

Education as an Art

Vol. 36

SPRING-SUMMER, 1978

No. 2



Our Small Children

*Cover and inside drawings: Kindergarten,
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Education as an Art

Published by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America

Vol. 36

Spring-Summer, 1978

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Mrs. Ruth Pusch has been the editor of *Education As An Art* for many years. In fact, the growth and success that the magazine has enjoyed has been due in no small part to her dedication and hard work. Now the time has come when she must retire from this arduous task. The present issue will be the last one to be published under her editorship.

The future of the publication now rests with a committee appointed by the Delegates of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Although the Committee has already decided that publication of *Education As An Art* should continue under the auspices of the Association, many details remain to be worked out. In order to allow the Committee some "breathing room", the next issue of *Education As An Art* will appear in the Spring of 1979.

For the Committee
Harry S. Blanchard
Chairman,
*Association of Waldorf Schools
of North America*

Editorial:

The Child Is Father of the Man

From a certain point of view the value and importance of education diminish in proportion to the child's growth from infancy onwards. This is not the general opinion, of course. On the contrary, almost all believe that the most important part of education takes place in High School and University; and if the amount of money that is spent on those institutions, and the qualifications that are demanded of its teachers, in comparison with what is done for pre-school education, are anything to go by, that is undoubtedly the case. It is only in adolescence that the student has the intellectual power to take full advantage of what education has to offer.

And this is no doubt so, as long as we don't consider that intellectual power is something that a child comes into at a certain age like an inheritance, and that the time beforehand is merely a kind of waiting to inherit. Intellectual power is there all the time, and needs as much attention at two as it does at

twenty, but not necessarily in the same way, or directed to the same ends.

The bodily organization from which the intellect derives its power is the most important concern in the first seven years or so. If this is not attended to, or if those in charge of the child make serious mistakes in attending to it, then that can react unfavorably on the deployment of the intellect later, regardless of what opportunities may exist for its exercise.

The importance of the care and development of the body as the instrument of the human intellect increases the further back into childhood we go. Its maximum is probably reached even before the child is born, but as that is a period in which education doesn't normally apply, the chief concern of the educator is with the first six or seven years.

They are the most important in the child's whole educational life, and the physical well-being of the child should be the object of education then. By the time the child is seven it will have laid down the basic pattern of the physical organization with which it has to live the rest of its life. Whatever happens to him later will have to conform to that basic pattern. We change the *substance* of our bodies, we are told, every seven years, but the living *form* which those substances take remains more or less the same. Nothing that follows by way of education afterwards is so important as the establishment of that living physical form. All our subsequent experience will be distilled through it.

Nature herself gives an indication that something is finished with the body by the age of seven with the establishment of the second teeth; and the mastery the child has acquired over purely physical accomplishments by the age of seven is obvious to anyone who compares that with babyhood.

Rudolf Steiner attached the highest importance to the education of the pre-school child. While all education is an 'awakening' of the human spirit, it awakens first in the will, and awakening in the will is primarily awakening in the body as such. It awakens in other parts of its being simultaneously, of course, but the *emphasis* for the first seven years is on the body. If we try to develop the intellect at the same time, we are drawing growth forces away from the body, and directing them to an area which is not ready for them yet.

Ideally, then, we should let the pre-school child play through the first seven years of its life; not unrestrainedly and indiscriminately, of course, but with the wise and imaginative guidance of trained adults. Play is the best exercise of the will. It is also the means by which the child learns directly the nature of the world it plays with. It learns what it can and cannot do with the beings and things of its environment, and those lessons pass deeply into the body's memory. They are held there tenaciously

as part of itself, just because they are the fruit of the child's own personal experience.

It is because our age is so obsessed with the importance of intellectuality that we have lost both the commonsense-insight for this, and the courage to hold back any kind of formal intellectual education until this period is over. We are afraid that if our children do not learn to read as early as possible, they will lose out in the race for intellectual achievement later. Fear governs our pre-school goals; and the fact that it is possible to teach the basics at a very early age only encourages this fear. The child seems to suffer no harm by it, and therefore we see no reason for not continuing in that way.

This 'no harm' argument however is a very specious one; it is difficult to counter, too. Steiner observed that the 'harms' that are none the less inadvertently done to the pre-school child through an early intellectual education often only manifest long after we have no more responsibility for it, in middle age and after. There is a polarity between the earliest and the later years of life, and there are many weaknesses of advanced maturity which were laid down in early childhood. They might have been avoided if we could have seen more clearly what was happening then. As they have no immediate and obvious cause when they appear later, they are often dismissed as just part of getting old.

Just because we can't see what harm it does is no reason whatsoever for an early intellectual education. We must look at the child all the time in the light of its whole life. The most precious possession it will have is its physical body, and that is largely established for good or ill in the first seven years. The child can't tell us what is unsuitable for it. Anything that doesn't give a child direct and immediate pain it will take up willingly, and even ask for more if it is made attractive enough, but we have to be able to see what it is doing, or not doing, in promoting a sound constitution.

We need to cooperate more with *Nature* in the education of the pre-school child, and not so much with the latest 'no harm' ideas on child rearing that abound, and which are often promoted to get somebody a Ph.D. or to sell manufactured techniques or programs that go along with them. Nature wants the child first of all to grow into a healthy young animal. So should we. We still can't beat the old-fashioned educational principles of plenty of play, plenty of love and plenty of fun, and if we can add a little imagination to them as well, so much the better.

But how many parents today have time to play with their children, and how many want to? And as for love, we tend to show that by what we give them. Never in the course of human history perhaps have children been *given* so much as they are today, but what we give them are *things*. What they want — and need — is us.

—A.H.

Happy, Hearty Four-Year-Olds

Twenty snapping, scrapping, scampering puppies turned loose in one room present a picture of blissful playfulness, but utter confusion! Twenty healthy, hearty three- and four-year-olds in one room can likewise present a picture of complete confusion, a confusion that may reach frightening proportions. For young children are notorious for their punching and pushing, for hurling harsh words and hard objects, and inflicting all sorts of cruelties upon each other.

Yet a parent one day visited a classroom, and upon finding twenty-odd youngsters playing and working together harmoniously, glowing with the joy they found in each other, she said rather surprisingly, "This is such a happy group. I know little children quarrel and fight, but I haven't seen anything at all like that." Why is it that these children get along so well? Are they particularly unusual? Not at all — they were as quarrelsome and pugnacious as any similar group of children when they first entered school. Does the teacher deliver a daily discourse on the intrinsic rewards of brotherly love and fellowship? Definitely not! To anyone who knows young children such a procedure is not only worthless, it is laughable.

But if the teacher, in all she says, in all she does, in all she *is*, can be the living example of those abstract principles about which we dare not speak to the children, she is then teaching those very principles to them. If the light of love and understanding and compassion shines through her, enveloping each child in its warmth and protection, then that light radiates through the child himself, the warmth and protection become part of his innermost being, and he can become capable of love without sentimentality, of strength without force.

Practically speaking, this is a matter not of *what* the teacher does, but of *how* she does it. In the course of a single day, countless situations arise which challenge the "how" of handling them. In any of these situations, there is no "either-or" solution; many degrees of variation are possible depending upon the circumstances and the children involved, but generally, in achieving the same end result, two directions may be followed. On the one hand, the teacher can create an atmosphere of resentment and fear, fostering the attitude that force and outward superior strength are desirable, in which case the children grow tense and nervous, and a chain reaction of quarrels and bickering is set up. On the other hand, she can create a warm atmosphere of friendliness and good-will, fostering the attitude that love and understanding and inner strength are desirable, in which case the children relax and shed their tensions, and become peaceful and happy with each other.

When Susie calls out, "I don't want to sit next to you, Bobby," the teacher can insist that they sit together, explaining what a nice little boy Bobby is; yet Susie will be indignant and Bobby uncomfortable. But if the teacher says in a welcoming voice, "Come sit with me, Bobby, I like to have you next to me," Bobby's face will light up, he will feel warm and wanted, and Susie will invariably move next to him with an "I like you too, Bobby" look in her eyes, and both children will share a special contentment with each other.

When Johnny climbs into an already crowded "lions' house," knocking over part of its walls, and is shooed away by its inhabitants, the teacher can easily take Johnny away because there is no room for him, making him feel clumsy and unwanted, and others, smug and self-righteous; she can also insist Johnny join the group, making him feel equally unwanted and the others, resentful. But should she come to help Johnny reconstruct the lions' house, and even *enlarge* it, the prospect of a *bigger* house is a great joy to any lion, and so they all join in creating a more spacious dwelling, and Johnny becomes the finest lion of all for having brought this about.

When Mary has not slept well the previous night and is tense and cross in the morning, the teacher can sit her in a corner by herself, thereby adding to her irritability; or she can push Mary into an activity in which she is too tired to participate companionably and soon find a whole group of annoyed, quarreling children. But if the teacher suggests sympathetically that Mary lie down in the dolls' bed to rest, before she is even tucked in, there will be a host of little mothers, both masculine and feminine, eager to care for a real baby (and with such tenderness!). Mary will relax and thrive under this gentle devotion, and all the children share in a rich experience.

