences from a report by Arne Klingborg in the *Goetheanum News* about Denmark. "We have," he says, "four, yes, four Waldorf schools *for a small area* (my italics), *and these schools receive state support up to 80%-85%.* There is a law that a new school receives this support *if it has existed for one year and has at least 10 children.* I have never heard that any politician from the farthest left to the farthest right has ever criticized this law."

AGH (Alan Howard—
the G is silent as in Ugh!)

(Former teacher in G. B. and at the Toronto W. S.;
lecturer and author)

Waldorf Education and the Public Schools

The editorial of the July, 1976 number of CHILD AND MAN states that Dr. Steiner had hoped that the Waldorf School Movement could work as an inspiration to the public educational world and that new ways of thinking and teaching could begin to penetrate the educational establishment. Now there are Waldorf Schools all across the world. Yet, to take America as an example, to what extent have these educational ideas at all affected the public school establishment?

As a public school teacher myself, I feel qualified to assert that Steiner's ideas have had no impact on public schools in this country. I think the basic reasons for this are threefold. The first of these reasons is found in the public schools themselves. Many public school teachers, I believe, are not searching for a spiritually deep quality of understanding of children, such as Waldorf education provides. The predominant idea is to teach in a way that gets quick results, not in a way that touches the depth of a child's heart. Also, there are many public school teachers who simply don't bother to think about what the purpose of education actually is. They take the state textbooks, without question, and teach out of a state teacher's manual, without ever using their own discrimination in what to teach or how to teach. And an interest in Waldorf education, after all, would have to develop out of an interest in or true understanding of the purpose of education.

The second and third reasons for the lack of public impact of Steiner's ideas on education stem, I feel, not from the attitudes of public teachers, but rather from the attitude of many Waldorf teachers. I have met several Waldorf teachers who just assume that it is impossible to teach according to Steiner's methods in public schools. They have an image that curriculum and teaching approaches are rigidly dictated by state and local educational administrators and that teachers really have no freedom to utilize Steiner's ideas in any way at all, even if they wanted to. In a moment I'll examine this premise.

Also, and perhaps most importantly, Waldorf educators tend to have the idea that Steiner's methods should not be employed in public schools unless the entire school can be totally devoted to Waldorf education. In other words, there's an idea that education must be pure—all or nothing, so to speak. If Waldorf methods are going to have any real effect on children they must be systematically utilized over the child's entire school career. In addition some have the attitude: who is going to use Steiner's methods in the public schools? The teachers there have not gone through Waldorf training, and they are really not qualified to

utilize such methods. And if Waldorf methods are used by untrained people in a haphazard way, what are the children really gaining?

How compelling are these points, and is Waldorf education, therefore, destined to merely serve the needs of a few children in only a very few neighborhoods? Is Dr. Steiner's plan, for the Waldorf impulse to penetrate the entire educational world with new insights, an outdated pipe-dream?

The answer to this question, I think, will depend on the predominant attitude Waldorf teachers have towards this form of education. Many spiritual questions boil down to a matter of one's attitude. Let me illustrate the two main attitudes I have encountered with regard to the present topic: Several years ago while some eurythmists were visiting Berkeley, California, I had an opportunity to attend my first eurythmy workshop. I had been a student of Steiner education for many years and a friend of the local Waldorf schools, but had never had the opportunity to learn eurythmy. I became very enthusiastic about the prospect of utilizing eurythmy in my public school classroom. But when I spoke to one eurythmist about this, he said that I should not try to teach any eurythmy to children unless I really had some lengthy and qualified training at a eurythmy school. Several months later I was able again to study some eurythmy with a different teacher and I posed the same question. This time I was told that it would be a very significant and important experience for the children in my class to learn a little eurythmy and that I should try to do whatever I feel able to with them. She said, in effect, that some eurythmy taught even by such a novice was better than no eurythmy.

So here are the two points of view, illustrated through this eurythmy question. But the question is, is Waldorf education the exclusive possession only of those who have been formally trained in such things, or can any interested educator learn what he can through books, lectures, visits to Waldorf Schools, etc., and try to put those ideas into educational practice in his own way? Obviously, my own bias leads me to accept the latter attitude. In this way, the Waldorf approach can become an important influence in American education.

