

Waldorf Journal Project #13

February 2009

AWSNA

Educating the Will

Compiled and edited by

David Mitchell

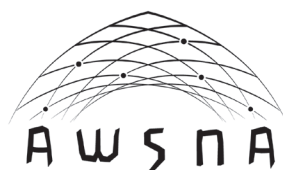
The education of the will is the object of our existence.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

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Gratitude is expressed to Christof Wiechert and the Pedagogical Section for allowing us to reprint these papers delivered during the World Teachers' Conference at the Goetheanum at Easter 2008.

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FOREWORD

The *Waldorf Journal Project*, sponsored by the Waldorf Curriculum Fund, brings translations of essays, magazine articles, and specialized studies from around the world to English-speaking audiences. This thirteenth edition contains several translations from the 8th Waldorf World Teachers' Conference in Dornach, Switzerland.

In the first article Christoph Wiechert addresses the development of the will forces during the first three seven-year cycles and how each of these three cycles needs the appropriate application of the teacher's will forces. He stresses that in the first seven-year cycle the teacher needs to hold back his own will forces, to allow the space for the young child's joy in discovery. In the second seven-year cycle the teacher must become as one with the subject while at the same time identify with the being of each individual child. In the third seven-year cycle, the high school teacher must identify professionally with his subject matter. Through both his personality and his professional competence he provides the students with important directions for later in their life.

Claus-Peter Röh writes about his personal experience as a class teacher. He gives a picture of how, in comparison to children of ten years ago, children today are much more awake, as observed in the kinds of questions they ask. They are highly sensitive and the teacher feels the enormous task and the daily responsibility through his mood, attitude, and way of speaking. Röh explains how the forces of the children in the second seven-year cycle can completely immerse into the artistic element and these forces work as "redeeming" for those children awakened too early. Through the artistic medium judgment and concepts become living realities, and it serves to enliven the questions of the children, as well. These questions give the teacher an immense inner challenge. "Where does the sun get the power to make everything grow?" "Which story is actually true (Biblical Genesis or the Nordic creation myths)?" "Does Zeus know Thor?" To give the right answers to these kinds of questions the teacher needs to be an educational artist.

Betty Staley writes about the strengthening of the will forces which are being freed up in the third seven-year cycle. Strong powers of media—movies, computer games, music, and the advertising industries—are absorbing the free will forces of the adolescent. Staley gives a picture of how the upper school pupils can develop inspiration and enthusiasm if they are allowed to participate in their own learning process and where the curriculum is not

overly prescriptive. Frequently the teacher is teaching passive students and as such we are robbing the pupils of their will forces. It is also important that teachers and pupils celebrate the fruits of their labor together. During the last day of the main lesson there need not always be a final test or exam but instead a joyful presentation of the achieved work.

A teacher complained to a colleague that a pupil in the eleventh class was reading the newspaper during his poetry main lesson. When the pupil was called on this behavior by the colleague, the student answered that she wanted to know if there were any great modern poets today; the teacher replied, “None that I know of....” Such answers are paralyzing to the will of the young people! Our lessons must be real. Real situations require real answers.

A teacher gave his pupils the task in an architecture main lesson to find the worst and the most beautiful corners, with regard to architecture, in the neighborhood where they lived and to contemplate what the differences between them were. Out of this work there arose a communal plan for the renewal of local parks that was so impressive it was handed over to city planners. Such projects strengthen and awaken the will of the young adults—for if we are not able to change things in our immediate surroundings, how can we change the world?

Is there something that is still unborn within me? Or am I complete? Hartwig Schiller’s lecture addresses such serious questions in life, with regard to developmental power of soul. When one looks back on one’s life, such reflection opens more possibilities for life itself because our will forces are more connected to the earth. The purest human forces are strongest in childhood. The adult on the other hand must make a conscious effort in his own inner development to come closer to his higher “I” and be inwardly moved by the question of how far one has not yet realized his or her pre-birthly intentions. Schiller looks at the development of the plant and compares it to the cycle of life: germinating seed, growth, flower, pollination, maturity/ripeness. Human life cannot be comprehended as a cycle or even a spiral but rather as a moving lemniscate that also considers as a reality the time spent in the spiritual world between death and rebirth.

The closing lecture by Heinz Zimmermann, not included in this collection, has the theme of self development. Thinking has the tendency to lame and kill; this creates a tendency for the will to be blind. In puberty one finds a natural idealism, a longing for the higher “I.” The adult has to consciously strive for this idealism, this higher “I.” Self development is mainly a question of will. The life forces in idealism can be achieved when the will forces enliven dead thinking and, in reverse, the will can be enlightened by thinking. One can come close to the reality of such a process when one meditates on the stones, the plants and the animals. The mineral is dead, completely selfless and transparent. The animal is alive but pure instinct; the plant is selfless and alive—these can be taken as pictures of the higher self, the pure “I” (Rosicrucian Meditation). Schiller writes, “One must willingly become like the selfless plant.”

Dirk Cysarz writes about rhythm as a force for regeneration and health. He describes several human rhythmic cycles and expounds on the importance of sleep as a preparation for learning new material. This article complements his research on rhythms in *Waldorf Journal Project #12*. Together with a team of university experts, he has carried out fascinating research on the effects of the hexameter in recitation.

Three essays which follow are not directly connected with the 8th World Conference at the Goetheanum, but are, nevertheless, important for our consideration. The first is by Van James. He addresses the fine arts and how they awaken consciousness as well as act as a humanizer for society. The paper is an amalgamation of presentations from a three-day conference in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Christopher Clouder's essay is about the dangers of early literacy that childhood faces today. At this stage of development, the forces of wonder are alive and active, and one can experience them in the pure joy expressed by the young child. The teacher must consciously reconnect with these same forces in herself. She must rediscover the child within herself and rekindle the accompanying joy and enthusiasm. In our modern society the developmental period of childhood as a whole is under attack—one can witness it daily through the intrusion of media, advertising, over-intellectualization, the poor quality of toys, and so forth. It is our task as educators to protect a healthy childhood and to bring renewed consciousness to the true needs of this age group.

Dr. Rainer Patzlaff defends the developmental period of childhood and describes in an astonishing manner how the media are actually robbing us of the ability to properly develop speech and subsequently threaten social emotional health. He describes how each sound possesses an inherent characteristic shape through movement with photographs taken with a "Toepler" device of smoke emitted while speaking a specific letters. This article is important for all teachers and most especially for kindergarten and lower grade teachers.

Dr. Caroline von Heydebrand concludes this *Journal Project* with a description of painting and children. We hope that you will be both informed and inspired by these writings.

All the articles are available on-line at
<http://www.waldorflibrary.org>

For those not interested in downloading the material, inexpensive spiral bound copies are available from:

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The editor is interested in receiving your comments on the articles selected. We would also be interested in hearing what areas you would like to see represented in future *Waldorf Journal Projects*. If you know of specific articles that you would like to see translated, please contact the editor.

– David Mitchell, editor
Waldorf Journal Projects

AWAKENING THE SPIRITUAL POWERS OF THE HEAD: EDUCATING THE WILL

by

Christof Wiechert

translated by Steffi Castri

The three tasks which are set forth for future teachers at the end of the *Study of Man* are:

*Imbue thyself with the power of imagination,
Have courage for the truth,
Sharpen thy feeling for responsibility of soul.*

In these three admonitions the beautiful, the true and the good may be recognized as three basic attitudes. At this point we can experience how close pedagogy is to general human nature, which Steiner describes as the field of activity for the Anthroposophical Society. Then there was an account of how the beautiful, the imagination, is placed between the true and the good, between truth and responsibility. It is not hard to recognize how the soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing shine through here.

At the last World Teachers' Conference (2004), we concerned ourselves with feeling, with the beautiful, with imagination, in fact. Now we intend to turn our attention to the question of thinking and of willing in education. In order to establish a basis for this we need to pose the question about the relationship of body, soul and spirit within the human being.

Let us consider the threefoldedness of man in a very general way. We can say thinking is bound to the head more than anything else. How does the head formation of the young child present itself? We have this powerful experience of a newborn baby, how relatively complete, how developed, how sound the head strikes us as being. All the rest is still much like an appendage. This fact is pointed out in the *Study of Man*, when the head is portrayed as being 'wholly body.' It is a body in which the soul is concentrated but still completely in a state of half awareness or dreaming, whereas the spiritual part is still in the night of unconsciousness.

The developing child is enabled, just because it is not yet awake in its soul and spirit, to be present with its soul-spiritual nature in its surroundings in the same way as the person sleeping is not present [sic] with his soul-spiritual nature in his body. This enables the child to enter into a relationship with its surroundings and thus start practicing imitation too; this is a really special learning process, which takes place with the person in a ‘dreaming’ state.

It is different with the rhythmic man. This aspect of the human being, the chest, we must think of as body-soul from the outset; we should not consider it primarily as bodily nature as with the head, but as body and soul nature from the start. The child still has the spirit outside itself as in a dreaming state. In this respect, Steiner gave the kindergarten teachers an important task, which sounds initially like a riddle: “When we observe a child in his early years, we see clearly that the chest organs, as contrasted with the head organs, are much more awake and more living.”

If we behold the human being in his limb system, then we experience how spirit, soul and body are interwoven with one another and interconnected,

[T]hey all flow into one another. Moreover it is here that the child is first fully awake, as those who have to bring up these lively, kicking little creatures in their babyhood very well know. Everything is awake, but absolutely unformed. This is the great secret of man: when he is born his head spirit is already very highly developed, but asleep. His head soul, when he is born, is very highly developed, but it only dreams. The spirit and soul have yet gradually to awaken. The limb-man is indeed fully awake at birth, but unformed, undeveloped.

All we have to do really is to develop the limb-man and part of the chest-man. For after that it is the task of the limb-man and chest-man to awaken the head-man. Here we come to the true function of teaching and education. From this you will see that the child brings something of great consequence to meet you. He meets you with a perfected spirit and relatively perfected soul, which he has brought through birth. All you have to do is to develop that part of his spirit which is not yet perfect, and that part of his soul which is as yet still less perfect. If this were not so, real education and teaching would be utterly impossible. The thing we can accomplish best in our teaching is the education of the will, and part of the education of the feeling life.¹

We may justifiably consider this characterization as a mighty sea change in education and in educational theory, even today. For, how strong is

1. Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man*, Lecture 11, paragraphs 7–9, GA 293.

the conviction of people in general that in education we have to concern ourselves primarily with the head! Learning as a head activity, which then leads to developing children's abilities, that is, top-down. Steiner turns it on its head and says education in the second seven-year period goes bottom-up, via the limbs, via the soul. It is through involvement, through interest that the spiritual powers of the head (*Kopfgeist*) are awakened.

It really is an awakening and this is shown by the following fact. As a class teacher one will have 'taught' many children to read. However, if we look more closely at the process involved, then one has probably not caught the moment of actual learning with a single child. As a rule what we perceive is, all at once they can do it. It is an awakening, resulting from an activity, from enthusiasm.

It is a matter of course that this kind of learning holds sway until the moment when the ability to learn is emancipated through the awakening of the powers of judgment. Then the spiritual powers of the head are awakened and become active themselves. Then the will part no longer stems from the activating of the human being in his limb system, but rather lives in the will of the active thinking. This process takes place with the transition to the third seven-year period but is not completed as this period begins. It takes time. With one pupil this emancipation of the independent thinking faculty through the use of the powers of judgment might come about quickly, with another pupil it takes more time. With the one it becomes a really lucid and bright faculty, with another it remains connected to the warmth processes of the will. This development is the target and focus of the approach which Steiner gives us concerning pupils with rich or poor imaginations: Either the thinking, the conceptualizing is more reliant on itself or else it participates in the warmth processes, in the circulation.

Now we can put to ourselves two questions, if we want to consider these viewpoints in teaching. The first question is: What do the lessons of the child in the second seven-year period look like? How do we work in accordance with our teaching methods bottom-up and not top-down? The second question, which we have already touched upon in part, is: What does this mean for the first seven-year period, and what does it mean for the third?

Formation of the Human Figure—Life Development

As to the first question, there is a special indication in the above-mentioned lecture. The most important part of the first seven-year period is the *formation of the human figure*, which proceeds from the head, a process which draws to a close with the change of teeth. The body has taken on its shape, 'hardened' by the formative forces, which have been 'poured into the body.' This human figure will still grow in size, yet in the wholeness of its shape, it is present in its conception. The head is not only the starting-point for nearly all children's illnesses, it is also the portal through which the formative forces pour into the body. What significance does that have

for education and upbringing in this period? It means that everything we do with the children, so to speak, is brought towards them from outside. We do not call upon their inner nature, on their soul life. In the kindergarten the field of activity is the whole being of the child, but shaping it, forming it, so to speak, from outside. This can be observed in free play where the outer framework is created. Through the shaping of space and time, conditions are created by means of which the whole child can be formed, be shaped. It is a holistic process.

Once this is completed, a new development is embarked on, that of life development. This does not start from the head, but from the chest system of the person.

Once the child has reached the stage of school readiness, the second spurt of growth sets in; he or she begins to stretch, to grow. This phase of stretching is followed by a phase of filling out, in short, 'becoming big' is a central subject of conversation at this age. When this phase of growth comes to a temporary halt around the eleventh or twelfth year, the child's approach to learning changes.

If it is the task in the first years of the lower school not to disturb this growth, then we will notice how roughly from class 5 or 6, on a freer approach to learning comes about. The span of interests increases noticeably and more can be learned. However learning is always embedded in the processes of growing and nourishing, of experiencing the world, of sleeping and waking. All these processes, all this breathing, is orientated towards the middle. The human being in his chest system, the being of feeling, the breathing person, forms the center and the orientation for child education in this period. The educator is now working mainly on the inner nature of the child. The child is no longer reached from without; rather, the key to the child lies within, in its inner life, not in its powers of consciousness, but in its 'powers of feeling.'