Words, very often, become entirely unnecessary. Picture, for example, little David — in his hand a wooden block, already started on its way to crash on top of another child's head — when he finds himself looking into his teacher's eyes. No word is spoken, yet without a perceptible pause in the motion of the block, it comes down to the floor and becomes the cornerstone of a fine building. The child's mood has changed completely, not out of fear, but out of all the experiences and feeling previously shared, which have been called up again.

Of course, with any group of children, accidents occur — water can be spilled, blocks can tumble over, fingers can be trod upon, hands and feet that mean only to be playful can sometimes hurt another — yet children can come to accept these for what they are if the teacher's expression, her voice, her gestures, even her quiet pauses, create the attitude of "he didn't mean it" (which is most comforting), and a truly sympathetic "I'm sorry" can come forth, not as an automatic response, but as the voiced expression of the feelings within.

Now we may ask, "Are these children then capable of defending themselves?" Indeed, yes! Not with a mere lashing out of fists, in disorganized fury, but with a deep inner strength and dignity. One of the most severe punishments one child could inflict upon another in this group became, "You are not my friend any more"; this simple statement carried more force and meaning than striking or pummeling ever could, for it brought the erring child back to the group with a good feeling for wanting to be accepted. And oh, what great joy to hear one child vigorously defend another with, "Of course he can play with us. We're all friends!"

Any child flourishes in such an atmosphere, for little children believe the whole world to be moral. That is why they are so quick to imitate all they see. Let them then be clothed in a warmth and security that can penetrate within so that their creative abilities and imagination are free to work, for when children are working creatively and imaginatively, they have neither the time nor the inclination to quarrel.

—Nanette Grimm

Reprinted from "Education as an Art," Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring, 1954.

* * * * *

A certain overwise father, seeking to protect his daughter from fantasy, composed for her an anti-fantasy in which the notion was stressed that there was no such thing as a Baba-Yaga (a witch in Russian fairy tales).

"I know there's no Baba-Yaga," the little girl replied, "but please tell me the kind of fairy tale where there is one."

* * * * *

Walking on the beach, Lialia saw, for the first time, a ship in the distance. "Mommy, Mommy, the ship is taking a bath!" she cried with excitement and amazement.

*From Two to Five, Kornei Chukovsky
translated by Miriam Morton
University of California Press, 1966*



Learning to Live with Dragons

It is no more right for a child to remain a child than it would be for a seed to remain a seed. The principle of life is growth.

In the life of any human being, there must be a time when he really is as innocent as the seed, but, however protected that life, this span of innocence will be brief. Children cannot be sheltered from the small punishments, the tiny injustices, the unkind disappointments that are encountered by even the most loved, and all of them teach the child the same thing. They teach him that life is not wholly affable, that there is more than one way of looking at things, that accidents will happen, and that the best intentions can sometimes twist in the hand like serpents.

All this is well and good, as long as the problems presented by life are not too large to be handled. It can be proved comfortingly that the bear in the corner, beyond the shadow of the night light, is not a bear at all, only a familiar piece of furniture. But the first time a child hears an animal scream in pain or sees an adult weep, he is no longer dealing with an imaginary bear which can be exorcised. He is dealing with a real dragon. He learns what it is to be afraid, and the fear begins to destroy the pattern of innocence, just as a stone thrown into a pond breaks the stillness on the surface and wakens the life below.

We adults know that this will happen, and we are mortally sorry that it should be so. To the best of our ability (that is to say, of our love) we will try to fight a delaying action against the dragon. See, it is not so large as it seems to be! Look, that is not real fire spitting from its open mouth! We diminish the dragon, hoping that it will become more manageable and can be kept on a leash.

Certainly, this is a wise thing to do. Children should not be overwhelmed, and they will need all the help they can get before they learn how to tame the fears themselves. Even then a child is fortunate who knows that, in the darkest forest, he can reach out and find a hand that will steady him and help him to draw the first long breath that quiets the pounding heart.

However, once the child has encountered disaster, he is changed. He has become *aware*, and it is this awareness that spells the first loss of innocence. He needs, most desperately, a flaming sword, and the first sword that can be put into his hand is a firm belief in the power of good to triumph over evil.

He needs this in simple and unmistakable language. He needs to believe that there is a prince in the forest and that the prince will survive against any odds, that the princess will be rescued and the dragon slain. He wants to be reassured.

This is what fairy tales are for. They offer a sturdy conviction, large and comfortable, a sort of home base on which one may stand and view the darkness with reasonable equanimity, since there is a known light by which to travel.

—B. J. Chute

*From an article on children's literature in
Book Week, New York Herald Tribune, 1964.*



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Children's Play

Whoever observes children today will declare that their capacity for play is gradually disappearing. They are not able to play as children used to play. Play has always been the archetypal characteristic of childhood and it is in danger of vanishing. Either it manifests as wild, unrestrained rushing about, or a child droops and settles into a state of impassive dullness.

This phenomenon should be taken very seriously. For it is an alarm signal, pointing to a profound and devastating change in the constitution of children. Children who cannot play are ill in a certain sense. They may not show symptoms immediately that are clinically clear, but they are in a condition that without question must lead later to soul weaknesses and bodily illnesses.

You hear so often today: our children no longer like the old ways of playing; they want something more realistic. Even if this is true, one should work against it. The old kinds of play, so full of fantasy, are not out-of-date, they are not superfluous, they are really right and good. They are in the same class as fairy tales. Fairy tales are important for a child's soul because they have a timeless quality. And it is this quality of timelessness that one finds in genuine play.

How, then, should our children play? The answer must surely be: so that their whole being is involved. But since different faculties keep unfolding as the children grow, the character of their play has also to change continually; there must always be some new element appearing to correspond to the children's development.

An important element of play is the sandbox. There the child's formative forces have a chance to be active, the forces that are working on his entire body during his first seven years. During those years every human being is actually a sculptor and has therefore a natural impulse to busy himself as such. His hands want to move, they want to be shaping things, and it is a blessing at this time if the very forces that are working plastically on his entire bodily form can also be used by him in his own activity. Sand play allows him to be creative in a way that rarely can be reached again. But a seed is planted there that can ripen later into artistic originality. Teachers should grasp every opportunity to make sand play available to the children, primarily during their first four years but also later.

Up to a child's eighth year it is still comparatively easy to get him to play. However, one condition must be fulfilled: an environment must be provided that lures him to play in it. During these early years he absorbs qualities of the spatial world with tremendous intensity. He experiences "things" not as dead

objects but as living bodies. When he is older he will want to grasp the world with his intellect; now he wants to grasp it not only with his hands but with his whole body. He climbs, slides, crawls, rolls, holds something fast, springs away from it. Behind all the variety of his activity is his inner need to touch the world, to feel it, to have direct contact with it, to get as close to it as possible. Forces of purest sympathy are manifesting themselves in this behavior. One could say, play is nothing less than love for the world.

The child loves the thing he is crawling through, the thing he is climbing on, and his love increases with each new encounter he has with it. The energy of his fresh young soul streams out into the world, and he receives what he gives. A mound of earth perhaps ten feet high is "his mountain." That is no pile of dirt, it is something thoroughly alive. He knows its true nature and treats it as a friend.

Children need such living relationships, for it is through them that soul faculties unfold. Obviously this can happen all the more easily, the more character the environment has in which they live. Tenements, backyards, asphalt, bare lots, even empty lawns, offer children precious little inducement to play.

Trees, bushes, a ditch, a "mountain," unexpected places to climb on or crawl through, logs or fat rocks that one can run between, climb over, jump from, by lucky chance an old boat — all offer a thousand play possibilities. This is only to suggest the direction one's thoughts should take. Under no circumstances should sophisticated technical things or machines be brought in, because a child's hidden forces can have no connection with them. One should provide for him nothing more and nothing less than "a world in miniature," of a natural, primitive, archetypal character.

The usual playground equipment — swings, slides, etc. — should whenever possible not be made only of steel. Children need a certain quality of warmth that steel does not possess. Wood does possess it. And so, for instance, it makes a decided difference whether a swing is built from sturdy pieces of oak or is just a prefabricated, tubular steel affair such as one sees everywhere today. In the former event the swing has "a look," it has "character"; in the latter, it has none. For the child-soul this is not unimportant.

Singing games and free play belong together as do sleeping and waking. In free play the children follow their own impulses; in singing games they follow one another in some arranged order. All our traditional singing games have an echo of ritual in them. They may consist of the simplest words, or verses without any apparent sense. With their bare melodies they seem to be nothing more than a kind of singsong. And yet they work magic in a

child's soul. Truly we are offering a genuine healing element when we give a child some regular opportunity to dip down into this activity. And it is precisely today's child that needs this to a special degree: because he is already far too awake. Overstimulation, which is steadily increasing, makes our children nervous and excitable. A singing game with its constant quiet repetitions means more for them than we could guess. Rhythmic repetition strengthens the will; continually changing impressions weaken it.