At this point it may be of interest for this public school educator to share some of his successes in utilizing the Waldorf impulse in the public schools. The fact of the matter is that public school teachers have an incredible amount of freedom to teach what they want in the manner in which they feel is best—especially if they can intelligently defend what they're doing to an administrator. There are, of course, some principals who

would make it nearly impossible to do much in the way of Steiner approaches. But the majority of administrators I have met believe strongly in the right of teachers to approach lessons in the manner they see fit. In my own case I have worked under two principals who have not only allowed me to utilize Steiner's ideas but who have become enthusiastic about such approaches and actually encouraged me. My first principal even went so far as to make my class open to children by parent request only, so that those parents who really wanted a more Waldorf approach for their child's education would be sure of getting it.

Basically the key to Waldorf education is the teacher. If the teacher looks at the world in a spiritual way and understands the occult side of developmental psychology and how children learn at various stages of inner and outer growth, then his educational approaches will be automatically transformed, regardless of his knowledge of exact Waldorf curriculum. In my own case, I was a theosophist and later a student of a Sufi school, so that Steiner's spiritual approach to education from the beginning of my career became my inspiration in working with children.

Thus with this motivation, I was able to study enough of Steiner's educational works to really bring about a change in my classroom approaches. I began to save larger blocks of time for formal lessons in the morning, rather than following the typical public school habit of jumping every twenty minutes from one subject to another. I began to have the children do most of their writing on unlined paper, utilizing the crayon technique of shading the paper which several Waldorf teachers have shown me. I began each day with some little eurythmy exercises and with the rhythmic reciting of poems and of the various times-tables, sometimes with the children standing still, at other times marching around the room. Also math lessons were approached first through rhythm and then through an artistic method with stories and with the children again shading their papers. I found that the more of these approaches I attempted, the more my intuition would flash me new lessons or approaches for the next day. I would be doing my evening meditation at home and suddenly get a brilliant idea of an imaginative way to approach, say, the grammar lesson for the next day.

One thing that I wanted to do was to find a way to keep children in my class for more than one year (without flunking them). My answer was to design a three year, multi-graded class wherein I had ten second graders, ten third graders and ten fourth graders. The following years I would get a new group of second graders, while the old second and third graders would rotate into the next grade. This multi-gradeness worked very successfully because I made sure I separated the kids for various

lessons so that I could give each age what was needed. For instance, I did a great deal of work (even plays) with only the fourth graders centered around Norse Mythology. Yet the different ages were still in the same room so that they could help each other and share with each other.

This class was so successful that there was always a long waiting list of children whose parents wanted them to get in. I've found that many, many parents who have thought deeply about educational issues really want something more offered in the public schools. They are upset about the joyless, boring approaches used in the so-called traditional classrooms, and they are not much more impressed with the undisciplined "open classroom" approach. There are generally very few classrooms operating anywhere between these educational extremes in the public schools.

Many people in the educational system are desperately seeking new answers to the problems of education. Traditional public education teaches the basics all right, but it makes kids either into lifeless automatons or violent rebels of the system. Open education, on the other hand, does foster a certain spirited creativity, but this at the expense of a systematic, enlightened curriculum and a disciplined respect for authority. I really am not sure whether there are many educators who are ready to understand the spiritual foundations of the Waldorf methods, but I do know that there are plenty who *are* ready for the Waldorf blend of creativity and discipline, joyfulness and structure, and for the inspired combination of feeling, thought and will activity into all curriculum approaches. As I stated at the outset, part of the reason Steiner has not had an impact on the public schools is that there are many teachers who frankly would not be the least interested in Steiner's approaches. But there are many, many others who are not presently interested solely because they have never actually encountered his educational work.

So what can be done to at least give public educators a chance to learn about Waldorf and be exposed to Steiner's impulse? First, let Waldorf teachers lecture and share their ideas with the public and with more university students, with less of the attitude of recruiting new students for Waldorf schools and with more the attitude of changing public consciousness about educational issues. Let Waldorf spokesmen write more and more articles for *public* teaching journals such as LEARNING magazine, and advertise Steiner's educational books in these same magazines. Finally and most importantly, I think summer workshops and mini-courses in Waldorf approaches, eurythmy or the philosophical base for education (i.e. *Study Of Man*) geared for public school educators should be offered. Publicize these sum-

mer courses through local school districts, universities and teachers' unions. Teachers are great ones for attending workshops — so Waldorf workshops must be offered; there is little doubt that they would meet with great success.