When the human being in the making reaches the third seven-year period, the powers of judgment start to unfold. If Steiner speaks in the above-mentioned lecture about the formation of the human figure and the shaping of life, we could say for the third stage: the *shaping of the soul*. In the upper school now, the pupil is seeking the way from within to without. The teacher 'calls forth' this shaping of the soul through the presence of his ego, which finds its expression through thinking, feeling and willing taking on an increasingly personal character.

These are ideas which provide an orientation. If we are filled with such thoughts, this has an effect on our every day teaching life. We now have a basis which will empower us to ponder the question about the development of the will and of thinking throughout the various stages of development.

Author: *Christof Wieckert is the head of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.*

WAKE UP YOUR HEAD SPIRIT: AT EYE LEVEL

by

Tobias Richter

translated by Anja Reglin

Christof Weichert referred to the 11th lecture in the *Study of Man* and observed that Rudolf Steiner's arguments are difficult to grasp—he even predicted increasing difficulties. So—shall I give up working on it immediately or shall I accept the challenge? I will risk it! The outcome is open....

Let us turn to the *Study of Man*, page 149. First, Steiner describes the different relations of head-man, chest-man and limb-man to the world of spirit and soul. Then I read a question:

What relation has the bodily head to the soul and spirit?

Now there are answers and explanations: In our head nature we have a very highly developed body, a dreaming soul—a truly dreaming soul—and a spirit that is still asleep.

The characteristic feature of this development up to the change of teeth is that man is an imitative being. He imitates everything that he sees going on around him. He is able to do this because his head spirit is asleep. For things are essentially different in the chest... It is not solely body, as is the head, it is body and soul; but its spirit is still dreaming and outside of itself. With the limbs it is different again. Here from the first moment of life spirit, soul and body are intimately connected... moreover it is here that the child is first fully awake... Everything is awake, but absolutely unformed...

Well, I have read the answers; I got the information....The part about imitation seems quite obvious: While asleep, my consciousness is not present in this world but in another one. Instead of being centered, my consciousness is floating in the periphery. This throws a light on imitation: It is not simply a repetitive movement but a movement that brings me into contact with the original, connects me to it. [The German word *nachahmen* (to imitate) is related to the German *einmessen* (to fit), and both words have their root in the Middle High German word *ame*, or *ome*, an old meter for 'liquids.' —trans.]

Without having experienced the same insight in similar statements by Steiner, I read on—maybe it will still happen? Nothing has happened—but now I read: You have to develop the limb-man and part of the chest-man, and then let this limb-man and part of the chest-man awaken the other part of the chest-man and the head-man. (GA 293, S 161 ff) Now it is getting serious. This concerns me as a teacher! I have to try and find some insight—maybe the light of perception will still be kindled?

I start by asking the question:

What do I know about “spirit” and “soul”?

Soul

- a) sensations connected to my senses
- b) my inner world (which is my own): thinking – feeling – willing
– connected to my being and tied to it
- c) mediator between body and spirit—the ‘I’ as center uses the soul, expresses itself through the soul—but its home is in eternity.

Spirit

The eternal may be experienced in and through thinking, opposite to the physical world, and therefore transcendental. But “all things were created through the eternal spirit.” The metaphor of light: Eternal light enlightens the soul. If the soul turns to the spirit and strives to penetrate its truth, i.e. is “drawn by the light,” then the ‘I’ has its home in the eternal light and is searching it.

And now we look at the different states of consciousness (well known from the 6th lecture):

awake:

centered consciousness – light – belongs to thinking

asleep:

consciousness floating in the periphery – devotion – unconscious
– not grasping any sensations – darkness – weaving through the willing

dreaming:

half conscious – creating images – the dawn of consciousness
– comparable with feeling

In the 11th lecture Steiner speaks about the small child, so we have to focus our attention there if we look at the threefold man.

head-man:

form-oriented, housing the far reaching senses (seeing, hearing, smelling) and the senses of balance and task. Especially

the first three are turned to the periphery—i.e. in-flowing,
 – impressing understanding and interpretation are
 not yet developed. No reflecting consciousness.

chest-man:

heartbeat and breathing are functioning, but not regularly, their
 rhythm is influenced by impressions and feelings: a constant
 change between in and out.

limb-man:

bodily unformed, active, any progress in learning becomes visible
 (gripping, crawling, going) the impulse to move comes
 from the outward (surroundings)—but there is an active will to be
 a part of the world.

Finally I try to work out a scheme. A scheme will serve me well, I think—
 (but life is out there...)!

	awake	dreaming	asleep
body	(head)		
	chest-man		
	limb-man		
soul	chest-man	head-man	
	limb-man		
spirit	limb-man	chest-man	head-man

But why do I expect you to read all this hints, catchwords and half-done
 sentences? Certainly because of my hesitation, uncertainty about my ability
 to write something “proper” about this theme, but mainly because I would
 like to show you how my attention was drawn to my first encounter with
 Steiner’s statements:

Either: That’s it! What? (Leave me alone with any question. It is
 like this and that’s it!) Convinced about the truth of the statement
 – sleep – satisfying darkness

Or: No understanding – a sense of dissatisfaction – dawn – then
 back to darkness

Now working on it:

Think about it, look for an explanation to clear it, try to understand
 – work of the ‘I’ – it is getting light (or a bit lighter...). I have
 woken myself; I had to do it myself. The impulse came from the
 outside, but to wake up—a lonely business.

The teacher (in this case Rudolf Steiner) gave the “material” and in this
 way gave the impulse to awaken. Everything else has to be done on my

own. So I have (once more) explored Steiner as an educator, who, of which he is talking, provokes in the listener (reader).

But now to school: Let us presume that a child is waking up. It has been raised by its limb-man (it has played, done eurythmy, drawn, knitted...) and by part of its chest-man (it has felt the quality of music, colors, forms, numbers...). But now we have to realize this awakening because it is not always accompanied by enthusiastic outbursts. We are lucky if we see in a child's eyes or in a changed attitude¹—and sometimes the child keeps it hidden. Only if I know it myself—this waking up—will I be able to sense it in a child or a youth.

One will only recognize a quality that one has achieved one's self. That's what I called "eye level" in my title: a welcome to the child. This "welcome" creates a feeling of coming home—I have arrived, I am here, I am present! But then we come to the next question: How do we work with the awakened head-spirit? Do we just go on like before?

Being the teachers we are...another self examination: An epoch is successfully finished—the concept has worked smoothly, so we repeat the successful concept and not only once (and here I always use this example): What about our wakefulness—the one that springs from—uncovering something and bringing to light? Obviously it also works the other way round: What is awake has a tendency to go back to sleep. Is this an ability that we have to develop again and again—on each new level?

1. Now I would like to give you a little example:

In class 7 we had for some time practiced discussions (as a little prep-school to dialectics). Each new speaker had to repeat the previous speaker's statements before he or she came to his own. One pupil started by saying, "My objection to your statement is...", while he made a rolling gesture towards himself with his hand without realizing it. Suddenly a girl student looked at me, imitated a few times and whispered, "Objecting, objecting" Then she smiled because she had discovered something. [Translator's note: The German word for *objection*, to *object* is *Einwand*, *einwenden*, which translated literally means "to roll in" or "turn in."]

Author: *Tobias Richter has been a Waldorf teacher for many years. Currently he is the school adviser in Zagreb and does teacher training in Croatia and Vienna.*

AWAKEN THE SPIRIT OF THE HEAD: PYRAMIDS AND STARS

by

James Pewtherer

“You mean that the pyramids in Egypt are a kind of imitation of Orion’s Belt?” This is just the kind of question that I hope for as a high school history teacher. Such a question, asked by a 10th grade student in ancient history class, opens up the world to a deeper inquiry than often comes from merely reciting the attributes which made the pyramids at Giza one of the seven wonders of the world. As extraordinary as these edifices are in their precision and their engineering, one does not want the observations to end there. In Waldorf education, we want our high school students to ask themselves, “What is the question which this phenomenon is asking of me? What are its secrets?”

As Waldorf teachers, we want to awaken the children to the world around them. This is in part a world of phenomena and of facts and figures, but as importantly, it is a world which has behind it realities which are to be found beyond the sense perceptible itself. This means bringing our students to the point that they, as a matter of course, feel that their inquiry is incomplete if they haven’t delved below the surface. Clearly, that challenges us as teachers to go beyond the “facts” as related by the standard sources of knowledge. When only materialistic thinking is considered valid, deeper insights are sacrificed. It is at this point of inquiry that the difference is to be distinguished between a teacher in a Waldorf or Steiner school and a teacher working out of most other forms of education.

In virtually everything which Rudolf Steiner wrote or spoke about, he challenged his audience to look at what they thought they knew and then to take a second look at such knowledge. This was not just for the sake of being different. Rather, he was asking his readers and listeners to change the very way they thought, recognizing that even anthroposophists are a product of their times and their culture. True education of children requires that we teachers help them to overcome modern prejudices, right down into the very way that a human being thinks and feels and acts. Instead of falling asleep to the unexamined biases that are so much a part of a materialistic worldview that we no longer notice them, the Waldorf educator gives the

child a way of learning that is a deeper mode of inquiry. Steiner was, we might say, asking us to “awaken the spirit of the head.”

One example of this is found in the last two lectures (of a series of three) which he gave to the teachers at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart on October 16, 1923. In the volume entitled *Deeper Insights into Education: The Waldorf Approach (Erziehung und Unterricht aus Menschenerkenntnis, GA 302a)*, Steiner gives a marvelous description of the role of carbon in the human being. He describes how the carbon which is inside the human being combines with oxygen, rises up from the lungs towards the head, and creates a kind of sparkling effervescence which stimulates a lively thinking activity. In contrast, carbon is also related to will activity when it tends downward in the body and combines with nitrogen on the way to becoming cyanide gas. In the latter case, he explains, this process is actually arrested before it can form poison and instead it allows the will to take hold of the muscles and bring about activity. Such a description challenges the teacher to ask of himself, “How should I teach in order to effectively use such knowledge?”

Here we meet anthroposophy at a point at which it is both method of inquiry and content. It is at these moments that we actually become spiritual scientific researchers, stretching ourselves beyond what we are by nature and by academic training. In other words, we become co-creators of the education. We, the teachers, have to be inwardly active in order to help the students to be inwardly active themselves.

In his explication of this methodology in these lectures, Steiner points out that carbon is more than a substance to be weighed and measured. He calls on the teachers to use this knowledge in an inwardly mobile way:

One who simply knows how diamonds, graphite, and coal appear in nature outside the human being, and goes no further than that, will not teach in a very lively way. If one knows, however, that carbon in coal, in graphite and so on, also lives within man as a substance metamorphosed; that on the one side it acts only in death-bringing compounds and on the other only in compounds of resurrection; if one speaks not only of the metamorphoses of carbon, which in the various stages of the earth’s evolution produced diamond, coal, and graphite; if one realizes that there are different kinds of metamorphosis of carbon in man, which can become inwardly alive, can be spiritualized, can mediate between death and life; if one understands this, one has in this understanding an immediate source of inspiration. (pg. 43)

Our task, then, is to approach our subject, whatever it is, in a way that will give the students an opportunity to experience with openness. That means that we, too, must bring the phenomenon, idea, or concept which we want to bring them with the greatest openness. I must be prepared to discover something new in my subject, even if I have taught it ten or fifteen times. This is what Steiner means by inward mobility.

And the pyramids at Giza? I discovered a volume which suggests other explanations of these wonders than what is the commonly given.¹ The authors suggest that, while the dates when the pyramids were built are accurate (2589–2504 BCE), the siting of the structures on the River Nile predates this considerably. As part of this theory, they call into question the age of the great Sphinx at Giza, pointing to circumstantial evidence that it is not contemporary with the pyramids, but far older. They note that the gaze of the Sphinx is directed at a point on the horizon at which the constellation Leo would have been rising at about 12,000 BCE. They contend that this is the time frame when the sacred precinct at Giza was laid out. To test their idea, Hancock and Bauval recreated the placement of the stars and constellations to this same time period of the 12th millennium BCE. The shape of the heavens and the placement of the Milky Way at this time created something of a mirror of the Nile. One had the Nile, an earthly river, below and the Milky Way, a heavenly river, above. And what notable constellation would have been on the “banks” of the Milky Way? The constellation Orion was right there, with its three stars of Mintaka, Alnilam, and Alnitak forming the easily recognizable belt of the hunter.

If we lead the students this far, then it is not too big a jump for someone to ask the question with which I began this essay. At some point, the juxtaposition of facts begs for a study of the placement of the three Great Pyramids on the ground next to the Nile. One finds that there is indeed a correspondence in position relative to the two “rivers”: as above, so below. This in turn begs for an artistic rendering in which the Nile disappears at a point on the horizon of the earth as the Milky Way touches the same point on the earth and appears to flow into the sky on its heavenly course.

Clearly this finding of relationship cannot be more than a hypothesis at this stage of our modern knowledge. But the important point here is that the students look behind the given theories in order to test the thinking in them even as they develop their own powers of reasoning. They need to know that not all the things of the world are understood. They need to know that there are discoveries to be made in spite of all that we think that we already know as citizens of the 21st century. As teachers, we should not be taking Steiner’s ideas as gospel either. But when we can take them as hypotheses and as stimuli for more observation and thinking on our part, then we become authentic Waldorf educators. It is this which Steiner means when he exhorts us to “awaken the spirit of the head” and “to develop the will.”

1. *The Message of the Sphinx: A Quest for the Hidden Legacy of Mankind*, Hancock, Graham and Bauval, Robert. NY: Three Rivers Press (Random House), 1996.

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MAN'S WILL IS HIS KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

by

Hartwig Schiller

translated by Steffi Castri

Some statements about the conditions of present-day education are so general and omnipresent that they hardly seem to need closer scrutiny or verification. According to the subject matter concerned, they cause synchronously anxious faces, merriment with meaningful glances or dismayed helplessness.

We will find such general agreement, for example, in relation to the prevalence of the complaint about modern youth's weakness of will; no less widespread is the complaint about their egoism and the accompanying personality cult. Archilochos, the first historically established poet of Greek antiquity, who lived roughly from 680 to 640 BC on the Cycladian island of Paros, had a differentiated view of human will in that he distinguished it from the divine will, as follows:

Mortal Man is limited.