—Rudolf Kischnick

*From "Merkblätter zur Gesundheitspflege" (Number 10)
published by the Verein für ein erweitertes Heilwesen,
Bad Liebenzell, Germany, with their kind permission.
Translated by G.H.*

. . . If children need ideas for their play, they have the whole colorful world, heaven and earth, offering itself to them.

SKY. If you show small children the lights in the sky, they love them. They raise their little arms to the sun; they greet the pale moon crescent joyfully, even in daytime. A child of only eighteen months looked past the harsh city lights to the dim stars far out in the winter sky — and crowed with delight. If a child wakes in the night and is restless, often a look out the window at the starry heavens will work wonders, and he will go back peacefully into his crib.

And what an event it is to discover a relation between clouds and rain! A five-year-old mulled over this for weeks. Every day he observed the clouds and made bold predictions, announcing them loud and clear to the world around him. Think how such a thing can sink into a child's heart! And then when a thunder storm comes! The parents must join him with their own enthusiasm and wonder at the mighty event taking place in the sky. Their lively interest and pleasure should be constant bridges from the child to the world. Parents must realize this.

EARTH AND WATER. Now and then let the children get into the wet, black soil of your garden, with worms wriggling through it and thousand-leggers and snails. And if they have been bored and sluggish in their sandbox, they will soon become lively. If there is some water near, so that they can stir up some beautiful mud, their delight will know no bounds.

AIR. Pinwheels will whirl, feathers will fly, if you blow them. Maple keys will spin through the air, fir cones roll. Folded-paper

swallows, if let loose from a balcony, will glide away in graceful curves.

If a strong wind rises, get the children out into an open field or a park, where they can feel how the air, usually so gentle, is suddenly banging the breath out of them and tearing at their clothes. Out in the open, children can experience nature with their whole body, in a way no school's "audio-visual aids" could ever, ever teach them.

FIRE. All objects fall to earth. Only fire pushes upward. Spark on spark, flame on flame is sent up. Lightness, levity is working here, the opposite force to gravity. This can be an impressive experience for children, but many have never seen an open flame, never lit a match. One only knows half the world if one only knows about gravity. Children should experience fire. What things burn? What puts a fire out? They should learn such things if they are not to grow up strange to the world and to life.

—Elke Blattmann

Translated by G.H. from "Spiel und Spielzeug," Nr. 22, Soziale Hygiene Merkblätter.



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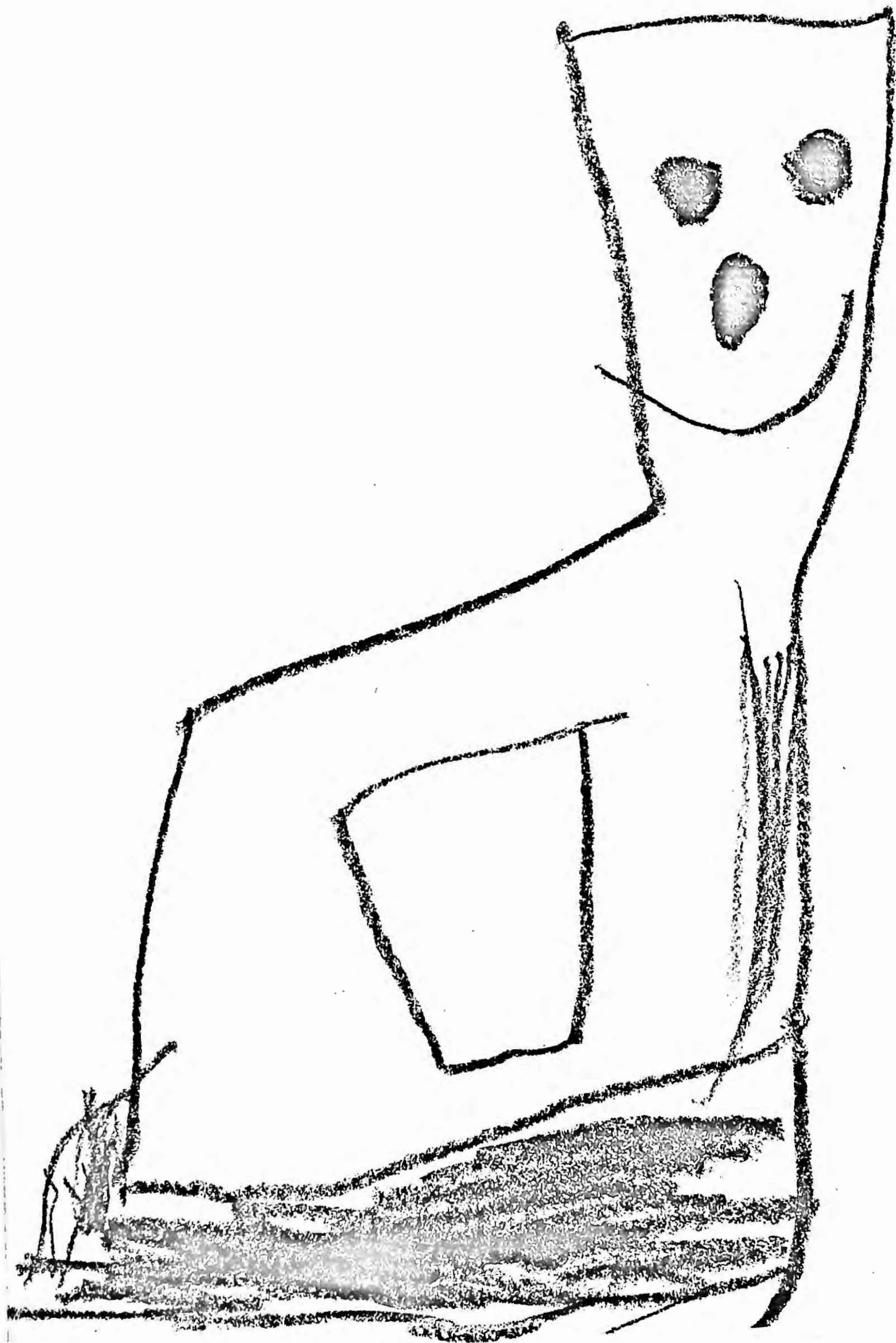
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The Effect of Waldorf Education on Home Life

When a friend of our family called to ask me if I would write an article on the effect of Waldorf education on our home life, I said yes, mainly because I could not think of a convincing, polite way to say no. I was plagued by doubts; after all, we weren't anthroposophists, I wasn't a writer, and our family life had its ups and downs. Yet Waldorf education as we came to know it did and does have a profound and continuing effect on our family. I decided to take the plunge and began to sort out and recreate our changing view of ourselves and our children. We have three, a girl of ten and two boys, five and eight.

We had always felt that a family living in the mainstream of modern culture must continually redefine and rediscuss what is healthy for a growing child and the family. Our own upbringing and the things we saw happening all around us, did not provide an example or guide for what we wanted: a strong family working together.

The search for creating such an ideal found no answers in our own experience. When our first child learned to speak, we tended to fall into the pattern in which a child is assessed in the modern culture: the smarter she was, the happier we were. The more she "knew", the prouder we got. I'm astonished now to think that we taught her the entire alphabet at 21 months! We hung letters and numbers all around her room, provided her with Sesame Street, flash cards, books and lots of positive feedback for being a bright little girl. Since she was eager to please us, she learned it all.

When our older children were approaching school age we decided on private school mainly because of my husband's disillusionment with the public schools he had formerly taught in. We also felt we should cooperate as much as possible with any school we chose. It happened to be a Waldorf school. That was the beginning — our children, the school and its parent-workshops slowly gave us a new direction and gradual certainty on how to create a family atmosphere in which we could all prosper.

In a rough sort of way the following categories stand out in my mind as the clearest way to talk about this.

RELIGION

Religion in our own upbringing was experienced as sterile and hypocritical. Our initial attitude had been that it is better to do nothing. There was, however, a gnawing feeling that we would have to face this issue once the children grew older. That first year at Green Meadow we seemed to whiff some kind of spiritual point of view; it helped raise our own doubts about whether it is really possible to do nothing. Laura and Daniel would come home from school and in their wonderful innocence

proceed: "Do you want to hear what we say before snack?"
Then they would say this prayer:

*Earth who gave us all this food,
Sun who made it ripe and good,
Dearest Earth and dearest Sun,
We'll not forget what you have done.*

They said it as though it belonged to them. We reflected on our own childhood where thoughts about food seemed to center on the fact that people were starving all over the world so we had better finish every bit!

Their prayer hit us as something that could be meaningful to us. For us as a family it seemed right. Our children also suggested we add candlelight to the evening meal and a family tradition became established. Our youngest child chimed right in, imitating the mood. Friends who join us for dinner and notice the candles and the care usually ask, "What's the occasion?" And someone always explains, "Oh, we do this every night."