Unless John Gardner's dream of true educational freedom* in America is fully realized, I think it's safe to say that private schools will never meet the needs of the vast majority of parents and children in this country. Therefore let us work for Dr. Steiner's plan of channeling his spirited impulse toward the revitalizing of public education. At the very least something should be done so that educators will at least have heard of Rudolf Steiner. Public education in America is crying out for some sort of reorienting inspiration. Let the Waldorf Movement help provide that inspiration.

—James Peterson

(Third Grade teacher, Mt. Diablo, Unified School District, Concord, California; Research Associate, J. F. Kennedy University, Orinda, Cal.)



In 1965 "Education as an Art" reprinted an article from the London Times Educational Supplement of September 25, 1964, describing the "transplanting" of Waldorf methods to the public schools of Bern, Switzerland. The author was not yet well-known in America; we bring excerpts from his article with great pleasure, in connection with Mr. Peterson's.

Further discussion of this subject would be welcome!

Independent Ideas in a State Setting

The test of a new educational theory is perhaps not how well it can grow in its nursery bed, but what sort of a show it makes on transplantation. This was impressed on me when I recently heard a Swiss teacher, Mr. E. Bühler of Biel, give one of the finest series of lectures I have heard on the Steiner method of education, only to discover that he had no connection whatsoever with a Steiner school as such, but was the head teacher of a Bernese Volksschule.

*See *The Experience Of Knowledge*, by John F. Gardner.

The independent nature of the individual cantons in the Swiss Republic needs no elaboration. But Bern is particularly noted for its vigorous and progressive educational policy, and the fact that by law its teachers are free within the limits of the curriculum, to teach as they see best.

Such conditions perhaps explain why a Freie Paedagogische Vereinigung — an Independent Pedagogical Union — whose avowed object is to permeate the public educational life of Bern with the methods and impulse of Rudolf Steiner, can flourish there with the full approval of the Canton.

Steiner himself, moreover, chose Bern in which to say in April, 1924, that the anthroposophical art of education concentrates on the "how" of teaching and can therefore be introduced "by individual teachers everywhere, in every kind of school and for every kind of instruction".

The F.P.V. was founded just over 21 years ago by a well-known and well-loved figure in Bernese public life, Professor F. Eymann. Its influence is felt throughout the Canton, even in remote alpine villages. It has just on 200 members, from about 90 public schools, of whom some 175 are primary and the remainder secondary teachers.

Four times a year the F.P.V. holds weekend conferences for the study and practice of Steiner's methods, and a large seven-day conference every autumn for the same purpose in Emmen-thal. This is apart from weekly meetings arranged by local F.P.V. groups in the various districts.

Of the complete Steiner method as practised in the Steiner schools as such—the same class teacher, for instance, accompanying the children through eight years from 6 to 14, or the morning main lesson at which one subject is dealt with for two hours over a period of up to five weeks—Mr. Bühler and his staff incorporate what they can.

They carefully follow, however, Steiner's suggestions for the progressive introduction of new subjects at the appropriate age, and for teaching writing through painting and drawing, and reading from writing; the analytical as distinct from the synthetical approach to arithmetic; the elucidation of the principles of geometry from a progressive study of forms (beginning with the simplest of symmetrical exercises in the first class); and the abundant use of fairy stories, legend and mythology in the younger classes as a basis for the imaginative work in writing, reading, acting, modelling, drawing and painting.

The children pursue every form of group activity in speech, flute playing, singing and drama. For the drama they have a beautifully appointed room with stage and lighting, and a props

room with every conceivable kind of costume, weapon, etc., all made in the school or by the parents. There is some eurythmy but it is not yet a full part of the curriculum.

It is possible, Mr. Bühler and his staff claim, to bring the full spiritual impulse of Steiner's vision into public education, and an increasing amount of the detail of the method as circumstances allow. This is epitomized for them in a stained glass window by Max Hunziger in the foyer of the school. The window portrays the growth of a child as a harmonious working together of the spiritual forces of the divine world from which man comes and to which he aspires, and those of the human society in which he lives and learns.

The school works towards this end with the full confidence of the public and the educational authority. Mr. Bühler and his staff work, not as a group of enthusiasts introducing something new, but as a professional body of trained and experienced experts practising their craft in the best possible way they know.

It may be that a private school is still the best nursery for a new educational idea. But the time must come when it must pass over into the educational life of the community as a whole, if it is not to stagnate or become the privilege of a minority. It appears that the Canton of Bern is not only awake to this but through the F.P.V. and schools such as the one I saw in Biel is ensuring that what is best in education shall reach the widest circle of its child population.