In Glaucos, Leptine's son, bound to die
A mighty will is stirring, which for Zeus
Suffices for a mere day, and a thinking power,
That is only the measure of its field of working.

And Horace, the poet who lived just before the turning point of time, points in one of his Letters to this greater will, which lasts for longer than just a day:

What keeps the sea within its shores? What orders the course of
the year?
Do the stars roam and wander by themselves or are they driven by
some will?
What conceals the moonlight from us and then fills the disc anew?

Human will and divine will differ in their scope, their strength and their effectiveness, yet not in relation to their being as a force. Archilochos

draws our attention to the difference in quantity, but, what is more, the difference in quality of human and divine will by characterizing the scope of consciousness of the 'human being, bound to die.' His is a will initiative that is merely 'a measure of its field of working.'

This is the relationship of wills addressed by Christ's words on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They turn against the World Spirit because they do not recognize Him, although He is in their midst. Their will is blind. It works out of unconscious drives. This puts in a nutshell the goal of development for the human will, which is meant to awaken from its blindness and learn to see.

In his essay about 'the experiment as the mediator between object and subject,' Goethe describes this new will quality and how it arises in a most meticulous way. He names it as a quality of an 'impartial and, so to speak, divine being,' a developed human being, who faces the world in a collected and measured way in the Platonic sense. This person considers and orders things no longer simply 'in relation to himself,' not according to "whether they please or displease him, whether they attract or repel him, whether they benefit or harm him." To begin with, this is completely justified and necessary for a person's life. "Nevertheless, with this approach, man is prey to thousands of errors, which will often bring him shame and make life bitter for him."

Instead, the person should "look at and view everything with an even, calm gaze in a way that connects the qualities of will and consciousness, and take the standard for this knowledge, the data to be judged, not from himself, but from the range of things that he is observing."

It was with good reason that Rudolf Steiner placed the beginning of this essay unabridged at the beginning of his book *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man*. With the question of the will is bound up the question of human life, the question of the awareness of one's own humanity, one's destination and self-realization.

For this reason, in an educational context, it is not simply a matter of more will or as much will as possible; it is about the quality of the will. And this cannot be established without its relationship to the powers of consciousness. For the human project to be realized, will and consciousness are inseparably interlinked.

Etudes, Spiritual Exercises and Work

The *Study of Man* portrays the formulation of this question. In Lecture 4 the fundamental rule of the education of the will is discussed first: "You direct the impulse of the will aright, not by telling a child once what the right thing is, but by getting him to do something today and tomorrow and again the day after."

An action of this sort must be made into a habit. The more it becomes an unconscious habit, the better it is for the development of the feeling; the

more conscious a child is of doing the action repeatedly, out of devotion, because it ought to be done, because it must be done, the more you are raising the deed to a real impulse of will. A more unconscious repetition cultivates feeling; fully conscious repetition cultivates the true will impulse, for it enhances the power of resolution, of determination.

Consciously repeated actions belong in the domain of exercises. In the realm of art they are called *etudes*, in the realm of religion, *religious exercises*. They lead into the domain of self-discipline or asceticism. Every task carried out regularly, carefully and responsibly constitutes an exercise at heart and belongs in this context.

The theme of work is, therefore, discussed towards the end of the *Study of Man*, in Lecture 13. The distinction is made between *meaningless* and *meaningful* work. Meaningless work, so it says, comes to expression in “senseless, unintentional movements, coming simply from the body.” By contrast, the human being is active in a meaningful way “when he acts in accordance with the demands of his environment and not merely in accordance with those of his own body.” Thus, meaningful will activity is not possible without the involvement of conscious awareness. For what the environment requires must be gauged and understood, whereby our understanding can perfectly well be many-layered. The heart, the soul can instantly understand something for which the head needs a longer time.

At the end of the lecture, Steiner says, “We must bring spirit into external work. We must bring blood into our inward, intellectual work! Think over these two statements, and you will see that the first is of significance both in education and social life, and that the second is of significance both in education and in hygiene.”

The Connection between the Soul Activities

What must be of central importance for education is to develop strength of will and conscious awareness in a harmonious relationship. An education of the will, which is not yet in a healthy relationship to the middle and the upper aspects of the human being, would bring about a terrible distortion of human nature.

In Lecture 8 of the *Study of Man*, Steiner summarizes in a differentiated way how the human being in his three-foldedness can be recognized:

- The spirit must be grasped by means of conditions of consciousness such as waking, sleeping and dreaming.
- The soul in man is grasped by means of sympathy and antipathy.
- And the body is perceived through conditions of form.

In the spiritual realm the will possesses the element of sleep, with the soul, the element of sympathy, and in the body, the element of the radiating form of the limbs. According to the way it is centered, a one-sidedly dominating will takes on definite characteristics that distort the human qualities.

If the bodily connection predominates, the will becomes instinctive. If the soul nature comes to the fore, the will shows itself in a range of

numerous changing forms that can stretch from desire and drive to tenderness and sensitivity. In this domain, the will possesses a somewhat moody nature and is not immune from one-sided characteristics such as sentimentality or unsparing severity. It lacks the strength to regulate itself. If the element of the intellect comes to the fore, phenomena will occur such as self-opinionatedness, stubbornness, fanaticism or fundamentalism. The essential thing is to unite the whole person—thinking, feeling and willing—and, according to the situation and through the strength of the ego, to put them into the right relationship, to become “master in our own house.” But how can that happen?

Praying and Blessing

Steiner points to logic in Lecture 9 of the *Study of Man*, saying that we, as teachers must bear the most important elements of it in ourselves. The most important elements do not consist of successfully completed philosophy seminars, but rather more in dealing with the most important elements of logic in the form of conclusion, judgment and concept as they apply to life. This is where the importance of the sequence comes in, on which the conscious life of the children practices. Children should not get definitions drummed into them as rigid, unalterable (in this sense), dead concepts, which they have to carry around in their souls as items on permanent recall for testing. This would mean feeding them with stones instead of bread.

Rather, the subject matter of the lessons—like all world matters—should be absorbed by them wide awake and joined up with what their souls are familiar with. This is linked with the digesting of experiences by the soul. The unknown is linked with the familiar, the rightness of the connection is judged and, thus, an early sense of familiarity is felt. Only when the complete background of the phenomena condenses into understanding and is illuminated do the children get a true grasp of the matter. This, in turn, means their attentiveness and thirst for knowledge are satisfied and quietened. What has been grasped is readily allowed to sink into the depths of the soul; it rests there in the sleeping depths of consciousness, in easy proximity to the home territory of the will. Just as the need arises, the one or the other can be awakened. “Just engage your will with your heart and soul, that the way be not wanting to your goal,” as an old German saying has it. It is not sufficient to know about a goal, but the way to it has to be taken as well. Yet, following the way is connected with the depths of the soul, in which the will lives.

Popular wisdom knows a thing or two about the problematic connection of fixed ideas to will power, as another saying has it, “The streets of hell are paved with people’s good will” (good opinions, intentions). It is necessary to liberate the will from such deep-down obsessions which exercise a secret regime of terror over the individual. This is where the special mission of religious education comes in, although we need to first rid ourselves of the fallacy that being religious has something to do with religious creeds.

Insofar as religious matters occur as definitions, creeds or dogmas, they belong to the realm of the scholarly approach to religion. They then form the basis for theology or denominational commitments.

True religiousness dwells in another realm. It lives in the realm of devotion and worship, the chaste approach to what is higher. Gratitude, awe, humility can be expressions of genuine religious feelings. They are characterized by a powerful, inner strength of the person who experiences them, an inner strength which is not directed towards self-interest or advantage. It aims for an encounter with something higher, an encounter which has its own intrinsic worth. As such, it is the object and substance of prayer. True prayer does not want anything for itself; if it is a request, then it is an intercession, not begging for one's own advantage. Nonetheless, it is full of will substance. It is the highest form of composure and directedness at once. In a spiritualized form it corresponds to the physical limbs as will organs in their position of radiating out.

This realm is of central importance for the education of the will. The way and goal are united into something higher. With regular, consciously repeated practice, a will sphere comes about here, which is, at the same time, strength and quality, selfless strength. In childhood the impulse is given through instruction, through education. The child learns to focus his attention on the world in an unspoiled way according to his nature. He sees, hears, touches, asks about things, takes them in openly, without prejudice. He learns to make judgments in order to connect the unknown with the known, to approach things, not to distance himself. In the end, he connects himself to the being in the phenomena through grasping them with wonder and reverence. Thus, living concepts arise as a living relationship to the world. This does not remain without consequences for the individual's life and for social life. "If you succeed in giving the child concepts of reverence and devotion, living concepts of all that we call the mood of prayer in the widest sense, such a conception, permeated by the mood of prayer in the widest sense, is then a living conception and it lasts right into old age; and in old age it transforms itself into the capacity of blessing." With this comment from Lecture 9, Steiner announces that education of the will in accordance with human nature can not only promote a strong will but also a more human will.

A habit of the soul that has been practiced from childhood on will be transformed under the guidance of the sovereign ego in the course of life into selfless strength, which can go beyond the mere making of requests and can give at the same time. Into this strength everything will flow that has been gained in the course of life as knowledge from the world and from life. Knowledge is transformed into wisdom. And thus, the selfless counsel of an old man can work as a power of blessing in a social context.

Good Will Is Far-seeing

There are two considerations which must be taken into account in the education of the will. For one thing, it is a matter of fostering a strong, tenacious will. However, this kind of will could be very one-sided and unpleasant in its nature. For, just as it would be capable of bringing about several favorable qualities, so it could also spawn highly undesirable qualities such as obstinacy, stubbornness, ignorance and brutality.

Therefore, besides pure will power, we need to have our focus on the fostering of a humane, truly human will, i.e. a particular will quality. This will, though, may only be described by certain paradoxical characteristics. Although it derives from the sleeping region of the soul, it is not blind but seeing. It does not want anything—in any case, not anything for itself—even though it wills with the greatest intensity that can be developed. It is engaged in acting and perceiving simultaneously. It combines conscious awareness with interest and action, which, with the involvement of such a will, can unite to become wisdom, love and strength. This will does not only know how to will something in the usual sense; it knows how to renounce, to overcome itself. Thus, out of willing the power of sacrifice arises. The result is the realization of a will quality, which can be characterized as human in the highest sense and which possesses divine nature. It is through it that man changes from being a *creature* to being a *creator*. It makes him a human being.

Starting with the quality of this will puts the question about modern youth's weakness of will in an entirely new light. It could be that today's youth do not want some of the things that earlier generations wanted and what counted as weakness for earlier generations does not count as weakness for them. Maybe not everything that is interpreted as such by older people is disillusioned and cool. Possibly, the youth of the present day have experiences of encounters with this new strength of will for humanity, which earlier generations were ignorant of and the absence of which has produced much suffering.

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ARTISTIC ACTIVITY — INDIVIDUAL RESONANCE — NEW PATHS

by

Claus-Peter Röh

translated by Steffi Castri

If we regard the children who start school in the first grade from the perspective of the threefold man, we see that the forces of the limbs and those of the spirit are diametrically opposed. As the limb-man is already well developed, many children exhibit an instinctive joy in movement. This can result in considerable force of willpower and energy. It can, however, also lead to increased restlessness and readiness for distraction.

Other children are, at an early age, strongly gripped by the head-man's capacity for thought, so that, on the one hand, when awake, they are able to question and reflect much of what is perceived. On the other hand, because of the constant emphasis on alertness and thought-perceptiveness through the senses, they are in danger of losing the ability for direct imitation and the inner feeling for movement. As a consequence, these children, when drawing have trouble putting dynamic forms to paper which would enable a really good piece of work to be created.

In this span of tension between head and limb centeredness, many children are just at the very threshold of finding a home for their souls within themselves. Those children who still have to do battle for bodily health and a safe haven in their soul's centers, may exhibit symptoms of insecurity and fear.

These developmental tendencies extend a challenge to us and should we accept it and record and think about each child's individuality and consider it more alertly. This effort, affecting the described external phenomena, would lead us to the young person's invisible inwardness and spirituality. What is the aim to which the child's individuality strives—through the existing one-sidedness?

What is the inner measure which I, as the example-person/teacher, take with me into the classroom, in order to be a force for the development of health and harmony, working on the balance between the head, the chest-center and the limbs?

Although a person's limbs are not yet fully formed at birth, they are awake. By contrast, Rudolf Steiner describes the head spirit as follows: "This is the great secret of man: His head spirit is really very highly developed but it is still asleep.... He actually only needs to develop the limb-man and a part of the chest-man because it is then the task of the limb-man and the chest-man to awaken the sleeping head-man.... The very best which we can achieve by upbringing, is the development of the will, and to some extent, the development of the soul."¹

If we don't attempt to awaken the still sleeping head-man in a child by appealing to his intellect, but instead use the nether strengths, the will, the natural vitality for life and the soul "strength" of the chest-man, we involve the entire person in the process of learning. This gives that which is learned a richer, deeper quality.

This can be illustrated by the following example: Early one morning the class 2 teacher unlocks the classroom door. On the floor in front of the blackboard half of a mirror-image-form has been drawn in lovely, large, dynamic strokes. The first children have hardly entered the room before they are irresistibly drawn to the form on the floor. Before long, working in casual pairs, they begin walking the outline of the mirror-image-form, one child follows the drawn lines whilst the other walks the mirror-image. On completion of this activity, they change roles. It is most surprising, when watching the children, to notice the change which occurs in the children at the very moment when they really tackle the task with their force of will.

Governed by an inner impulse, a child is fully concentrated on the lines of the form and on his steps. Simultaneously, though, he straightens his whole frame and (as when balancing) makes light, tentative and completely natural compensatory movements with his hands. In this way, whilst concentrating on his own steps, the child is also aware of the surroundings and of the mirror-movements of the child walking opposite him.