There are several practical benefits to recreating the dinner hour; a prayer and candles seem to calm everybody down and make conversation easier, it distinctly sets this time apart as special and gives a sort of elegance to the simplest meal.

In a seminar for mothers we received more practical suggestions. With lots of fresh memories of the cajoling and struggles at bedtime we perked up our ears at suggestions as to how to create atmosphere for the children in the evening. We learned to use a candle instead of an electric light, to speak softly (this is still sometimes difficult) and to say with each child the evening prayer and perhaps sing a song or two. Besides giving the child the assurance of *his* time alone with the parent it provides a wonderful hidden benefit: all the little problems and hurts that would well be lost or overlooked in the daily hustle and bustle seem to come out at this time. One of our boys holds a lot in and he especially seems to use this quiet, safe time just to talk.

We needed the children to be our vehicle, but we became receptive to the gifts they brought to us from school, particularly a sense of wonder at the order of things. The children would come home with their stories of the seasons, each year the same cycle. There is order in nature and there is order in the heavens. As a family we learned to experience together the wonder of things.

It's difficult to describe the impact the third grade Old Testament block had on our daughter and our family. She lived into these stories in such a way that her descriptions of the glorious battles, struggles, sacrifices, and moral dilemmas of the ancient peoples were simply thrilling for her and an eye opener for us. These deep moral questions were so real for her we began

to think of the Bible in a different way too. In fact, we had given our family Bible to a friend on "permanent loan" and had to ask for it back. We still laugh when we remember having to explain to our daughter that the Philadelphia *Phillies* did not mean the Philadelphia *Philistines*.

We got her a large print Bible at her request last Christmas and found her reading it with the fervor she now gives the Nancy Drew series. It seemed to us that through these stories the school had tapped something very fundamental in her at just the right age. Our boys look forward to this block because she explained to them that although she could tell them some of the stories, her teacher advised that they must be a little older to hear all of them . . . what a wonderful thing to look forward to.

PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY WORK

For us there was no real precedent for teaching responsibility and participation. In most homes, the parents wait until the son or daughter is almost grown up — as happened in my own life — until the suggestion comes that the daughter should perhaps vacuum her own room and make her bed. There seems to be a custom of one caregiver per family while the children occupy themselves elsewhere.

At a parent workshop it became clear that many of us wanted a family that worked together, but we really didn't know how one goes about doing that. We learned that several things were essential, attitude, investment of time, and some creative thinking. Having the right attitude simply means that you believe that children really want to help and participate. It also means that one does not abruptly announce, "There's going to be some big changes around here!" It's a gradual process, and parents must be willing to help and guide, especially at first, and be prepared for constant backsliding. It became painfully clear to us that it took an awful lot of time to teach a child how to make his bed and to make sure he did it every day. We also began to think together about what a child could realistically be expected to do and at what age. Six-year-olds can fold and put away their laundry; even four-year-olds can do a pretty good job cleaning up their rooms. The older ones learn that jobs in the garden or with the horses take effort but have rewards.

Vacuuming, setting and clearing the table, changing their beds — this all belongs to participating in a family. The fruits of this are manifold. Children are proud of things they can do, it expands their confidence in their own capacities, and the process itself teaches the consequences that occur when work is left undone. This is especially true if one has animals: a dog left unfed remains just that in spite of the most imaginative excuse.

These are all lessons of life, learned naturally through participating in family work. We found it useful to be willing to say sometimes, "I'll help you do it."

Lest this all sound too rosy and pat, let me add that reminders are still essential in our home and probably always will be.

USE OF FREE TIME

My first thought about use of free time is television. Much has been written about this lately and many people in the wider culture are taking a second and third look at the whole question. We all know Waldorf schools do not recommend TV for children, especially little ones. Our family gradually got the message and turned off the TV about three and a half years ago.* In a nutshell, we came to see it as an essentially passive activity that was a poor substitute for experience. It is also a theft of time.

In the past I had found that when our children started to fight or I needed some quiet, I relied on TV. Instead of involving myself in the family situation, I escaped it by turning on the box. The implications both for myself and the children made me uncomfortable.

Once the TV gets turned off there is more time. Time for what? We realized that we really didn't quite trust our children's capacity to find things to do — in essence, to be children. However, it became quickly evident the children at Waldorf schools know how to play. Our children, especially the boys, play outside in *all* kinds of weather (this really is no problem if a child is properly dressed). The older ones read and we have a "project table" that always has fresh paper, beeswax, crayons, and puzzles on it. This is used every single day by our children and/or the neighborhood children. It seems to be a great unwinder after the long bus ride home.

As a family without TV, we are forced to interact more and have begun taking hikes, camping, and skating together. We also play board games. Our daughter spends time playing the 'cello and piano.

We have also come to appreciate *what* the children play with. Those beautiful wooden toys at school are a sharp contrast to the gimmicky dead-end things that never seem to last more than a week or two. It made sense to invest in some really good toys that were nice to look at, handle, and really lasted. At pre-school workshops we saw that toys should be open-ended, not too strictly defined. A doll that does "everything" leaves a child little room to make it come alive and cuts off all the wonderful possibilities one may dream up.

The other thing we do in our free time is nothing. Just a lot of space for someone to tell you a story if he feels like it, take a walk, or watch the birds on the feeder outside.

*See "On Turning Off the Television" by Paul McArdle, in *Education as an Art*, Vol. 33 No. 2: Spring-Summer 1975.

FOOD

As in the case of television, many people in the wider culture are taking a second and third look at the food we eat. The word "health food" seems like it should be a contradiction in terms, but both my husband and I began to rethink this whole area about ten years ago.

We were immediately at home with the school's attitude that it really matters what you eat and good wholesome unfooled-with food is always preferable.

There is a conscious effort to keep school-provided snacks as natural as possible and our littlest child already seems to sense what is *really* good to eat.

It was the children who explained what millet was, how to grind grain, and how good it is to pull a carrot out of the earth and pop it in your mouth. We had never really given much thought to the actual relationship between what we eat and the earth, rain and sun.

Now each Spring especially our oldest boy announces, "Let's plant a garden."

CONCLUSION

Our last child was born just about the time we entered the school and has really benefited most from the education. As his parents, our view is hardly unbiased, but he seems to have such a bright, loving, enthusiastic approach to life that it continually reaffirms for us some of the choices we have made.

I see that each year at the school has made us conscious of more possibilities. As all five of us get older, it may be that this process will just continue.

—Ruth McArdle

* * *

"Daddy, when I talked with you over the telephone, how did you manage to get into the receiver?"

His aunt, a physicist, immediately undertook to explain to the three-year-old the structure of a telephone apparatus. He listened attentively and then asked:

"But how did Daddy manage to crawl out of it?"

(From Two to Five)

Comment

"A drive is under way by the United States Office of Education, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and other groups to make child-raising a basic part of every high school student's education."
N.Y. Times

And about time, too!

It really is remarkable when you come to think of it that the one vocation which almost everybody is likely to take up — parenthood — is the one which we do little or nothing about in education. In spite of all the voluminous research into child psychology and educational theory, it is none the less still tacitly accepted that any two young people who have started another human being on the way will know just what to do about bringing it up.

At a time like ours when the enjoyment of the sex act has become the main concern in the procreative process, and conception a hazard that must be avoided at all costs, is it any wonder that the children who do manage to by-pass the condoms and the coils and get themselves born are on the whole having such a raw deal? Even if we believe that their parents really 'wanted' them, the present state of marriage shows that they wanted the 'freedom to live their own lives' much more. When a crisis threatens that freedom, the children are the first to suffer.

It is about time that somebody began to think of sex and sex-education as the means by which children are brought *into* the world, and not just as a pastime, the success of which depends on keeping them *out*. Then we might be able to give more attention to why people have children in the first place, and what kind of people should have them, and whether they are suitable in every way to look after them when they come.

And there can be no better time for beginning that than when the young human being becomes capable of producing them.

And that's where education could come in, in inculcating the moral responsibility of this generation toward the next. Whether it is done in the high school or elsewhere is immaterial, but done it must be if we are to survive humanly.

After all, that's what marriage really is, and what it was originally instituted for. It wasn't an ordinance of God, but a sound social institution. All that business about 'marriages are made in heaven' and 'whom God hath joined . . . etc.' was just put in to emphasize the moral responsibility. Marriages were made on earth for the preservation of property and the upbringing of children, but because sex was a force that could play fast and loose with any social institution, people had to be frightened

into believing that any dallying with unmarital sex would bring down upon them the wrath of God and the pains of Hell.

People don't believe that any more, and we're all the better for not doing so. But we're not all the better for disregarding our moral responsibilities towards the children who result from our sexual activities. The sooner we learn them again, *and teach our young people to respect them*, the better we shall be.