—Alan Howard



If a child has not had the feeling for beauty awakened in him, has not been educated to see the world from an esthetic point of view, then that boy or girl will in adolescence tend to become sensual, perhaps even erotic. There is no better way of restraining eroticism than by a healthy development of the esthetic sense, a feeling for what is noble and beautiful in nature. When you lead children to feel the beauty and glory of sunrise and sunset, to be sensitive to the color and form of flowers, to the majesty of thunder and lightning, you are doing far more for them than if you were to give them the sex-instruction which is now given to children in their tenderest youth and often carried to absurd length. . . . As a child learns to perceive the world in all its beauty, he learns also to stand as a free being over against his own body; he is not oppressed by it. And that is what eroticism is: to be oppressed and tormented by one's own body.

—Rudolf Steiner

From *The Upper School*: Supplementary Course given to the teachers of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, 1921.

Book Reviews

FORWARD TOWARD WHAT? For Ourselves and our Children by Pelham S. Moffat. Rudolf Steiner Educational Association of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1976.

Teachers and parents of our schools have had for many years reason to be grateful to Pelham S. Moffat. For he was the author of a fine collection of plays for children—still available—that was written out of his vast experience of 25 years as a class teacher in the Edinburgh Waldorf School. That experience now has flowed into this second book, one that will illuminate the whole subject of Waldorf education with well-reasoned and graceful light. It would be a great pity if the blunt Scottish air blowing through the somewhat craggy title discourages anyone from looking further than the cover. There is strength inside. Fully half the book is addressed to our uncertainties about the nature of the physical world and the possibility of freedom—not at all in an academic tone but filled with the imaginative will of the good teacher. With this as foundation he is able to embark on a discussion of what good education should be.

The following excerpts will give an impression of that sturdy Highland style.

“When the adolescent period is reached we must bring reasoning into play. This change of attitude toward the adolescent must not, of course, take place overnight; but one must watch for the time when the youth begins to take reasoning seriously. One must distinguish between this and the pseudo-arguing of the pre-adolescent child who says: “O *why* must I go to bed now?” “Why” is used here as a protest and not because he wants a reason. He knows it already in any case. If one gives way to reasoning with him in such circumstances, one is lost. For he is not interested in reasoning as a means of discovering truth, but merely as a way of wriggling out of a situation and of keeping you talking, and if he can do this long enough, he has gained his point. Of course a child of this age can reason, but he is concerned with argument merely as a means of defending himself or of getting what he wants. With the adolescent, reason has become important, and one must show that one respects this, even when his conclusions are erroneous. . . .”

“The normal difficulties attendant on adolescence are due to the fact that adult powers of thinking as well as adult feelings and emotions have been newly released in the young person, but that the ability to organize and control these is not yet there. This is born only some years later, around the age of 21,—hence

the idea of "coming of age" at this period. . . . Like all new powers, these abilities bring dangers with them. The power of judgment necessarily involves a certain standing back, a pushing away from us, as it were, of the things which we have to judge. We have to adopt a certain coldness of attitude towards what we judge in order to think and judge objectively. But this power of cool criticism, if pushed too far, can become antipathy to the world around us; and if, in educating children, we try to activate the intellectual powers prematurely (i.e. prior to adolescence), we push the normal critical powers of adolescence over into antipathy, and so we can get vandalism, cruelty and the impulse to terrorize.

This is especially the case if, at the same time, the feelings of the children have been left unnourished, resulting in an inner emptiness which the young adolescent is now driven to fill with excitements of an unhealthy or even vicious kind,—eroticism, drug-taking and the like. This is the reason why, in Rudolf Steiner schools, they take the greatest care to nourish and develop the feelings of the children between the ages of 6 and 14, and avoid over-pressure of an intellectual kind and heavy mental work during these years. For it is not difficult to see, looking at the matter from this point of view, how the modern increasing pressure of examinations—exerting its force even down into the primary school—can result in these problems. On the other hand, children who have not been so pressed are nevertheless just as capable of passing the necessary examinations when the time comes, as is seen in the Rudolf Steiner schools, and their minds are all the fresher to meet the task before them. For it is a fundamental error to imagine that, in order to prepare children for intellectual work, one must start as early as possible in case one should not arrive there in time. One must wait until the child has reached the maturity necessary for this kind of thinking, when he will cover the ground all the more quickly and without harm."