A fixed point and its surroundings, the head-man and the limb-man are woven together in this activity by the strength of will and the concentrated surrender of the child to the activity. Here, in this educational activity, we find the four qualities, which, according to Chekov, define a work of art.²

Lightness, Form, Wholeness and Beauty

In the lesson which followed the walking of the form on the floor, the pupils practiced drawing the mirror-image in the air with their hands and then, finally, they drew the form on a large sheet of paper. All the children, even those with more intellectual leanings, were able to produce successful, clear, well-formed work. This is because the task was approached from below, through the force of the will. This method results in a deeper and broader understanding of the task at hand.

1. Rudolf Steiner. *Study of Man*, Lecture 7, GA 293.

2. Michael A. Chekov. *Die Kunst des Schauspielers*, Stuttgart, 2004, p. 87.

It is often these more intellectual children who, during and after the drawing of the form, make suggestions as to how the drawing could be developed further the following day. As a result of the art work these children can advance from being merely “observers” to being “participants” and finally “co-developers.”

The third important meaning of the “way of the will” lies in the healing effect it has on the young people. Health, from the health promoting point of view of Waldorf education, is not merely the opposite of being ill. “It is a state of being balanced which we must constantly strive to maintain.”³

It is right here, in the teaching-work in the lower school that the struggle for this balance becomes most evident. On every school day we are occupied with these ethereal-spiritual forces which develop the inner organs of the body. These forces are set free when the child loses his milk-teeth. Should we challenge the intellectual capacity of a child too early and one-sidedly, these forces may be depleted too soon. In this case, “those forces in the organism which consolidate a person internally come into play, i.e. the forces which deposit salt, those which deposit calcium and those which build bone...”⁴

In the measure in which the young school-going child isolates itself from the mirroring function of his experience and from that which is reflected by his surroundings and by life—if he insulates himself from the nature of the world around him, he experiences an impoverishment of the soul. The absolute opposite—namely, richness of the soul—can be experienced when a whole class of children takes up their crayons and creates a drawing or a colored form and exhibit a natural joy and energy while doing it. In a healthy upbringing, we strive neither for that which is one-sided, consolidating and stiffening emphasis on the intellect, neither for the rich but also one-sided artistic activity, but rather for that which allows the whole being to develop from artistic activity, through to thought and on to understanding. “Through the creative act one becomes rich and has the desire to dilute this richness to some extent. Then the artistic imagery turns of itself to the more meager concepts and development of ideas.... If, when one has gripped a the child’s attention with art-work, one can then let the intellectual disposition emerge, then the artistic activity has the correct intensity, so to influence the body that it doesn’t become too strong, but is correctly consolidated. You, in fact, impair a child’s growth if he is too intellectualized. On the other hand, however, you set the child’s growth free if you let him glide over from artistic activity to intellectual activity.”⁵

If we observe the children, the activity just described, and comprehend the “lung-capacity” required between the activation of the will in artistic

3. Rudolf Steiner. *Die pädagogische Bedeutung der Erkenntnis vom gesunden und kranken Menschen*, Vortrag v. 26.9.1921, GA 304.

4. Rudolf Steiner. *A Modern Art of Education*, Ilkley Course, GA 307.

5. Ibid., p. 125.

activity and on the way to reflective thinking, we soon recognize that every child breathes in an individual way.

For example, some time ago, a little girl in the 3rd class attracted the teacher's attention because she was gripped by a strong inner restlessness which made it impossible for her to integrate herself into the social community of the class. This child's activities in the playground during break became more and more difficult to cope with. However, at the same time, in art classes, she exhibited an increasing pleasure in drawing, and in particular, in achieving very special and careful changes of color. In this artistic activity she exhibited an individual resonance to the impulses given, and the teachers were able to see a future aspect of her ability and personality shining out behind the current difficulties.

She was, in fact, able to surmount the difficulties caused by her restlessness within the next few school years. Furthermore, she was able to find her way into the secure social stream of her class. If we discover the glow of individual resonance on the "Path of the Will" as just described, we have, on the one hand, the opportunity to expand and change our impression of the individual child. On the other hand, the appearance of this individual resonance (which usually appears suddenly in the middle of a lively teaching process) can totally change and renew the lesson planning. One finds the courage and sustenance to try out new plans through the deep and intensive encounters with individual pupils.

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BRINGING THE WILL INTO THINKING IN ADOLESCENCE

by

Betty Staley

As we teachers work with adolescents, we experience the changes they go through in relation to their thinking, feeling, and willing. With the freeing of the astral body, new possibilities occur which change the relationship between the adolescent and the world. It is as if the young person is thrown into the world without a sense of direction. Yet the world of the early 21st century is very different from the one we teachers entered during our own adolescence.

Our generation experienced the dropping of the atom bomb. From that time on, no generation in humanity would live in security; but there would always be the possibility that the earth could be destroyed. All the images from science fiction about the destruction of the planet could really come true. The movie *The Last Day* confronted our generation with the terrible things that could happen if there is nuclear war.

Today's generation is living with just as much insecurity, but in a different way. There is not so much the fear that an enemy could use a bomb to destroy the earth, but that we ourselves, we human beings are destroying the earth through our life style, through our greed for energy, for material goods, and for comfort. We have not only affected the extinguishing of species, but we are responsible for changing climate and geography. This is the condition that our young people face today.

Such a condition has several different influences on an adolescent's will forces. Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, is the movie of our students' generation. Because it is being shown all over the world, adolescents in many countries are united in their awareness of this dire situation. What kind of influence does this have on their will forces?

1. It could lame their will and create an attitude of despair:
"There is no sense in doing anything because nothing will change the situation. So, why bother?" Here the impulse is to escape and hide in video games, drugs and alcohol, or give way to depression.
2. It can create an attitude of selfishness: "Since it doesn't matter anyway, we might as well just enjoy life to the fullest. Live it up."

3. A third attitude might be denial. During the summer, 2007, a young Chinese woman told me, “China is being blamed for global warming. But you Westerners have had the benefit of all the goods for a long time. You contributed a lot to global warming. But now you want us to stop manufacturing goods and driving cars. Our generation is the first generation to live the way you do. We want our chance in the world also. Our parents and grandparents were affected by the Cultural Revolution. They had nothing. We want to drive cars, use cell phones, listen to our iPods, and be able to email people around the world. We want to travel. We want to be part of the world. How can you tell us to stop? How do we really know there’s a problem anyway?”
4. On the other hand, the adolescent could have an attitude of interest and concern and think of ways to contribute positively. Through thinking about the situation in a broad way, youngsters can feel a call to action for the benefit of humanity and the earth. They can become aware of using environmentally-friendly materials in their homes and schools, they can walk or ride a bicycle instead of driving a car (if possible). Youth in many schools and organizations are founding clubs to make changes in their schools and communities to address the situation.

In the first examples of despair, selfishness or denial, we see a kind of instinctive response, connected with survival. Their picture of the world is narrow, focused only on “me.” Unable to grasp a wider perspective, the youth’s attitude becomes limited and is open to fear and gloom, or only to self-satisfaction. If youth have a broader scope of thoughts and feelings, they can direct their will with purpose, resulting in courage and sensible optimism.

Global warming is just one example of the physical and psychological environment in which our teenagers live. There are other issues that affect them that have to do with their longing for meaning and truth in the world.

During early adolescence from fourteen to sixteen years old (9th and 10th grades), as youth come in contact with the world, it is often overwhelming. Carrying an inner picture of a time when everything seemed to be wonderful, the younger finds the world disappointing, frustrating, unjust, and ugly. Nothing seems to work right. They have stepped out of the sunlight into a world of shadows, and they long for perfection, for unity. In this discord, they lash out at the adults. “You have messed up the world. It’s all your fault.” Or, “No one understands me.” They are trying to understand the world, but it is not easy. They often adopt a negativity towards the world in which they live.

As teachers of adolescents, we have to develop for them a broader view of the contemporary world. Although at times we may become upset and

even overwhelmed ourselves by the pace of life, by rampant materialism, and by vulgarity and violence in the media, it is our challenge to find what is positive and cultivate interest and positivity. It is our responsibility to be fresh and vital. We need to delight in what is new, while at the same time being cognizant of the cost and benefit of each change.

If we develop this attitude, then our words and interest will continue to stimulate the will and feelings of adolescents so that their thinking is activated. We then become supportive partners with adolescents, encouraging them to develop their own answers rather than simply adopting or rejecting ours.

As students reach the next stage, roughly sixteen to eighteen years of age (11th and 12th grades), significant changes occur. From the neurological perspective, the prefrontal lobes of the brain are increasingly developed, allowing for a more mature grasp of life. Students begin to understand issues at a deeper level, understanding the consequences of actions and organizing their thoughts more carefully. The inner life of the soul is opening up to receive the “I” on the wings of the astral. At this time adolescents make their way into the world in a more positive manner. Rather than being confronted by the outer world and feeling hostile to it, they start to connect with aspects of the environment, striving to find a moral direction. They are more able to see the complexity of the world, find ways to accept it, and to compromise. They approach life from within outwards, as if their will is connecting with their feelings and awakening in their thinking. Their search for truth becomes intense, and they begin to identify mentors whom they admire. Their relationship with their teachers changes also. Rather than seeing them as good or bad, black or white, they are able to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of a teacher with compassion and even amusement. They respect those who understand their own need to be individuals and to think through problems as they strive to find their own answers. Many parents comment that their sons and daughters become more balanced and easy to get along with after sixteen.

When we teach a course in the high school, we never know how the students will be influenced by it. Each student has identified teachers whom he or she admires. Surprises do come as students reflect on their particular experiences. One twelfth grader casually commented to her mother, “That course on Faust was boring, but through it I found God.”

We have to be so careful not to try to make the students believe what we do. In *Soul Economy*, lecture XVI, Rudolf Steiner comments that we must allow morality to develop freely. In referring to questions of religion, he said, “Any attempt to indoctrinate the young in our own particular ideology [Christian, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Protestant] must be eradicated from the true art of education.”

This is a challenge to Waldorf schools, especially in the festival life of the school. Questions arise: Is the Waldorf school a Christian school? Why do you mainly celebrate Christian festivals? In the new multicultural environment in many countries, this question needs to be tackled in an open-minded way. It causes us to ask questions about the place of the school in

the community, what is traditional, what is universal. At the high school level, these questions are significant. With issues around fundamentalism frequently in the daily news, high school students benefit from a course in the world's major religions so that they can better understand the values of each religion and be respectful and interested in different streams, awakening to their own thoughts.

One of the main ways adolescents awaken to their thinking is through the curriculum. During this time, the adolescent meets the world through his or her intellect. All the living pictures that had previously been given in the lower school were seeds for this new understanding.

In *A Social Basis for Education, Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, Steiner makes suggestions about curriculum:

All instruction must give everything necessary for life.

From age 15 to 20, everything connected with agriculture, trade, industry, commerce will have to be learned. No one should go through these years without acquiring some idea of what takes place in farming, commerce and industry. All those subjects will be introduced such as world affairs, historical and geographical subjects, everything concerned with nature-knowledge, but all this in relation to the human being. . . . Instead of our gaze being turned back to the most ancient epochs of culture, which took their shape from quite different communal conditions, from the age of 14 or 15 upwards, when the sentient soul with its delicate vibrations is coming to life, the human being must be led directly to all that touches us most vitally in the life of the current time.

I have pondered these words many times. How do we balance bringing historical periods from the past and yet lead the students directly into their time. In his lectures (*Education for Adolescents*) to the teachers when the first Waldorf school was about to begin a tenth grade, Steiner suggested that we should always connect our lessons with the human being and with something that is happening currently. It is difficult sometimes to leave behind many of the exciting and interesting events that happened in ancient or medieval times, or even events from a century ago.

Perhaps we are teaching one of our favorite subjects or time periods, but the students don't seem to connect with it. When I taught American history, every time I told the students about John F. Kennedy, I could feel a throbbing in my own soul. Kennedy's life and death were critical events in my life, but for the students they were just another part of history. They could learn it in their heads, but their will forces were not stimulated. However, when I described what Kennedy meant to my generation, where I was when he was shot, how the deaths of John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy affected my contemporaries, the students became more interested because they could make a personal connection with me. When I went further and asked what events had occurred that would affect their

generation, they became excited and wanted to discuss this. Their will forces were involved, and their thinking was enlivened.

At different times over the last forty years, students' answers differed. When our high school in Sacramento started, it was the Vietnam War and Nixon's Watergate that affected them. Later other events were mentioned such as the death of John Lennon, the Gulf War, the use of the personal computer, Internet, robots and, of course, the Iraq War. Because of the war in Iraq, ancient history lessons on Mesopotamia and ancient Persia are more relevant to our students today.

Over the years students have complained about getting the same material that they had in lower school. They want something new. There is a benefit to revisiting material from the lower school, but it must be in a new way, a way that challenges students to ask deeper questions, to relate the familiar material to problems of our time. For example, when teaching a course on ancient history, the question of rivers and water supply is a central one that influenced the growth of a civilization. But what is the effect of rivers and water supply today? Why are dams being built to divert water and to produce hydroelectric power? How are these affecting changes in society today? How is the lack of water influencing the expansion of deserts, and what is the consequence of this? When the teacher relates the theme of the course to current issues, he or she is challenged to artistically shape the course so it has a clear focus and the central theme is not lost.

A teacher of 12th grade history of architecture did this successfully. After the students studied architecture at different times and places and had familiarity with architectural terms and concepts, they visited different locations in Sacramento to evaluate. They identified the ugliest areas and analyzed why that was so. Then they took one area not far from the school and had to design a town center for an area that had traditional suburban sprawl. This led to a project worked on in small groups. Students were motivated to design this project because it was real and it could lead to positive change in their community. Their projects were placed on exhibition in a public arena and were much appreciated.

Students are often taught about places far away and exotic, but their will is more activated when they connect with their local communities because it is the here and now. Each community is a microcosm of modern issues—land use, water resources, traffic, health issues, care for the elderly or homeless, schools, etc. Meeting with local specialists in each of these areas stimulates high school students to consider solutions to local problems. These are the streets they drive on, the public transportation they take, the stores they shop in, etc. If they become involved in the economic, political, and social issues that affect their lives directly, they are stimulated to think about them and be creative in making suggestions.