But here we come up against the real problem — the prevailing belief that man is only a higher animal. And how can you teach morality to young animals — whether higher or lower?

Man is not an animal, but a moral *being* who was incarnated in, and who is in process of evolving through, and out of, an animal *form*. Only when we can see this as the only reason why man is educable at all, and as the lesson underlying all knowledge whatever the subject, shall we be able to evolve a sexual morality which is neither self-centered eroticism nor traditional inhibitionism.

* * *

"The so-called Silent Meditation Bill has passed both houses of the New Jersey Legislature, and now awaits Governor Byrne's signature."

N.Y. Times

What is meditation?

Victor B. Marrow who teaches philosophy at Long Island University, writing about it in the N.Y. Times, equates it with silent prayer. He is a convinced atheist, and has carefully brought up his children to be atheists, too. Meditation, he says, is prayer, and he doesn't want his children to be made to pray in school. The supporters of the bill, on the other hand, claim that meditation is not prayer, but Marrow says that is just "their tactic for violating the constitution."

Surely the real issue is not meditation as such, but what you meditate *about*. Meditation itself is innocuous enough. We all do it whenever we engage in a spell of concentrated thinking. It is just unfortunate that meditation in our time has come to mean almost exclusively thinking about God or Christ or the spiritual world. It is losing its more general meaning, and what Victor Marrow really fears is that his children will be made to meditate on spiritual things. As an orthodox atheist he doesn't want that at any price.

But meditation as such shouldn't upset him, because an atheist can also meditate — no doubt, does — on his atheistical, non-spiritual values. In fact, meditation as it stands could be a means of upholding rather than violating the First Amendment,

for why shouldn't children meditate on something of their own or their parents' choice? Freedom of conscience needn't then be violated thereby.

Of course, there might be other problems, like, "Please, Miss, I've forgotten what mother told me to meditate on today"; or, "Johnny, why aren't you meditating?" "Please, Miss, mother forgot to pack my meditation subject in my lunch box today"; but any worthwhile teacher would be able to take such little crises in his stride.

The danger, as I see it, from a constitutional point of view, is that the teacher might come not only to set the theme and guide the practice of meditation, but might also indicate the lines it should take according to his own ideas. That could become a direct interference in the liberty of thought.

The danger that it might turn into prayer is not so great — unless the teacher deliberately brings about such a change. There is all the difference in the world between meditating, say, *about* God, and praying *to* God. The first not only makes any concept of God possible as a meditation subject — even the possibility that there might not be a God; the other presupposes belief in God to start with, and attempts to make access to him by prayer.

The real point is whether meditation is of any *educational* value. I see no harm whatsoever, and certainly no violation of constitutional or other rights, in saying to the children, "Now let us sit quite comfortably, and perfectly still for a few moments, and close our eyes, and try and think of nothing else but . . .", and then one might suggest a flower, or a beautiful scene, or anything in the child's experience they might find it easy to think about for a few moments. In fact I have at times used such a 'gimmick', and found it effective in creating a certain calm relaxation and refreshment in a group situation. Of course, one has to be very careful how long and how often one does this, but the practice of silence and stillness, of inner indwelling, is in my opinion a wholesome experience for children — and adults.

What I don't like about this bill is what I don't like about so many modern innovations in education. It is a legislative directive imposed by an outside authority on the way education shall be conducted, and therefore another nail in the coffin of educational freedom. And I strongly suspect that this Bill is an offshoot of the influence of Transcendental Meditation. And T.M.—whatever else it is as a meditation technique—is also big business. It earns thousands upon thousands of dollars for somebody; and any kind of big-business venture which attempts to capture 'the school market' through legislature, salesmanship or other pressures is, in my opinion, inimical to the best interests of education.

—Alan Howard

(Editor's Note) A later news report has it that the Governor is holding up final passage of the bill.

Freedom in the Public Schools?

An interview with Gerhard Bedding

Quite a few Waldorf school teachers come from public school teaching backgrounds; not many travel the other way. Gerhard Bedding, however, a Waldorf school teacher for many years and now class teacher of the present fifth grade at Green Meadow School, did just that for a year and a half. He then continued his work in public education for another four years by writing a series of lively science articles for national distribution in the public schools. Like James Peterson, the elementary school teacher from California who introduced something of Waldorf education into his classroom,* Gerhard has observations from his own experience that may interest teachers and administrators everywhere.

The real problem in public education, he's convinced, is a system that gives teachers just enough leeway to administer education "kits" and prescribed teaching techniques. Although it often doesn't happen because of "good human elements," the power of this bureaucracy can, in extreme cases, lead to teachers becoming little more than caretakers — "A reflection of the state's compulsion toward uniformity and its lack of trust in teachers' independent judgments," he sums it up.

This suggested that perhaps for every James Peterson who succeeds in throwing out the textbook, there's a Jonathan Kozol or a John Holt who gets fired for using successful but unorthodox methods. Was Gerhard's experience anything like this?

"I was not, like them, teaching basic skills in an inner city school but science at the fifth and sixth grade level in a large, regionalized, fairly middle class school in Massachusetts: a different world and yet, in some ways, most of my students were also indifferent to school, because of the ways they had been taught and probably because of their TV 'education'. The sheer size of the school, the fact that it didn't belong to a town where most of the children lived, weakened the children's identification with 'school' as a place we live in and like to take care of. The impersonal look of the building and grounds reflected this."

In some ways, he concedes, he was lucky. He got no criticism from his administrators for largely ignoring the standard textbook and routine testing. He had far less freedom, however, to establish the kind of rapport with his class he felt was essential before they could accomplish any real learning. The reason was simple. Time.

"The day was fractured into seven periods of forty-five minutes each. This meant we might just be getting somewhere when the bell would ring. Dealing with seven of these situations a day was extremely frustrating. Also, schedules had been worked out with no regard for when the children would be at their freshest.

**His article was in the Spring-Summer, 1977 issue.*

One particular class was scheduled only for late afternoons, when the students were too tired to learn or observe.

Gerhard thinks that he did have some impact during that year and a half in convincing the administration that elementary classes need a home-room class teacher for most of the day, rather than specialists. The "departmentalization" bandwagon was abandoned the following year, ironically, after Gerhard left.

Was there anything he was able to accomplish within the given limitations that was different from what the children had been used to?

Yes. His pupils had been used to huge amounts of "busy work," like filling in workbooks. Gerhard showed them how to look at science in a new way: to observe with head and heart instead of accepting easy, abstract explanations. He discovered to his dismay that these children, living in a rural environment, had no connection with the star and plant worlds. They had no idea how to find the Big Dipper and knew hardly any names of the local trees. Gerhard got them to keep a diary of ordinary natural phenomena. He took them on star walks and he showed them how to recognize some trees and plants. He helped them set up experiments with water, sound, heating and cooling. He found that his classes enjoyed these experiences enormously.

"By the end of my public school time, though," he observed, "I had the nagging feeling I could only go so far. I felt always under some compulsion to be 'neutral,' to conform to the accepted limits of science. But natural phenomena have moral implications and overtones. Reverence, for instance, is central to the studies in a Waldorf school. It is hard to create this mood in a place where it is not expected or practised.

"Perhaps I was even more conscious of what the children were missing, because I too had had a 'neutral' education," Gerhard continued. "In a sense, that was what led to my becoming a Waldorf school teacher. I knew what I had missed: inner nourishment — and I was determined to make up for it in some way later in life."

"Later in life" came after an early career in business and a degree from the University of Amsterdam in Social Psychology. Gerhard arrived in the United States from his native Holland in 1955. He spent the next two years earning his M.A. in Education from the University of Chicago. During this time he was in touch with the Garden City Waldorf School, which then asked him to take over its seventh grade. He did so and remained at Garden City for thirteen years as a class teacher. In 1970 he felt he needed a change. He and his family had been vacationing in the Berkshires, and they wanted to try living there. The offer of a job teaching science came at just the right time.

"So that's how I came to be a public school teacher. I welcomed the opportunity to concentrate on math and science for

a while, and I have never regretted my experience there. During my second year I was offered a job by Xerox Education Publications to write articles for a journal called *Discovering Science*, that was used in grades four through eight. This gave me another chance to meet with teachers fairly often, in school and in workshops, to show, for instance, how an article might lead to active discovery in the classroom. In this way I was able to observe many public elementary schools, some quite different from the one I had taught in. It wasn't difficult to see that the smaller ones and the ones with "self-contained" classrooms and a steady connection with one teacher were a lot better off than the large ones."

And yet even in those, many at least, Gerhard remembers witnessing the depressing sight of little first and second graders spending hours and hours of their time filling in pages and pages of workbooks. Always sitting, instead of moving about. Having taught the lower grades under more joyous conditions, Gerhard became aware of the damage being done, the stunting of spirit "in a way I could feel almost palpably."

"In a way you can't blame the teachers; they're not encouraged to innovate by their own initiative. Accepted innovation comes mainly from the outside on a bandwagon." He cited the introduction of Modern Math as an example.