DIARY OF AN EARLY AMERICAN BOY by Eric Sloane,
Ballantine Books, New York, 1965, \$2.95.

“Why old *anything*?”

That is the question artist-writer Eric Sloane asks in his book *An Age of Barns*. He then proceeds to show that two points of view exist, one in favor of improving on the old by a constant array of new things, and one in favor of maintaining the old ways which are usually considered to be best. But, he says, “new things are not always improvements on the old; often they are sad imitations. And many old things are obsolete—even bad—and consequently of no value whatsoever.”

What “treasures”, as Sloane puts it, both “real” (i.e. “physical”) and spiritual, that have taken centuries for mankind to acquire, have many of us thrown away? In *Our Vanishing Landscape*, he looks around at just that, the landscape of New England, at the “old mills, smokehouses, churches, canal boats, covered bridges, road signs, sleds, snowplows, wagons, water wheels, icehouses” and much more that has vanished or is quickly vanishing and being replaced by billboards, roadside stands, supermarkets, shopping centers, bungalows, super highways and other “improvements.” Rather than sentimental nostalgia and romantic yearnings for something that was never as beautiful as all that, Eric Sloane’s books are a kind of “mirror of the past” which should serve to reflect the present, for, as he says, “when a man has lost sight of his past, he loses his ability to look forward intelligently.” His books are treasure-houses of drawings and essays, sketches in word and picture, which present the craft and ingenuity of the many American farmers, architects and tradesmen who lived and worked in the centuries preceding our own.

Of his several books, amply illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings, perhaps the most appealing to a general readership is *Diary of an Early American Boy*. Himself a collector of early American wooden tools, which he sees as a collection of works of art because they show how carefully and beautifully people created such things in the old days and because they tell of “the manner in which people lived or the things that the people thought,” Sloane one day found in an ancient New England house an old diary written by fifteen-year-old Noah Blake, son of Izaak and Rachel Blake, which covered the period from March 25th to December 24th, 1805. During those nine months Noah recorded maple-sugaring, building a bridge, plowing, setting up a water wheel, cutting the hay, bringing in the harvest and (even) his courtship of Sarah Trowbridge, plus many other activities and undertakings.

Eric Sloane first sets the scene with two detailed sketches, one showing the Blake place in 1790 with the log and slat bridge over Red Man Brook, the bark-roofed cabin that housed the Blake family and the surrounding woods; the other sketch shows the same situation with improvements after 1805, a real homestead and home for the family. The book, which includes Noah's diary entries, helps give readers "a sense of participation in the past" which is not unlike the feeling one gets reading the books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. By the end of the book, Noah Blake and his people have emerged as real characters in a literary work, who take hold of the reader's heart and imagination.

Not only can the general reader enjoy this work, but parents and teachers who wish to awaken an interest in children in this "use of the past" will find it a profitable resource book. The following applies to all of Eric Sloane's books, but especially to the *Diary*: "If you get the slightest portion of the immense pleasure I got while researching this material, my book will have been worthwhile." Pleasure, indeed, can be obtained from making a soft stone ink-well, a quill pen and home-made ink from a recipe of boiled-down walnut shells, vinegar and salt, and then writing out a page—just as Noah Blake did. Though one would not be as apt to make a water-powered mill wheel, still a weather-vane made by placing a stick adorned with a movable arrow into a bottle is fun to do with children, just as this hay rick ornament was both humorous and useful for Noah. You can trace the history of the wheelbarrow, learn how to make a moving toy called a hoe boy, or find out how wrought nails were made at home. Throughout the book there is expressed an appreciation for the way people at the turn of the 19th century met the necessities of daily life by their inventiveness, including the making of their own tools.

How far removed we are in this day and age from the struggle to build up and maintain physical existence—what with all the modern conveniences and services at our disposal! How important it is to allow our children to experience something of this struggle, even if only in the realm of imagination and feeling, so that they will be better equipped to handle their own spiritual and emotional struggles that they will face as they grow up. Perhaps realizing the efforts of the past is a really legitimate "use of the past", and, if so, then the books by Eric Sloane can serve to guide us back into the old days and ways that we have so readily left behind.