There are so many opportunities to involve students in projects where they have to work in teams to connect their learning with will activity. The challenge is to integrate a project with an intellectual component so that their will, feeling, and thinking are connected. For example, after the Katrina

hurricane did so much damage to New Orleans, students from various high schools wanted to help. Some collected truckloads of clothing and supplies, others helped families relocate, some went to New Orleans and worked in shelters. Others began websites to track places where help was needed. In addition to actually doing something important and meaningful, it is necessary to extend the activity into learning about hurricanes, what the relation is to global warming, how seacoast cities prepare for disasters, what happens to families who are affected, what changes need to be made for the future. The project itself is worthwhile, and students feel good about being involved. In addition, it opens possibilities to relate the project to whatever studies the students are currently involved in.

The challenge for high school teachers is to know the material so well that they can be flexible and shape the lessons so they relate directly to the students. Students today are very different from students in the past. Now they can get so much information from the Internet, so we need to offer them something different. No longer do high school students want to listen to their teachers lecture them, they don't want to be passive. They want more choices and more opportunity to be actively engaged in the learning process.

As high school students become more active in their learning, they begin to explore new aspects of themselves, new possibilities that relate to their own destiny. Is this an area that sparks an interest they want to follow? Where will this lead them? What skills have they learned by working together in small groups? What have they gained in terms of connecting with the problems of our time? Especially with the students in 11th and 12th grades, the opportunities to look into themselves awaken new perspectives and possibilities.

When the students' perspectives expand, they grasp different ways of handling situations. Instead of being locked into a one-question, one-answer approach, the breadth of possibilities enhances their optimism and courage to tackle situations that at first seem unsolvable. On the other hand, if they lack a broader perspective, it becomes easy for them to feel fear about the future and melancholic about whether they matter at all.

As we continue to explore the question of bringing will into thinking in adolescents, another area to consider is gender difference. When we understand the differences between males and females in relation to the four bodies (physical, etheric, astral, and I), we can become sensitive to their needs. This picture is augmented by brain research to help us understand differences. When the boy experiences strong feelings, he moves quickly into his will—from the limbic system to the reptilian brain (see Gurian's book in the bibliography). The girl, on the other hand, moves from feelings (the limbic system) into thinking (the cortex). This further adds to the image given by Steiner that the female lives more in imagination and the male in desire.

The challenge for us as high school teachers is to find a way to transform the boy's will (instinctive desire) into his thinking so that he can regulate his

behavior. This is particularly the case in early adolescence when boys are subject to react quickly without thinking. One way is to involve the boys in activities that serve the good of the community such as farming, practical surveying, building, welding, etc. Boys have a deep need to work physically to discipline their actions. Sports, if kept in balance, also helps meet this need. In all these areas of activity, there are particular rules (boundaries) that affect the use of tools or the actions of their body. Knowing how to keep from splitting wood, or how to use powerful equipment properly, or to stay within the rules of a game—all help them relate their will and thinking. Boys have a harder time than girls to sit in a chair and listen. They need purposeful activity. Although this need is already present in the early years of school, it becomes even stronger in the high school when they become restless and aggressive or withdrawn and want to leave school. Projects, practical crafts, and learning skills that connect them with real work are ways to involve the boys.

Girls have a closer connection between their feelings and their thoughts. They can get lost in their emotions and live in fantasy. Because the popular media puts tremendous pressure on girls to be sexy rather than use their intellect, they need a broader perspective on how some aspects of society work. When they understand how the thinking behind advertising is trying to influence them, they can feel more capable of resisting it. Becoming involved in projects that benefit others in the community helps take the focus off themselves. Many of the same activities that help the boys also help the girls. Today there are no differences in what schools offer boys and girls. Their individuality is much stronger than their gender identification. It is, however, helpful for the teachers to be sensitive to a situation in which a particular student needs guidance and direction.

An area of school activity that is particularly helpful with both boys and girls is drama. Drama is a great field for personal discovery and interaction. Students can experience soul qualities through taking on roles quite different from their usual ones. Trying to think and move like a particular character expands their understanding of human behavior. They can try out new ways of exploring anger, joy, jealousy, and nobility. They can sing solo or in a group, they can dance. They can participate in set design, lighting, costume making, printing programs, directing, and producing. Each activity contributes to the success of a production, and each person can find a niche in which to be active. They learn to work in ensemble, a microcosm for the world community. In addition to all of these activities which stretch their emotional life and physical capacities, there is the intellectual component in which to explore the meaning of the play, the turning point, the relationship of the play to values in society. Drama is also valuable because it contributes to the culture of the larger school community and brings appreciation and admiration from the community to the students

The key question to ask ourselves in working with this age is: What does it mean to be a soul artist with students after puberty? How can we be renewed in our own thinking, feeling, and willing so that we can be creative

and awake to the needs of our students? As society is going through changes and our students are changing, we, too, must be flexible and open to new possibilities. By cultivating our own inner development, by working to create a stronger center in our soul life, by working together with colleagues, and by being active members of our school communities we can heed the inner call of adolescents.

Resources:

Michael Gurian and Patricia Henley, *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*.

Joseph Chilton Pearce, *The Biology of Transcendence*.

Rudolf Steiner, *Essentials of Education* (April 8–11, 1924), lectures 4 and 5.

Rudolf Steiner, *Roots of Education* (April 13–17, 1924), lecture 4.

Rudolf Steiner, *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, December 1921, lectures 12, 13, 16.

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LEARNING IS A ROYAL PATH TO FREEDOM

by

Hartwig Schiller

translated by Ulrike Creyaufmüller

This is obvious to many people and is expressed by phrases such as “education to freedom” and similar ones. Some people believe the secret of freedom is linked to the emancipating power of knowledge. This attitude is illustrated by the term “enlightenment” and, to a certain extent, it is adequate.

Knowledge creates new and broadened horizons. It leads out of the narrowness of limited perspectives and opens up to a vaster world. However, the character of knowledge determines whether it might lead instead to the narrowness of fixed opinions and specialized views, defined and qualified. Thus it is by no means a guarantee of emancipation, self-determination and a sense of responsibility.

Further, in the course of time it has become obvious that the level of achievement at certain stages in life is always temporary, deficient and incomplete. The consequences of such shortcomings are misjudgments, errors and mistakes. The person that defines himself according to his knowledge is susceptible to manipulation. The liberating effect of knowledge is limited and uncertain.

Learning Is a Stamp of Humanity

This is not the case with learning. Learning is not a quantifiable possession but a qualifying process. The learning person is a steadily changing, transforming being. This is particularly true about the realm of learning that is not determined by superficial motivation, such as the pursuit of utility, comfort and effectiveness.

Learning as an intelligent adjustment to the conditions of life is a capability already present in animals. Human learning surpasses this. Apart from focusing on utility, humans can direct their interest on beauty and goodness. They can develop a moral dimension. In this respect learning is self-determined. Human beings do something that extends the realm of necessity. What they do they can perform only by themselves. Nobody else and no worldly power can force human beings to perform free learning

open to moral dimensions. Rather, learning is one's inherently personal free activity. A fixed goal or a specific target is not important; this would lead to something complete and limited. Rather, learning directly affects and relates to the process of becoming a human being. Thus learning is the central mystery event of education.

Self, Art and Education

The secret of education is how to initiate this process. Everything that is fixed, methodically completed, canonized is not suitable. Education has to become art to come close to the lively soul life of the pupil. To perform this art several things are necessary but one is central: the realization that all kind of education is self-education.

This insight/knowledge influences many views on education and schools. It shows that the ones who are taught and educated—and not the teachers or educators—undergo changes. That is valid for all ages and all fields of learning. It is the pupil himself who, having an inner overview of quantitative ratios, carries out a calculus operation according to the relative proportions. It is the pupil himself who judges a historical personality according to his personal evaluation. And it is the baby itself that adapts its life expressions to the circumstances of its parents and educators.

The pedagogues just teach (the German word for “to teach,” *beibringen*, also means “to bring”) or offer meaningful or meaningless, stimulating or dull, suitable or unsuitable subject matter, material, scenarios and learning conditions. Accordingly, he can find something that corresponds to his inclinations supporting his developmental stage, arousing his interests. The art of the teacher consists of anticipating where and how the interest of the pupil can be kindled, where he can connect and begin. This is awakening education. It requires the art of directing. The teacher has to find suitable plays, styles, scenes, pieces of scenery and manners of stage-directing—no matter in which subject. The pupils do everything else. They act fast,” grasp things” and start to learn. By learning they teach themselves. They struggle with the subjects, cope with their limitations, tackle exhaustion, likes and dislikes, travel with their subjects into the universe of perspectives of the world, spirit and soul. Skills in movement, soul and character are required and educated. That is the reality of learning. Learning constitutes the dignity of man; it offers him the experience of freedom.

Life and Learning

Over the course of a lifetime, learning changes form. At the beginning of life learning is totally different from learning at its end. The beginning of life is determined by care, sympathy and company. Without company and care no child is born or fathered. At the door to birth the company of the beginning of one's life is even guaranteed by the umbilical cord. If everything goes well, the cradle is surrounded by an entire community of parents, friends, grandparents and relatives. At his birth man is received by

an interested community. If everything goes well, the atmosphere is one of cheerfulness, sympathy, interest and helpfulness. At the end of life there is a different picture. Although surrounded by others, in dying everybody is on his own. But this is much rarer than intact communities at birth. Those who have lived in a community leave it behind. The end of life is often lonely. If somebody reaches grand old age, often those who shaped his life have gone already; he stays, alone with his memories. Nobody of those who share his experiences would come and initiate a spontaneous activity. Calm, quietness and the reflection of the lived life—the past is part of old age. Old age longs for warmth, mildness and care. At the time of birth there is an abundance of life, vitality and will forces, whereas in old age the forces of consciousness are dominant.

The polarity between birth and death is well illustrated by the relationship between praying and blessing. Praying is a collection of purified will forces leading to higher spiritual experience. Blessing is a radiating flow of forces of wisdom to those needing help. The culmination of natural will forces at the door to birth requires education—that's to say, human cultivation. The forces of consciousness that are still in the background at that stage have to be gently awakened to be developed in a human and vital way. Will has to be formed in a human manner; the spirit of the head has to be awakened from the perspective of a wise consciousness.

RHYTHM AS A SOURCE OF REGENERATION

by

Dirk Cysarz

translated by John Weedon

Features of Rhythms

From time to time upsetting, exciting or dangerous situations occur—and the heart starts thumping immediately. After a while, a deep breath may lead to calm and peace again. In this example the two prominent rhythmical functions of the human organism are obviously experienced. During daily activities, these two rhythms often remain unconscious. Thus, it is not easy to identify the features of rhythms.

A closer look at these rhythmical functions reveals that they are not completely fixed. In a healthy individual no heartbeat is completely identical to its predecessor. And the respiration is also “subject to variation.” This enables both functions to adapt to the different daily demands and activities. An almost fixed heart rhythm (heartbeat with very small variation) occurs, e.g. after myocardial infarction. And it is hard to imagine having a fixed respiratory rhythm—it would be much more difficult to talk to someone or to eat something. Such activities require the voluntary variation of respiration. Thus, a fixed rhythm is an indicator of a pathological state of the organism. On the contrary, such rhythms are not completely erratic or irregular; an irregular behavior, for example, of the heart rhythm, would also be a serious pathological state. The healthy rhythm of the heartbeat is to be found between these two extremes: between a completely fixed rhythm (complete predictability) and total irregularity (complete unpredictability). Hence, in a strict sense, the extremes cannot be called ‘rhythm.’

Keeping these features of rhythm in mind, it is easier to understand the meaning of an abstract description of rhythm: the temporal repetition of similar temporal structures. Rhythm carries aspects of the past because it repeats structures. Furthermore, rhythm is also open for aspects of the future because the repeating structure may vary and thus incorporate new aspects—but only in a restricted fashion because otherwise the rhythm might become too irregular. Taking these two aspects of rhythm, it is clear that rhythm integrates aspects of the past and the future into the present.

Human Organism and Rhythm

Rhythmical functions are found throughout the entire human organism. The interactions between nerve cells in the brain are very fast rhythms that require far less than a second. The rhythms of heartbeat and respiration, situated in the chest, are in a range of seconds for one complete cycle. The rhythms of digestion are already far slower—minutes and hours. Circadian rhythms (rhythms of approximately one day and night) and even longer rhythms define the regeneration of the body.

The works of G. Hildebrandt give an overview of the different rhythmical functions in the human organism. The cardiovascular rhythms are especially interesting because they establish a well-defined structure of rhythmical functions during nighttime sleep. For example, the average ratio of 4:1 between heart rate and breathing frequency is a feature of the structure of rhythmical function. Like in an orchestra the rhythms are coordinated in the human organism during nighttime sleep. This structure of rhythmical function is a prerequisite for the relaxing and regenerating effects of nighttime sleep. Everyone has experienced that short interruptions of the nighttime sleep may result in dullness the next morning. The orchestra is sensitive to even slight disturbances—the relaxing and regenerating effects are diminished if un-rhythmical aspects or interruptions occur during nighttime sleep.

Learning and Rhythm

As rhythmical function during nighttime sleep is essential for relaxation and regeneration, so too learning of new abilities is also supported by a good sleep. If practicing a musical instrument is followed by nighttime sleep, the next day the practicing may be accompanied by an unexpected increase in ability. But, regardless of how good the nighttime sleep was, if there is no practicing the next day, there is also no improvement. Insight into logical and mathematical topics (and in a wider sense also learning of foreign languages) may also be improved after a good nighttime sleep if such topics are practiced during daytime (even if not completely understood). If the topics are picked up the next day, the solutions may be far easier to achieve. Thus, ‘sleeping on a problem’ is a justified saying.

How to Support Rhythms in the Human Organism

The different activities during the daytime lead to various demands on the rhythmical functions of the human organism. As a consequence, the structure of rhythmical functions with all its benefits for the organism does not appear. Nevertheless, specific exercises may be used to support aspects of the structure of rhythmical functions at least partially. For example, an investigation of the guided recitation of hexameter verse with respect to heartbeat and respiration reveals a strong synchronization of heartbeat and respiration during the recitation. Respiration can lead to a strong modulation of the heartbeat rhythm similar to some sleep stages during night time steep. This kind of recitation practiced several times can provide positive effects on the heartbeat rhythm even after a resting period.