What about successful experiments in education, such as Pittsburgh's "school without walls"? . . . the *Foxfire* books?

"Yes, of course, some innovation *can* exist in the classroom," but there again, Gerhard stressed, in the case of *Foxfire*, "that teacher was handling a non-controversial subject. Suppose he had questioned the mechanistic basis of teaching human physiology — how long would he have had a job?"

He went back again to the subject of "compulsion."

"It's everywhere," he said. "If teachers don't have a choice as to how to teach, what choice do parents have? None, really, unless they're willing to pay for it. All of us are compelled to pay taxes to schools whose goals we have no part in deciding, and what differences there may be within the schools in our community we are not allowed to take advantage of, because each child has to go to the school he's assigned to."

Gerhard cites as a positive step those school districts in which voluntary exchange programs have replaced the traditional practice. "But the idea is far from widespread."

"With educational policy so centralized, is it any wonder that more and more children fail to respond to a depersonalized, standard approach and wind up bored and angry?" he asked. "I can never forget the Peanuts cartoon that shows Lucy walking over to her school during the summer and giving the building a good hard kick."

Enthusiastic parents and teachers working closely together can form a team that may create a good, though "neutral" school. The most successful public schools are those in which this sort of team spirit flourishes, and Gerhard has seen some of them. "But far too few," he adds.

"Why must there be so little choice? Why do Americans seem to feel so threatened by the idea of schools being different and yet possibly receiving state support? Do we really need such a vast and powerful bureaucracy when it comes to education?" Gerhard asked. "The crux of James Peterson's success is that he was allowed great freedom in his classroom by his superiors. And the moment all teachers are allowed more freedom and parents are allowed a choice, all of a sudden you eliminate two of the biggest stumbling blocks existing in public education today. You might have in one community two or three radically different types of schools, all "public" in the sense that they were all receiving some kind of public support."

What about Governor Brown of California's rumored interest in Waldorf education?

"The biggest danger," Gerhard stated emphatically, "would be if the state of California decided that there was something in Waldorf education that should be in *all* schools. This would absolutely kill it in the bud. But if all schools and teachers were free to adopt different methods, some teachers might be inspired to try Steiner's ideas, as Peterson has."

Who might be responsible for workshops that could introduce Waldorf education to public school teachers?

"I seriously question whether Waldorf teachers could find the time," Gerhard said, not surprisingly. "They have an incredible job just teaching and administering the school."

In the long run, he thinks, it is the Waldorf teacher-training institutes that must do most of the work of introducing this kind of education to others. Many of the teachers who attend their programs do not become Waldorf teachers but remain in the public school system.

Let's hear from them! Or from Waldorf teachers who, like Gerhard Bedding, have gone into the public school system.

Before we replace an old, broken-down car we spend a lot of time repairing it. It's a little like that in education. Combating the deficiencies piecemeal may not result in dramatic improvement. Can there *ever* be one answer for Americans? Public schools in their present form will probably be around for a long time to come. We need all the help we can get. Meanwhile, one teacher's insights can start us all thinking.

—Lee Haas

Another Waldorf teacher, Gisela O'Neil, wrote about her experiences in "Work with Underprivileged Children."*

"'I hate teachers!' 'I hate women!' were the welcoming remarks. The atmosphere was filled with hostility. No, they did not want to read. No, they hated arithmetic! Animosity permeated their own relationships to each other . . . It was at the end of the long school day. Antipathy and disinterest had been expressed freely toward every subject and activity. Still forty-five minutes to go. My exhausted mind reached for a dramatic Russian legend for younger children, 'The Beggar in Paradise'. As long as I live, I shall never forget the change that occurred: the eyes grew wide with wonder, their faces relaxed. They literally drank in this beautiful tale . . . Many other episodes could be told to illustrate the moral power of stories on this class. Their greatest impact was shown later on during the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece. All the heroes were gathered in the good ship Argo. Lots of hardships had already been weathered. More were to come. Jason stopped the boat before the last, most dangerous, most burdensome trial. He gave a realistic picture of the hardships ahead of them, then offered a choice: 'If any one of you wants to quit, then do it now —' At this dramatic moment, one of my worst quitters of the past stood up, stretched out his fist, and exclaimed triumphantly: 'Oh! not one of them is going to quit!'"

*In "Education as an Art," Vol. 28, No. 2: Winter, 1969-70 (Still available, \$1.)



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It's Easy to Start a Waldorf School . . . But . . .

The growth of Waldorf education in North America — so slow for so long — is now accelerating rapidly. In 1968, some 40 years after the founding of the first school in New York City, there were just eight schools and three of these were infants. The next decade has seen nine more come into being. More significantly, there are almost countless centers where groups of people are thinking or working actively to found new schools.

The need is great. Even 50 or 100 Waldorf schools on this continent would be all too few to meet the needs of those families that want this education for their children, and to be resource centers for the enlightenment of other teachers. One cannot but feel a great sense of urgency, particularly as the conventional image of man darkens under the influence of concepts such as behaviourism, sociobiology and the like, and in turn the public schools, news media and books pick up and deluge us with such soul-destroying doctrines.

But the need is even greater that each and every Waldorf school be strong and be true to Steiner's impulse. A weak school can drain our scant resources, and we have none to spare. A school not really working out of the knowledge given by Steiner, not fully dedicated to the spiritual and cultural renewal implicit in it, cannot truly be a Waldorf school, and its shortcoming will reflect on all other schools and on the good name of the whole movement. Any school which fails, or falls short, will leave a legacy of shattered hopes, even bitterness, which will hamper all the rest.

It's easy, all too easy, to found a school. A teacher, a room or two, a few hopeful parents and their children, glowing words and visions — and you start. But then . . .

Problems arise. Teachers find they face issues and questions new to their experience. Parents query some specifics or are disappointed with their child's progress in reading or don't pay the agreed-on fees. The landlord is uncertain. Faculty openings cannot be filled with trained people, and substitutes don't understand why it must be done just this way. Cash shortages prevent full salaries being paid, and teachers are burdened with personal financial problems. Good co-workers leave. Space, equipment, faculty and funds aren't adequate for next year. Applications dry up. Disagreements arise between good, dedicated people. And suddenly it seems that the school which started so easily cannot survive. These examples are not hypothetical. It can all too easily happen. For while it is easy to start a Waldorf school, it isn't easy to sustain it through its formative years.

Every parent knows what is involved in raising a child through infancy, childhood and adolescence. A school goes through a similar maturation process. A new beginning school should consider quite objectively whether the initiative is suffi-

ciently substantial, or whether in reality it may be a radiant, floating bubble of enthusiasm. No Waldorf *grade* school should be started without assurance that it will continue.

What, then, should be considered if and when the impulse arises in you and in your circle of friends to start a Waldorf school?

The first step for such an initiative group would be to ask themselves three basic questions:

1. *What really is a Waldorf school?*
2. *Why do we want to start a Waldorf school? What is our motivation?*
3. *What does it mean to be responsible for starting such a school?*

Superficial observation might suggest that a Waldorf school is a pleasant school where lovely people teach beautiful programs. In fact, any school could use Waldorf techniques and methods and be a very fine school — but still not be a Waldorf school. It becomes one when its teachers are united in a common inner commitment to an image of the spiritual nature of man, and live and work out of that commitment. A Waldorf school is an embodiment in a practical way of a spiritual undertaking for spiritual and cultural renewal. The understanding of this task comes from the Spiritual Science of Rudolf Steiner (also known as Anthroposophy). The initiative of beginning a new Waldorf school requires a conscious recognition of this deeper significance and a willingness to accept responsibility for it. Without the spiritual reality coming alive as its center, the potential of a Waldorf school cannot be achieved.

Each school is unique and begins in a different way. The initiative may be set in motion by teachers or parents or Anthroposophists, or interested people with a social healing impulse. Someone has been moved by an idea, a vision. The nature of this vision will influence the form and character of the school, and will draw the co-workers together. It could be a city school for deprived children, a country school close to nature, a small school to fulfill the needs of a particular community, a demonstration school contributing to general educational development, and so on. Waldorf schools, because they are based on that which is universally human, are adaptable to any situation, any culture, and any social background. In every case, however, an initiative group unites to work together toward an ideal that is greater than any one individual.

Starting a school is a deed which goes far beyond the needs of the personalities of the moment. It is a creative act, setting something in motion which cannot be casually abandoned. One can expect trials and obstacles which test the strength of commitment of the members. Each step is a growing process for the people involved and a test and preparation for the next step.

A thorough understanding of the spiritual foundation of the school need not be a commitment of every person who becomes involved in the practical work, nor of all parents who enroll their children. It must, however, be carried by the responsible members. These 'responsible' persons include the teachers. While each Waldorf school is autonomous and comes into being through free, individual, local initiatives, a group founding a school undertakes a moral responsibility and commitment to ever widening circles affected by their deed.