—Mel Belenson

(Class teacher at the Toronto Waldorf School)

CHILDREN'S DESTINIES by Walter Holtzapfel, M.D., Translated from the German by Madge Childs and edited by Henry Williams, M.D. Mercury Press, Spring Valley, N.Y., 1977. 75 pages. \$7.50 softbound, \$10.00 hardbound.

As the final decades of this century approach, there can be little doubt that the classroom teacher in the Waldorf School will be faced with increasingly disturbed behavior in his pupils. Such factors as poor nutrition, broken homes and the pervasive influence of television and radio all play a role in bringing such disturbances to the foreground, but the perceptive teacher will realize that he must look more deeply for the cause and for the sources out of which help may arise.

In his book *Children's Destinies*, Dr. Walter Holtzapfel, who presently heads the Medical Section of the Goetheanum, in Dornach, Switzerland, describes in broad outline some of the most common disturbances of modern childhood and suggests some methods of treatment. His work is based on Rudolf Steiner's course on "Curative Education" (1924) and is illustrated with numerous examples from his own work as a Waldorf School teacher in Germany and Switzerland. Dr. Holtzapfel is at pains not to categorize disturbed and special children as deviations from the "norm," but rather to bring their problems into the context of the whole world of childhood development. His diagnostic tools should be familiar to any serious Waldorf teacher or parent—such polarities as rapid growth/slow growth, large-headed/small-headed, inbreathing/outbreathing, sleeping/waking. It is, in fact, only insofar as disturbances arise around these poles that one can understand what the "normal," i.e. balanced state really is—in this way the ill child becomes a revelation for teacher, parent and physician of the complex ways in which Spirit seizes hold of Matter.

It is, in fact, unique to Waldorf education that it is precisely this aspect which Dr. Steiner emphasized. In *The Study of Man* (1919) we are told how powerfully the class teacher works, not only on the soul but on the physical body of the child, affecting his digestion, growth patterns and physical well-being. While other educational methods or spiritual movements may attempt to imitate one or two aspects of the Waldorf method, only a teacher working out of the deepest impulses of an anthroposophical physiology can truly follow the indications of Rudolf Steiner in this regard. It is thus very much to Dr. Holtzapfel's credit that he so often gives detailed physical descriptions of the "psychologically" disturbed child, and, on the other hand, often indicates how the soul-quality of the teacher and the artistry of the Main Lesson may work beneficially on the physically ill youngster.

Dr. Holtzapfel's treatment of the "Hysterical Child" can serve as a case in point. Contemporary educators and psychologists debate whether the so-called "hyperactive" child may be benefitted more by "optimal stimulation" or "reduced stimulation" (e.g. the work of S. Zentall) or whether such behavior actually stems from over-ingestion of artificial food additives (B. Feingold). In both cases, only the crudest and most obvious cause-and-effect picture is given, both of the behavior and the simple means needed for its "cure". How much more complex and delicate is the picture given by Rudolf Steiner and amplified by Dr. Holtzapfel! Here we have the image of a soul in constant pain and hesitation, unable to enter into the forceful rhythms of earthly life — a soul-state which manifests in the physical realm of excretions, perspiration and odors. That such a child can be helped more by a careful working with rhythms and tempos in the Main Lesson than by over- or under-stimulation, or that the loving, confident firmness of the teacher may be of more help than the most capably thought-out diet—for such perceptions we must be indebted to Dr. Steiner's indications.

Dr. Holtzapfel lays stress on the value of the proper social situation to the children he describes. Too often they are removed from the class on account of behavior problems or learning disabilities, when the careful cooperation of faculty, physician and parents might have made it possible for them to remain among their peers. And why should the special child, whenever possible, not be too far removed from the normal school life and curriculum? It has been found that in the working out of such "children's destinies," school, children and parents alike find new strength in and new relationships to their own destinies.

It is to be hoped that a study of *Children's Destinies* may stimulate interest in the works of Rudolf Steiner which stand as its foundation, for example, *Education as a Social Problem* (Anthroposophic Press), *Curative Education* (Rudolf Steiner Press), and the lesser-known *Spiritual Relations in the Configuration of the Human Organism* (Mercury Press). And if *Children's Destinies* can encourage teachers and parents to work for new perceptions of the soul and body of the child, then its publication will have served a good purpose.

—Eugene Schwartz

(Co-worker at the Fellowship Community in Spring Valley, N. Y., where he helps in the care of the elderly and teaches the sixth/seventh grade at the Otto Specht School for children in need of special care)

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