The recitation of hexameter verse is helpful for such effects because a line of hexameter verse consists of 6 (hexa) feet (a foot is the basic rhythmic unit), usually dactyls (one long and two short parts). The recitation is carried out as follows. The therapist and the subject walk slowly at the same pace. The therapist recites the first half of the hexameter line (e.g. something taken from Homer's *Odyssey*) and the subject listens. Next, the subject recites the hexameter verse in the same fashion. If just half of a line of hexameter verse is recited and the inspiration takes as long as one foot (basic rhythmic unit), the duration of the recitation (or, equivalently, one respiratory cycle) takes affect. As a result, the ratio of the duration of the recitation and the duration of a respiratory cycle (4:1) is perceived as pleasant. There are, of course, other types of verse, and many of them can be used to bring about different but very specific positive effects on the rhythms of heartbeat and respiration.

In practicing therapeutic speech this way, the physical body and the soul are engaged and stimulated at the same time. While just reading poetry would stimulate just the soul, the effects on the physical body would be negligible. Likewise physical activity without the stimulation of the soul (e.g. by metronome breathing) would have effect on heartbeat and respiration, but this kind of activity would be tedious—the soul would be neglected. Appropriate recitation combines these two aspects, and as a consequence, regenerating rhythms appear in between body and soul.

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ART:
AWAKENER OF CONSCIOUSNESS,
HUMANIZER FOR SOCIETY

by

Van James

translated by Marion Fischbach

Art is an awakener of consciousness. Art is at the same time a humanizer of society. These functions of art should be clear and basic cultural experiences for everyone. And yet, sadly they are not. We should realize that art is essential to what it means to be human. The art historian, Hans Belting, said that it was not until about 1400 AD that art began, that is, art in our understanding of art as an object outside of ourselves. Primal people did not have a word for art, for artistic creations were an intimate part of their spiritual-physical lives. For them original participation, original connection, or oneness with the world was a given.

Aesthetic Education

Let us think about the word aesthetic. *Aesthetic* means the artistic experience. The antonym of aesthetic is anaesthetic. *Anaesthetic* means numbness, a grayness of the soul—that is, non-aesthetic. Aesthetic means “enlivened being,” the ability to be responsive. Because we have a *responsibility* we therefore have a *responsibility* to the thing we are responding to. There is an ethical connection here between subject and object.

The process of putting art more and more outside ourselves continued through various stages of human development, and in the mid-eighteenth century great changes took place with the industrial revolution. The word *manufacture* literally means *hand-made*, things created by the human being. Before the industrial age small-scale, hands-on production by craftspeople who learned their skills through apprenticeships took place. Industrialization transformed production into large-scale, impersonal, machine fabrication. Today the word *manufacture* is generally understood to mean “made by machine.” The human input has been removed from the process. The eighteenth century also saw the introduction of public education that soon grew into large-scale impersonal product oriented edu-manufacturing. Based on the factory model, education, too, became an assembly line for learning and

teaching (to the test), in which only one right answer became the standardized system of instruction. There were counter-movements in education led by such people as Pestolozzi and Rousseau (the Romantic Movement) with an emphasis on the spontaneity of childhood, play and creativity to enable learning. In 1837 Friedrich Froebel established the first kindergarten that put emphasis on play. The artists Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and the architect Frank Lloyd Wright attended Froebel-style kindergartens that influenced their way of envisioning the world. The impressionist artist Claude Monet and modernist Henri Matisse collected children's drawings and admired the intense creativity expressed through this primal artwork.

The twentieth century has seen the progressive school movement continued through the Waldorf/Steiner schools' educational curriculum which recognizes the importance of art. "Art must become the life blood of the soul," said Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf schools. Bring art through education and children learn naturally to live in and work out of their creativity. At the end of his life Steiner advocated turning the Waldorf/Steiner education around one hundred and eighty degrees more toward the direction of art, aesthetics and practical activity.

Especially in an age of technology we need to go even more in the direction of creativity and art. Robert E. Allen, chairman and chief executive officer of AT&T Corporation, one of the largest telecommunication companies in the world at one time, said:

We live in an age increasingly ruled by science and technology, a fact that only underscores the need for more emphasis on the arts. As we find science encroaching on every field of study, we need to ensure that our humanity does not become a historical footnote. That can best be assured with a solid understanding and appreciation of the arts. A grounding in the arts will help our children to see, to bring a unique perspective to science and technology. In short, it will help them as they grow smarter to also grow wiser.¹

Architecture

Look at your body. You have two feet standing firmly on the ground. They are our foundation. Your two legs then rise up as columns, while your trunk provides a wall—it provides support for your body's architecture. Our heads are like our roof. They are cupolas or domes and express the load of our physical structure. Our two arms are like free floating columns that may attach themselves and flexibly support numerous activities in the world. Our body, like all architecture, consists of foundation, support, and load (Fig. 1).

1. Loyacono, Laura. *Reinventing the Wheel: A Design for Student Achievement in the Twentieth Century*, National Conference of State Legislatures-State Standards and Course Objectives, 1992, p. 16.

Now let us imagine, as we sit down here in this building, that we are actually outside in nature. We are sitting on a rock or a tree stump and these walls and this ceiling are gone. We can feel the firmness of the earth beneath us. The ground is our foundation. Above us is the dome of the sky, the heavens. It is the roof of the world, with the stars above and beyond. The light blue mantle of atmosphere forms the cupola of the cosmos; it is the load that the gods put upon us from the heavens.

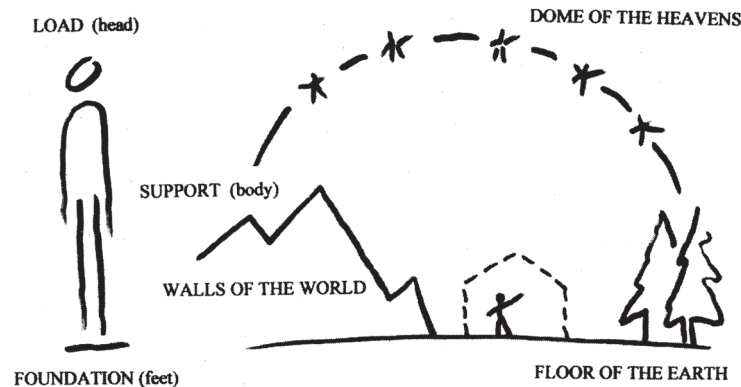


Figure 1. *The threefold principle of architecture*

In Australia when one group of aborigines was first given buildings to live in, instead they used them to store their possessions while they slept, cooked and did everything outside under the open sky. They couldn't bear to be in such small, enclosed spaces as the government had built for them. Primal peoples slept under the roof of the world and felt protected by it. To our right and left are the mountain ranges and the trees of the forest which act like columns and walls of the world (supports).

When we construct a building around us, we place the laws of the physical body out into nature as a kind of offering back to Nature. These laws exist already in outer nature and in the body that nature has fashioned for us. We then use these laws, these principles, when we create architecture and they work back upon us. During the rebuilding of London following World War II, Winston Churchill said, "We shape our dwellings and our dwellings shape us." The art of architecture is a bridge and a mediator between the macrocosm (universe) and the microcosm (human being). The art of architecture is also a bridge between the physical world and the spiritual world. Historically, the tomb is the first building. Architecture originally served to conduct the soul of the dead from the physical body back to the spirit world.

Architecture, it is said, is the mother of all arts for it provides a setting for all the other arts—it sets the stage.

Drama

Just as architecture is said to be the mother of the arts, drama might also fulfill such a role. Drama often features the other arts as its offspring. All of the arts that work with word, tone, color, form and movement come together in drama.

What is it like to act in a drama, in a room with three walls? What is it like to be part of an audience viewing the actions and story portrayed on stage? In classical Greece, attendance at the theater was open and free to all. Greek theatre provided a transformative, healing experience for the audience as the audience empathized with the play. Not only can a picture tell a thousand stories but a story can paint a thousand pictures. As one enters into the stories, the soul goes into the pictures and goes through a catharsis. The art stimulates a response and thereby creates a responsibility (response-ability) to the stories. In this way art has long been the foundation of education and soul hygiene.

You will notice that high up on the wall at the back of this auditorium here is a red window. Steiner placed a red, carved glass window in the back of the Great Hall of the first Goetheanum, above the west entrance. This was so that the red light behind the audience, at their backs as they entered the auditorium, could work therapeutically, could stimulate the will and inwardly engage the sitting members of the audience. Such an architectural feature works together with the performance art being presented on stage and enhances the interaction between audience and performers. ... So the question is: How do we make art the lifeblood of the soul, a part of our daily lives? How can our soul life pulse with the aesthetic experience of enlivened being? Our creativity makes us unique beings. At the same time it unites us with all of creation. Every scientist, every housewife, every mechanic, every teacher is an artist. Artist and writer, Guy Davenport said, “Art is the attention we pay to the wholeness of the world.” We are all artists when we pay attention and respond. We must awaken this aesthetic, response-ability that we all possess.



If we look at young children we see that, as they develop, growth forces are released and utilized as imaginative forces and eventually (adolescence) becomes the power of conscious intelligence. There is a link between growth, imagination or the power of fantasy (creativity), and intelligence.

If you ask kindergarten children, “How many of you can draw? How many of you can sing? How many of you can dance?” They will all raise their hands to each of these questions. As Pablo Picasso pointed out: “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist as we become adults.” Art is the lifeblood of the soul of childhood, but why is it so often lost to the grownup?

Visual Art

Let us do an artistic experiment! I am going to say three words to make a statement. I would like you to reflect on each word that I say and see what feelings or pictures you form from each of these words. I will leave some space between each word so you can truly observe the mental picture that arises from each word:

As soon as a word is spoken we get a picture. Everyone's picture is unique and the picture metamorphoses with each new word. We are doing this activity thousands of times each day, making our own, very individual mental pictures. We are constantly painting mental pictures throughout the day. Cognitive feelings appear first as pictures that are then turned into words and sentences. This often happens within a split second. We are, in fact, visual artists.

Imagine you are living at one with nature, in what Owen Barfield referred to as the state of original participation, in Paleolithic times. You are brought to a cave by one of the elders of your tribe and instructed to take some mineral substance from the ground, chew it and mix it with your spittle. You are instructed to spit this pigment out, over and around your hand that is held against the rock wall of the cave. You become aware of your extended, paint-covered hand, and how your fingers end at the end of your hand. This is the first time you have noticed this curious phenomena—that your hand ends at your finger tips. You have an awareness of living in the vital life forces of your hand! and you see the separate picture of your hand on the rock wall of the cave. The picture helps you hold a mental picture. Eventually, thousands of years later, humanity develops the ability to form concepts. Even today for some Australian aborigines the making of the handprint is part of their initiation ceremonies and rites of passage.

Artistic practices were the means by which human faculties, actual capacities, were formed. Today we don't know what art is for, but it still affects us and shapes us. We have to create an understanding for art and create/discover its new meaning in the world. The 1400s saw the beginning of art as we know it. In the 1960s art, in its traditional sense, ended. Since pop art and conceptual art, anything can be art. Today what art is depends on what the intention is. What is art now?

The Seven Arts

Music and architecture can be compared to one another, for music is invisible, flowing structure. It is like moving, ethereal architecture. Schiller said, "Architecture is frozen music." Drama paints a moving picture, while painted pictures tell a story and create a color drama. Dance and sculpture are also related, as dance is moving, modeled form, and sculpture fixes and holds fast rhythmic movements. The six arts are united by a seventh art that we'll consider later (Fig. 2).

Now, let us do something with some of these arts. I would like you to form several concentric circles, holding hands with the persons next to you. Without moving the chairs let us make the circles around the center point in the auditorium floor. I suggest that the organizing committee of this conference form the innermost circle. The next circle can be made up of people from Christchurch, while those from outside of Christchurch can form the outer

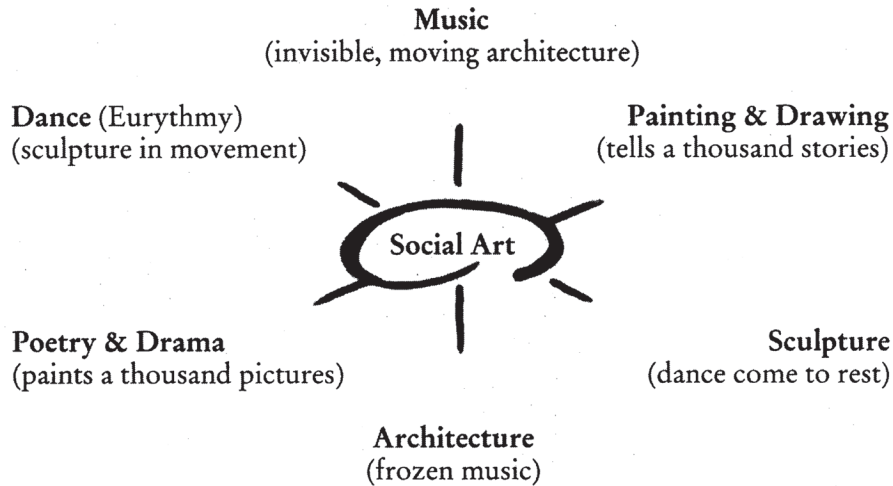


Figure 2. *The Seven Arts*

circles. Form these circles close to each other and hold hands with the left palm up and the right palm down in a giving/receiving gesture like we see in the central figure of Leonardo da Vinci's painting of *The Last Supper*.