Getting down to business, how does one go about getting a school started?

It takes quite some time to prepare the ground and to build up a strong enough center of intensive interest to sustain a school. In most situations out of several hundred initially interested people, a small percentage will be sufficiently motivated to investigate what the school can offer. Of these an equally small percentage will be courageous enough to actually entrust their child's future to a new school. Therefore a broad base of interest and support needs to be built up, forming a pyramid from which only a few carry their interest all the way to the peak. In Toronto where a school was opened in 1968, study of Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy by small groups of people, including periodic public lectures, had been in progress for some 13 years previously. Regrettably the urgency of this decade does not permit so lengthy a preparation; a school's start would be much stronger and steadier if it could.

Planning for the practical needs of a grade school should be started two to three years before opening. It will be a rare occasion when all the necessities can be adequately prepared spontaneously. This means the group has to 'sense' their situation and envision a realistic target to work towards.

The practical steps could be divided into four basic areas, which should all be in control *before* opening a school:

- I. *Teachers*
- II. *Children, parents and public*
- III. *Buildings and equipment*
- IV. *Finances*

Much could be said on all these points, but a few brief comments must suffice.

Without the first — the teachers — there can be no school. This matter is therefore of primary importance above all others. In starting a new school it is of immense value to have at least one experienced Waldorf teacher with the kind of depth of understanding of Steiner's philosophy of education attained only by maturity and experience. Due to the rapid expansion of the movement, these persons are all too few and are frequently much needed in their present schools to train young teachers.

It could happen that a school simply must begin and no Waldorf teachers are available. A very good school or kindergarten can be established incorporating as much as possible of Waldorf ideas. Care should then be taken not to misrepresent the facts. Give the school another name; add the name of Waldorf only when it has achieved this goal.

One of the best ways of contacting parents and children is to set up a pre-school program in the same geographical area where you intend to start a grade school. A pre-school program is an extremely valuable service to children, especially in our time when so many destructive influences can impinge on the child in the early formative years. A program up to Kindergarten level can be continued for many years without requiring any commitment to a grade school. It can be carried by a small number of people. Care must be taken, however, not to give in to the inevitable pressure by a few eager parents to start a grade school prematurely. The need is so great and the children so ready! But this situation prevails everywhere. We can only do a very little in the face of great needs; we are still very few people spread very thinly. What we do must be done rightly and solidly.

The image the school projects is an important concern. Every piece of paper, every human contact, every display will be scrutinized by the enquirer as representative of Waldorf education.

A good teacher can educate in a barn or under an oak tree! Nevertheless, because a Waldorf school tries to reflect its philosophical values in every aspect of its work, the outer appearance and environment of a school building are important. Local regulations for schools generally govern such matters as land use by-law conformity, floor space per child, washroom facilities, parking and transportation accessibility, and fire regulations. The fire regulations are generally the most stringent and may make the conversion of an old house or building prohibitive. Even while accommodating all the necessary regulations, we can become distinctive by greater dimensions of imagination, human warmth and artistic sensitivity in how we use or embellish our facilities. Rudolf Steiner emphasized the long range effect on the developing child of architectural forms and the quality of the environment; he even gave indications for suitable colours for the walls in the different classrooms.

Finances are a very necessary component of life and we must be the masters of the balance here too. All planning — for faculty, other staff, premises, equipment, supplies, enrollments and fees — can and should be worked down to dollars in and dollars out. Some assumptions and guesses may be necessary at first, but you can obtain through budgeting an idea of net needs in advance. Those people you approach for financial assistance will be more likely to support the project if they see realistic, sound

planning and feel that they are being asked to close a financial gap rather than fill a bottomless hole.

It is almost certain that fee income can never do much more than cover operation costs. A new school will likely have a deficit of at least \$10,000 per year for the first four years of operation, not including purchase of major equipment. Financial support for this should be guaranteed *before* starting the school. Additional funds for land acquisition, construction or major equipment will have to be raised through gifts or loans. Money that is freely given carries a gesture of support and love, bringing more than tangible benefit to a school.

The teachers carry full responsibility for the totality of a Waldorf school, and this includes finances and administration. But they will need the assistance of staff and advisors, because they must be aware of the ramifications of their decisions and be able to see clearly their school's needs in the basic dollars in and dollars out of budget management.

Starting a Waldorf school is a challenge. It involves learning to work as one of a group; accepting disappointment or hard knocks and remaining steadfast; learning from mistakes; and learning to love what must be done. It requires the patience to wait for the right time to move in harmony with human and spiritual needs; the selflessness to listen to the quest of others; the courage to persevere toward the goal in spite of hindrances and difficulties. There are rewarding surprises when new help appears 'out of nowhere'. There is a revitalizing energy when a group together discovers a new understanding of education or of human potential.

—Shirley and Bob Routledge

The foregoing is based on a more complete monograph on the starting of a Waldorf school, entitled "The Infancy of a Waldorf School", available from the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America, c/o Dr. Harry Blanchard, Kimberton Farms School, Phoenixville, Pa.

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Book Reviews

AND THERE WAS LIGHT and ANIMAL STORIES, by Jacob Streit, translated by Ekkehard Piening. Walter Keller Press, Dornach.

"Long ago there was no earth. There were no clouds and no stones, no, not even a sun! Darkness was everywhere."

Thus begins the story of the Creation as told by Jacob Streit and translated into English by Ekkehard Piening. For the purpose of comparison, this is the same passage as it appears in the King James version of the Bible: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The early Bible stories are retold in *And There Was Light* with as much reverence and wonder as anyone could wish for, and yet they have all the appeal and charm necessary to completely capture the attention and interest of a child in the 7- to 9-year-old age group. The struggle of the archangel Michael with the renegade angel Lucifer, who dared to try and usurp God Father's position amongst the heavenly host, and the succeeding casting out of Lucifer result in the establishing of an upper and lower world, the latter ruled by the evil spirits who join forces with Lucifer. This tale is followed by a very colorful and image-filled description of the Seven Days of Creation which includes additional material from legend and fable not found in the Bible itself. This section of the book concludes with the fall of Adam and Eve and their first days of living outside the Garden of Paradise.

The second part is called "The Sons of Cain" and it brings us many stories of man's learning to live on the earth, his taming of the animals, his playing music on instruments and his working with tools. The third part, "Noah's Ark", starts with the story of Methuselah and then tells in picturesque detail the history of Noah and the Flood. The book ends with the establishment of a new human civilization on Mount Ararat.

As the author says in his Afterword, these stories are a free creation growing out of many years' experience in introducing young children to the world of the Old Testament. Not only can they awaken interest for further reading, but of themselves they "touch the children's hearts and feelings." The illustrations by Assja Turgenieff are an inspiration to both the heart and imagination and enhance the whole experience of the book.

Another volume by the same author and translator is titled simply *Animal Stories*. It is a collection of 25 short stories or anecdotes about different animals. Most of the stories feature two contrasting creatures who confront one another in the es-

sential nature of their being. There are the deer and the fox, the bee and the Junebug, the ant and the snail, and many others including, of course, the spider and the fly.

In the story of the eagle and the groundhog, we meet a sleepy little ground creature who cannot understand why anyone would be so foolish as to "fly about high in the clouds where one gets dizzy and frightened." The eagle, meanwhile, has flown up into the pink morning clouds. As the groundhog continues his musing — "is there anything more wonderful than to lie all the day in the sun on a warm stone?" — the eagle is circling and suddenly he drops "from the blue like a lightning bolt" and digs his talons into the furry back. As the eagle is flying away with his prey, all one hears is the groundhog's desperate voice calling, "I want to go into my hole! I want to go into my hole!"

In short, perceptive and entertaining narrations the stories give us a glimpse into the animal world. They are charming but without sentimentality, amusing and educational, a genuine animal storybook for children between 9 and 12 years of age. Both these books, published by the Walter Keller Press, Dornach, Switzerland, are available through St. George Book Service.

—Mel Belenson

* * *

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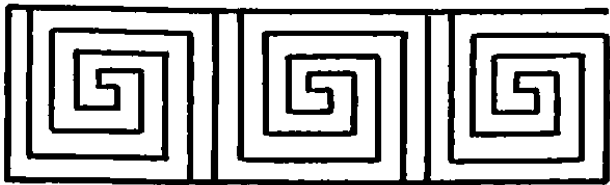
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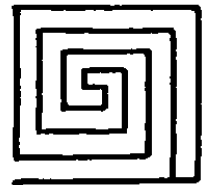
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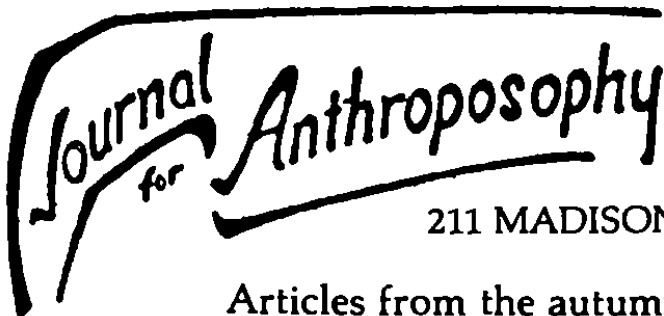
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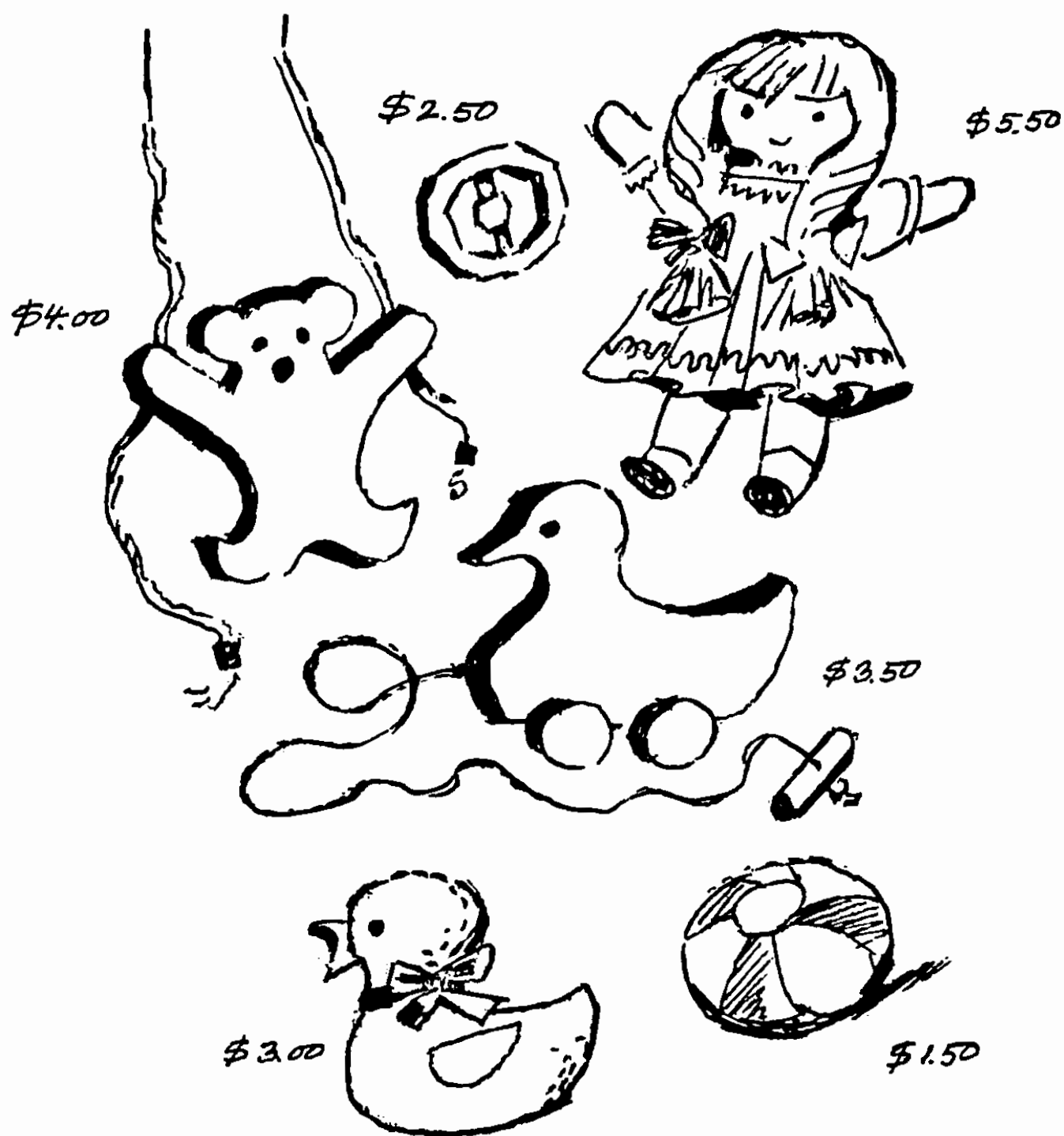
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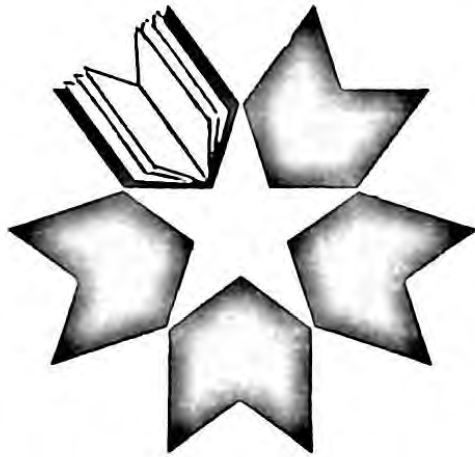
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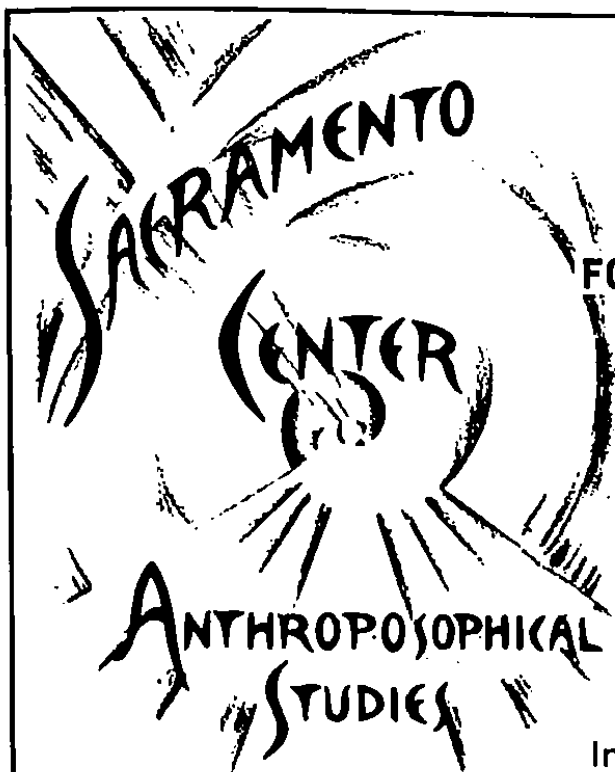
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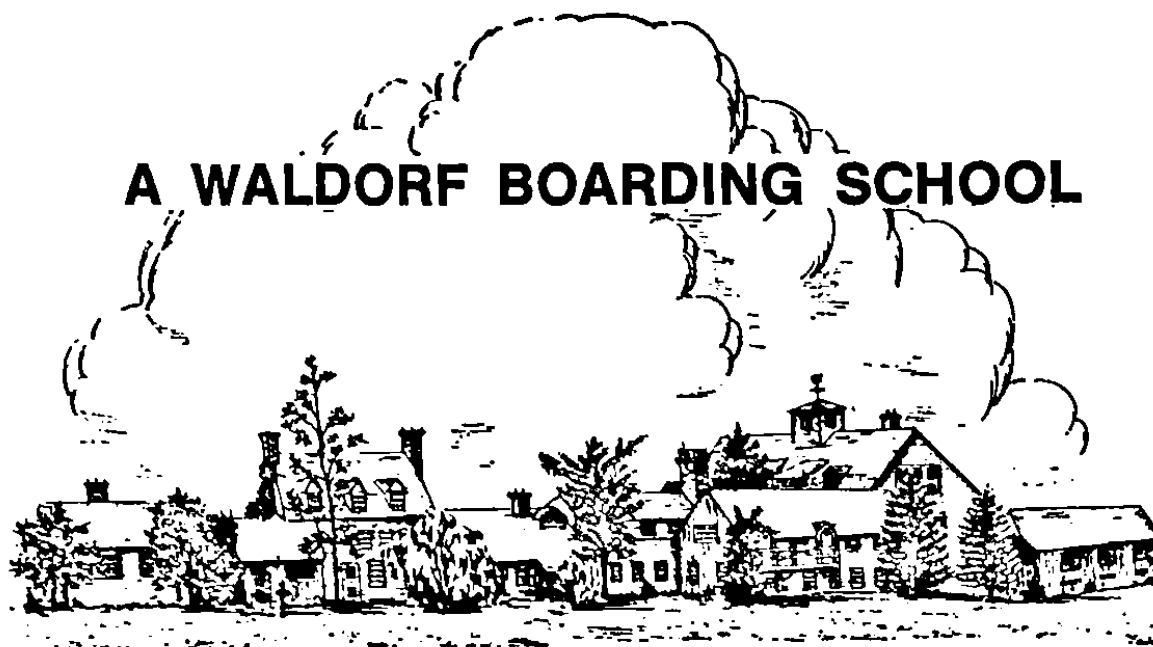
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