When we have our circles formed and we are holding hands, we will close our eyes and sound a tone to send up through the roof and down through the floor as a light stream, as a vibrational column. It will be an invisible column of tone, a support pillar. First we will let the tone sound upwards and then downwards in concentric tonal shafts. We will call it "A Tonal Column of Support for the Arts" (Fig. 3)—here at the Rudolf Steiner School in Christchurch. Imagine the potential for all the arts in Christchurch being supported and bolstered by your tone, by our tonal column. Then let the vibration stretch out to all of South Island and then all of New Zealand. That will be far enough for today! Please, don't feel awkward about doing this! This is not a scientific experiment. It is not a religious ritual or group meditation, although elements of science and religion, cognition and belief will certainly play their parts in the experience. No, we are simply going to make art!

In Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, he says that the aesthetic education of humanity lies in the art of play. Between the form and duty of science on the one hand, and the substance and freedom of religion on the other, is art—the nature of which is revealed through play and creativity. We will now engage in serious play. I will join the outer ring and we will each choose a tone to sound. Change it and vary it as you will in response to what you hear around you. We will continue with this until it seems complete.

[The choral-like tones spontaneously ended.]

Let's leave it at that. Let's not talk about this performance piece right now. I have never done this before. I think you'll agree it was very special, so we'll leave it to resonate.

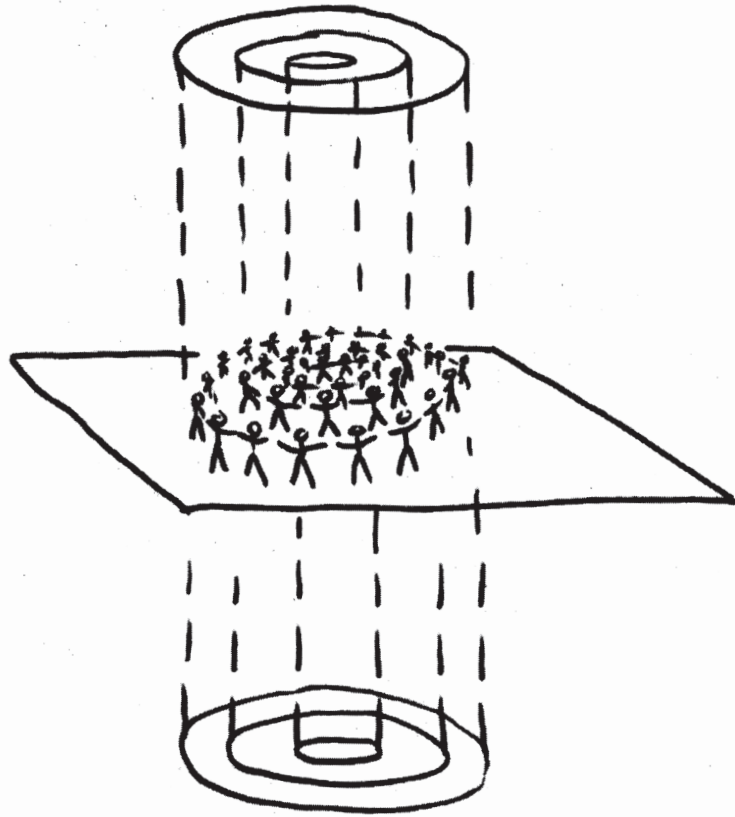


Figure 3. *The Tonal Column of Support for the Arts in New Zealand*

Now, I have a question for all of you. How many of you can sing? How many of you can dance? And draw? [Audience response.] Yes, yes, yes! We are artists. We are truly human when we engage ourselves as artists. Anthroposophy means awareness of one's humanity and certainly in an anthroposophical gathering such as this, we should all be able to say "Yes" to all of these questions. We are aware that we are creative beings. Art is an awareness of our humanity, and as such is a path from the spirit in the Individual to the spirit in the Universe.



We have looked at how art needs to become the foundation stone, the central focus, the life blood of the human soul. We have considered the arts as a vehicle for the unfolding of human consciousness. Today we will focus on how art promotes ethical individualism and moral imagination. Rudolf Steiner said:

True art stands beside real [scientific] knowledge, on the one hand, and, on the other, genuine religious life. No artist could create in his medium if there were not alive in him impulses springing from the spiritual world. This fact points

to the seriousness of art, standing alongside the seriousness of cognition and religious experience. It cannot be denied that our materialistically-oriented civilization diverts us, in many ways, from the gravity of art. But any devoted study of true artistic creation reveals it as an earnestness of humanity's struggle to harmonize the spiritual-divine with the physical-earthly.²

We have a picture here of art as the bridge between science and religion, between the earthly and the spiritual, between thinking and willing (Fig. 4).

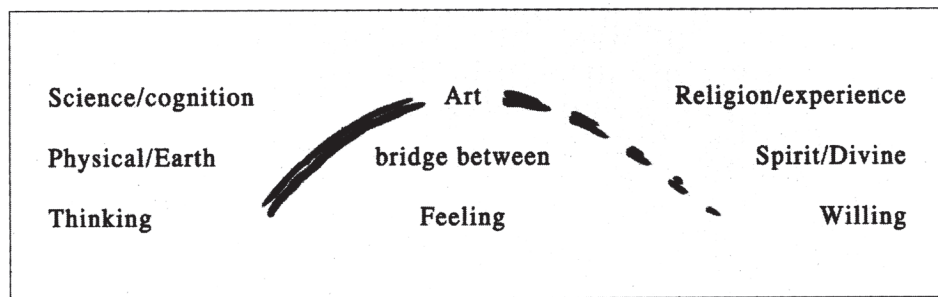


Figure 4. *Art as the bridge between science and religion*

Proper and Improper Art

James Joyce, the twentieth century literary giant, had a vision of the arts. He saw the arts as consisting of both proper and improper manifestations. But he saw two kinds of improper art. This distinction between two types of improper arts is most important. One he called pornographic because it seduces us, pulls us towards it and sells itself. The other form of improper art he called didactic because it wants to teach us a lesson, whether we want to learn it or not. It is in your face, *avant garde* art, pushing itself on one. Didactic art is true but not pretty. Pornographic art is pretty but not true (Fig. 5).

The arts have this very special and serious mission of engaging us on three fronts. Pornographic (not meaning anything sexual in this case) art appeals to our will through our feelings, while didactic art appeals to our thinking through our feelings. They are forms of art that go too far in the direction of the metabolic-limb or will experience on the one hand and too far into the nerve-sense or thinking process on the other, and don't resonate fully within the rhythmic, feeling realm where an epiphany, as Joyce called it, in the stillness of the heart can take place—what is referred to as aesthetic arrest.

2. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Arts and Their Mission*, Lecture IV, Dornach, June 3, 1923, New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1964.

Improper Art 1 Pornographic Pulls one towards it Seduces one into liking it. Sells itself Pretty but not true Sympathy	+ Proper Art Thin line of quiet. A state of aesthetic arrest Epiphany	Improper Art 2 Didactic Pushes one away In your face. Tries to teach one a lesson. True but not pretty Antipathy
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Figure 5. *Proper and improper art*

No Art!

Imagine there is no singing, no humming, no instruments. Imagine there is no music of any kind in the world. Imagine there is no dance, no creative movement, no eurythmy. Imagine there is no theatre, no acting, no drama. (Imagine a Peter Jackson movie about a world with no art. How would you stage such a thing?) Picture a world with no drawing, no painting, no special effects, no animation or graphic design of any kind. Imagine no stories, no poetry, no literature. Imagine no sculpture, no architecture, no buildings.

What kind of world would this be? Imagine. We have the ability to imagine this and yet it is unimaginable, because a natural world without the human being is not the same thing. Steiner said that in very primal times, people put their hands into very cold water as it was about to freeze, and as the water hardened they found that they could make forms in the freezing water. They could experience how forms take shape from the water in to the ice. Art is already in nature as potential.

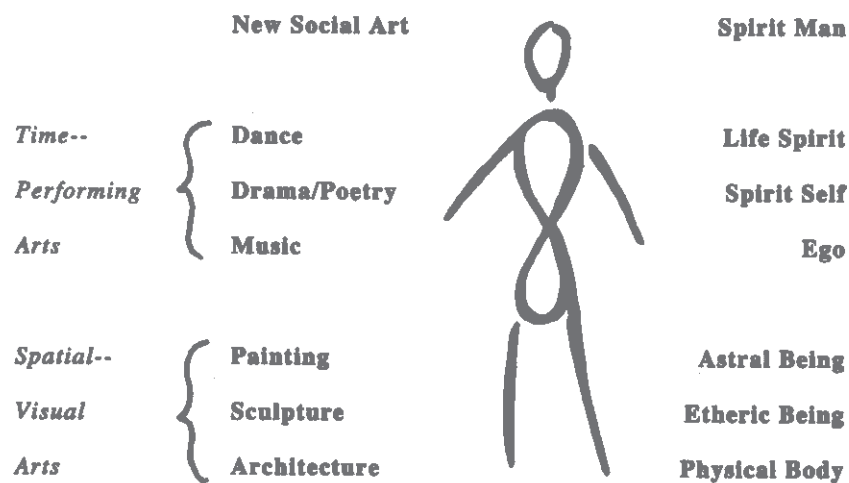


Figure 6. *Sevenfold picture of the arts*

The Seven Arts

Steiner gave a picture of how the various arts are related to one another and are also linked to the human being (Fig. 6). Architecture is based on the laws of the physical body. Sculpture arises out of the laws of the vital, formative forces or etheric sheath. Painting is based on the laws and activities of our sentient experience, our sympathies and antipathies or the astral being. These three arts: architecture, sculpture and painting are the spatial, formative arts or the visual arts.

The three arts that have to do with time, otherwise known as the performing arts, are music, drama and dance. Music is an expression of the laws of the human “I” or Ego principle. Drama and poetry, the literary arts, and the art of speech formation, arise out of the laws of the Spirit Self, that is, when the Ego works back and effectively transforms the soul forces or astral being. When the Ego is able to penetrate and refashion the habit body and temperament, to transform one’s etheric sheath, Life Spirit results. Dance, that is, a movement art like eurythmy, unfolds according to the nature of Life Spirit.

Beyond these six arts is the new Social Art that arises out of the principle of a still higher spirit member, of the human being, out of Spirit Man. When the physical body is permeated by the Ego, is transubstantiated by the work of the “I” principle, then a truly human higher spirit results. A new art form is possible when our highest member, that is Spirit Man, works down into the physical body. This is a picture of how the seven arts are related and intimately bound up with the sevenfold nature of the human being.

The Healthy Social Life

Rudolf Steiner gave Edith Marion, his first appointment to head the Visual Arts Section of the School of Spiritual Science, a verse that by extension could be given to be for all artists. It is called *The Motto of the Social Ethic*:

Healing is only when
In the mirror of the human soul
Is pictured the whole community
And in the community
Lives the individual soul’s strength.³

Healing happens only when the entire community is pictured in the mirror of the single human soul and the virtue of each individual soul lives in the community. There is a double call to the individual: The individual must become a mirror of the community and share his or her virtues and strengths with the community. The double call to the community is that the community

3. Translation by Van James.

allow every perspective from every individual to make up its body and to encourage the virtues and strengths of all its members. How does each individual become a mirror for the community? How does the community form itself around the gifts of each individual? And why the social ethic for artists?

The late avant garde performance artist and German professor of sculpture, Joseph Beuys, who died in 1986, “extended the concept of art” to what he called *social sculpture*. A very controversial member of the Anthroposophical Society, he said: “Every human being is an artist, a freedom being, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and condition our lives.” Beuys’ concept of art is that we are all creative artists continually working on our greatest artwork, the masterpiece of our own lives.

We are all called to respond, to be responsible, to have a response-ability as artists. By working with forms, shapes, gestures, colors and tones, we are working with elements in a way that is a preparation for a greater Social Art that is yet to come. One can speak about colors as qualities, activities, energies, personalities, and, finally, as beings. One can come to the beingness of colors. Already through colors, and other media, we have a preparation for this greater Social Art. Art is practice for our social future!

Leo Tolstoy said:

The task for art to accomplish is to make that feeling of brotherhood and love of one’s neighbor ... the customary feeling and the instinct of all people. The destiny of art in our time is to transform the realm of reason to the realm of feeling the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set in place of the existing reign of force that Kingdom of God, i.e., of love, which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life.⁴

This is an earnest, social task!

The Spirit-filled Work of Art

Listen to the following verse given by Rudolf Steiner in 1909 at the dedication of his first building in the village of Malsch, Germany (a small prototype of the first Goetheanum), and you can hear the seed of the “Foundation Stone Meditation,” which only unfolded years later:

With the laying of this foundation stone of the Malsch building, we entreat the blessings of the Masters of Wisdom and the all-high and highest beings of the spiritual hierarchies that are connected with earth evolution. We entreat that all of your power of spirit may stream through in harmony together with what is brought, felt, willed and done here.

4. Tolstoy, Leo. *What Is Art?* pp. 190–191.

On this building may there shine
The light of the spirits of the East;
The spirits of the West may they reflect this light;
The Spirits of the North may they strengthen,
And the Spirits of the South warm it.
So that the Spirits of the East, West,
North and South may stream through this building.

In pain and suffering our Mother Earth has become materialized. It is our task to once again spiritualize her, to redeem her, in that through the power of our hands we fashion a spirit-filled work of art. May this stone be a first foundation stone for the redemption and transformation of our planet Earth, and may the power of this stone work a thousandfold.⁵

“Through the power of our hands we fashion a *spirit-filled work of art*.” How do we transform the world into a spirit-filled work of art? Ten years later, while lecturing about the first Goetheanum building, Steiner said:

If ideas underlying such works of art find followers, then people who allow themselves to be impressed by these works of art and who have learnt to understand their language, will never do wrong to their fellow men either in heart or intellect, because the forms of art will teach them how to love; they will learn to live in harmony and peace with their fellow beings. Peace and harmony will pour into all hearts through these forms; such buildings will be ‘lawgivers’ and their forms will be able to achieve what external institutions can never achieve. ... However much study may be given to the elimination of crime and wrong-doing from the world, true redemption, the turning of evil into good, will in future depend upon whether true art is able to pour a spiritual substance into the hearts and souls of human beings. When human hearts and souls are surrounded by the achievements of true architecture, sculpture and the like [painting, music, literature, drama and dance] they will cease to lie ... will cease to disturb the peace of their fellow men ... buildings [art] will begin to *speak*, and in a language of which people today have not even an inkling.⁶

True art and architecture will in future have such a moral force as to reorient the intentions of people. Not the improper pornographic or the

5. From Rudolf Steiner, *Bilder Okkultur Siegel und Säulen*, Vortrag vom 5/16 April 1909, Malsch; translation by John Wilkes.

6. Steiner, Rudolf. *Ways to a New Style in Architecture*, Lecture II, Dornach, June 17, 1914, New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1927.

improper didactic art, as described by James Joyce, but the proper, the true art with its “thin line of quiet,” will promote moral judgment worthy of a human being. Harmony and peace will flow through artistic forms and human capacities will be transformed. “Art is the creation of organs by which the gods may speak to mankind,” said Steiner. Art is an instrument by means of which the spiritual worlds may speak to us. It is one of the most powerful gifts humanity has at its disposal! Art, we see, must become the lifeblood of the soul, for it awakens consciousness and it humanizes society.

Author: *Van James is an artist and a high school teacher at the Haleakala Waldorf School in Kula, Hawaii. He is also Chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawaii.*

THE PUSH FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY: A VIEW FROM EUROPE

by

Christopher Clouder

“Can you do Addition?” the White Queen asked. “What’s one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one?”

“I don’t know,” said Alice. “I lost count.”

“She can’t do Addition,” the Red Queen interrupted. “Can you do Subtraction? Take nine from eight.”

“Nine from eight I can’t, you know,” Alice replied readily. “But –”

“She can’t do Subtraction,” said the White Queen. “Can you do Division? Divide a loaf by a knife – what’s the answer to that?”

In this passage from *Through the Looking Glass*, the queen shows neither particular pedagogical aptitude nor an approach of at least patiently encouraging Alice to find the correct answers. Although it would be unfair to use the above to satirize policymakers and educators who are sincerely concerned with improving children’s learning, the current tendency to promote early formal learning and its concomitant league table mentality also present dangers that are amusingly encapsulated in this imaginary discourse.

In December 2000, Britain’s House of Commons Education Select Committee issued a report which concluded that children under five years of age should learn mainly through creative play in classes of no more than fifteen for each teacher. The Committee also stated that there was no conclusive evidence that children benefited from being taught the “3 Rs” before the age of six. After a thorough investigation of papers and witnesses, chairman Barry Sherman, MP, forthrightly stated, “If you start formal learning early on, you can actually damage formal learning later on.” He went on to say, “Some people believe that the earlier you start children reading and writing and doing formal instruction the better. All the evidence we took, from every side, goes against that argument.”

Tricia David of the Professional Association of Nursery Nurses commented, “Overemphasis on formal education and abstract concepts of literacy and numeracy before the age of five can result in a sense of failure.

Early failure can lead to long-term underachievement, disaffection and even truancy. We could learn from some of our European neighbors, where children start school later than in the UK but still achieve better academic results.”

The memoranda submitted to the Committee from the British Association for Early Childhood Education underscored this point of view:

Comparison with other countries suggests there is no benefit in starting formal instruction before six. The majority of other European countries admit children to school at six or seven following a three-year period of preschool education which focuses on social and physical development. Yet standards in literacy and numeracy are generally higher in those countries than in the UK, despite our earlier starting age.

The Committee recommended keeping the school entry age at five, but that young children should receive the style of education appropriate to their stage of development. Their report then goes on to highlight concerns given in evidence in this area:

The current focus on targets for older children in reading and writing inevitably tends to limit the vision and confidence of early childhood educators. Such downward pressure risks undermining children’s motivation and their disposition to learn, thus lowering rather than raising levels of achievement in the long term. . . . Inappropriate formalized assessment of children at an early age currently results in too many children being labelled as failures, when the failure, in fact, lies with the system.

This is one contemporary phase in a struggle that has been waging since the beginning of the 19th century. At its heart is our conception of childhood. The manner in which we receive our children into this world influences who they eventually become, and, whether or not nature or nurture proves the short-term victor in any conceptual battles, the fact remains that the early years are vitally important. The basic assumption is that the child should be welcomed, but how that welcome is expressed can vary according to the times and the social fabric around the child. A report from the Swedish Aid Commission touches elements that confront us as citizens of the world’s affluent minority:

Basic to a good society is that children are welcome, are given a good environment during childhood and are the concern of the whole society. Children have a right to secure living conditions that enhance their development. Preschool has an important function in children’s lives. It offers a comprehensive program and is the source of

stimulation in the children's development. It gives them a chance to meet other children and adults and to be part of an experience of fellowship and friendship. It is a complement to the upbringing a child gets at home.

In other words, children are born into a culture which, with all its assumptions, history and aspirations, will have a profound effect on how they experience childhood and indeed their adult lives as well. Human cultures vary enormously in their approaches to the rearing of children, and one culture cannot claim to be the template of good practice for all.

Yet there is the factor of our common humanity and something that can be recognized as universal childhood. In the present roller-coaster plethora of advice, research and increasing polarization of views, we must look for deeper aspects of childhood so that as parents, caregivers and educators we do not become restricted to a particular one-sided approach or dogma. The interests of young children are the interests of the whole of society and should be of primary concern if we are to find solutions to the many social and ethical challenges facing us.

How quality in early childhood education and care is defined and evaluated will be a concern not only for politicians, experts, administrators and professionals, but will also be a matter for a broader citizenry.... It becomes important to create forums or arenas for discussion and reflection where people can engage with devotion and vision.... Within these arenas a lively dialogue can take place in which the issues of early childhood education and care are placed within a larger societal context and where questions concerning children's position are made vivid.

Being concerned about the early years of human life also has the capability to draw out what is best in us as adults. If we wish to help our children develop devotion and vision, we must also strive for them ourselves, as in our world they are no longer just given facts of life. So we should welcome the fact that the role and content of early years' education is a matter of such a wide and intense debate as evidence that its seriousness is unquestioned.

Of all the countries in Europe, only Northern Ireland starts compulsory schooling at age four; five countries (the Netherlands, Malta, England, Scotland and Wales) begin at age five; nineteen countries begin at age six, and eight at age seven. Interestingly, one of the latter, namely Finland, scored very well in the latest Program for International Student Assessment (2001 PISA) study which assessed a quarter of a million children in 32 countries. In this survey by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on skills in literacy, numeracy and scientific understanding, Finland scored significantly better than any other European country. There may be other imponderables at work here, but what this does show is that starting later need not necessarily be a disadvantage. A few years ago there was a national debate in Finland about reducing the school

starting age from the traditional age of seven. However, in light of both commonsense arguments and scientific evidence regarding children's neurological development, it was decided not to proceed with this.

The countries that scored less well are less likely to follow this aspect of Finnish educational policy. Germany's low ranking has been claimed in that country to be analogous to "sputnik shock" in the USA, and one result of this is growing pressure to start formal learning earlier. In spite of anecdotal evidence from numerous discreet summer pilgrimages by officials and policy makers to Finland, it seems they are rather inclined to adopt what Lillian Katz calls the "push-down phenomenon." In her Royal Society of Arts lecture in London she pointed out that there is evidence of short-term advantage if three-, four- and five-year-olds are put in formal instruction, but that there is also evidence of some noticeable disadvantages in the long term. "There are two important points to note here," she writes. "First, it's only in the long term that you can see the disadvantages of early formal instruction. Second, early formal instruction is particularly damaging to boys.... My favorite theory is that, on the whole, early learning damages the disposition to learn."

In fact, a 1992 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study of reading literacy in 32 countries showed that the age at which children began reading was associated with a gender gap in literacy. The ten top-scoring countries had a later starting age, with an average of 6.3. The study concluded: "It is clearly a plausible hypothesis that boys are too immature to begin reading formally at the age of five, and that their difficulties are represented in low achievement, relative to girls, at both the ages of nine and fourteen." The as yet unpublished reworking of the IEA data for 27 of these countries has also shown that in only four countries did children start reading before the age of five, and that in all four countries (and only these) there was a distinct gender gap at the age of nine.

Caroline Sharp's paper "School Starting Age: European Policy and Recent Research," produced for the National Foundation for Educational Research, gives a very balanced view of the whole issue of whether teaching literacy and numeracy can cause damage to young children's development. She mentions that the early school-starting age in the UK was not established for any particular educational criteria; it was enacted into law in 1870 partly out of concern for the protection of young children from exploitation and partly to appease employers in consequently enabling an early school-leaving age. In any case, six is the most common starting age worldwide. Sharp's conclusion regarding academic achievement is that there is no conclusive evidence concerning starting school at different ages. The best available evidence suggests that beginning to teach more formal skills early gives children an initial academic advantage, but that this advantage is not sustained in the long term.

There are some suggestions that an early introduction of formal curriculum may increase anxiety and have a negative impact on children's self-esteem and motivation to learn. Top-performing countries in the Third International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS 1996) survey had a school starting age

of six, although the factors for this need further research. “What we can say,” the survey concluded, “is that a later start does not appear to hold back children’s progress.... Certainly, there would appear to be no compelling educational rationale for a statutory school age of five or for the practice of admitting four-year-olds to school reception classes.”

In June 2001 the OECD issued its long-anticipated and highly regarded thematic review of early childhood education and care policy (ECEC) for twelve countries. It is significant that for the OECD, early childhood extends until the age of eight, and that “education” and “care” are conjoined. It is explicitly stated in the report that flexible curricula, built on the inputs of children, teachers and parents, are more suitable in early childhood than detailed, expert-driven curricula: “Contemporary research suggests ... that the curricula should be broad and holistic with greater emphasis on developmental outcomes rather than subject outcomes... more process-related and co-constructive... defined by the vital interests and needs of the children, families and communities... and more in tune with socio-cultural contexts.” This was an international call for flexible frameworks that leave freedom for adaptation, experimentation and cultural inputs.

The testing regime that accompanies the pressure for early learning is also under scrutiny. The London University Institute of Education’s systematic review of the available evidence made a wide-ranging search of studies of assessment for summative purposes in schools for students between the ages of four and eighteen. After searching through 183 studies, nineteen of which they identified as providing sound and valid empirical evidence, the researchers concluded: “What emerges is strong evidence of negative impact of testing on pupils’ motivation, though this varied in degree with the pupils’ characteristics and with the conditions of their learning.... Lower achieving pupils are doubly disadvantaged by the tests. Being labeled as failures has an impact on how they feel about their ability to learn.”

The researchers’ suggestion is, therefore, that new forms of testing be developed that make it possible to assess all valued outcomes of education including, for example, creativity and problem-solving, not just literacy and numeracy, and that, furthermore, such assessments be only one element in a more broadly based judgment. However, the researchers also found that “when passing tests in high stakes, teachers adopt a teaching style which emphasizes transmission teaching of knowledge, thereby favoring those students who prefer to learn in this way and disadvantaging and lowering the self-esteem of those who prefer more active and creative learning experiences.” Although this paper is more concerned with older students’ reactions, we should not overlook the fact that four-year-olds can feel themselves failures too, and the sense that they are letting their parents down can be devastating and lasting. It also begs the question of what is developmentally appropriate for young children’s learning that is in harmony with their natural need for “active and creative leaning experiences” as expressed in play.

Play is vital to human learning. It can introduce, consolidate, and support learning in an infinite variety of situations. It assists in the development of cognitive and social skills, encourages problem-solving skills, supports

language development and the expression of emotions, and provides opportunities for exercise and coordination. It also needs space and time, which are the very factors the “hurried curriculum” threatens to efface. “We know that we can teach children to read at four if we want to, but we want them to spend those years playing. Here you teach them to give the right answers. We want them to be able to solve problems, cooperate with others and cope with life.”

It could be argued that children have a fundamental right to be prepared for school in such a way that the impact of their individuality does not become a handicap. The Hungarian educational sociologist, József Nagy, found enormous differentiation in children’s capabilities. “Children with a calendar age of six,” he writes, “can demonstrate a biological difference of plus or minus one year, a difference in mental development of plus or minus two and a half years, and a difference of plus or minus three years in social development.” In the 1980s, after researching school-based attempts to overcome this variation, he concluded that schools were incapable of doing so. “The result is that the school career of those entering is predetermined by their stage of development at entry.” As such a wide variation of capacities and personal development is unsuitable for a setting in which formal learning can successfully take place for all children, the view that the purpose of preschool is to prepare children for formal learning gains greater credence. Whole class teaching requires the children to be capable of receiving and benefiting from it and ensuring a certain stage of readiness. This is, in fact, the child’s right.

Perhaps at this point we should turn to the evidence of the poets, who have an instinctive rather than analytical approach to childhood that should not be disregarded just on account of its lack of academic rigor. Poets are often able to retain the closeness to the qualities of childhood that the rest of us lose. Miroslav Holub, himself a distinguished biologist, remembers his own Czech childhood and the need to inwardly breathe:

Ten million years
from the Miocene
to the primary school in Jecnà Street.
We know everything
from a to z.

But sometimes the finger stops
in the empty space between a and b,
empty as the prairie at night,
between g and h,
deep as the eyes of the sea,
between m and n,
long as man’s birth.
Sometimes it stops
in the galactic cold
after the letter z,

at the beginning and the end,
trembling a little
like some strange bird.
Not from despair.
Just like that.

If this space is so vital, where is the evidence that there is a greater good in losing it? What do we destroy if we fill up all the space in a child's imaginative and emotional life? Lowering the age at which children start formal learning is, in fact, a small revolution with little debate or serious consideration of the consequences. "The precise educational rationale for the school environment being offered to four-year-old children has either been given inadequate attention or overlooked altogether." A change of such significance and consequence surely needs careful and deep consideration, especially as its effects impinge on everyone and could be lifelong.

Beginning in the 19th century, preschool education in Europe had humanitarian roots in catering to children from working-class families. It was said of Margaret McMillan (1860–1931), a great pioneer in this work, that "her anger burned at the violation of the lives of little children. She fought as one inspired to prevent their misuse."

A similar romantic notion was shared by Ellen Key, the Swedish educational reformer, whose influential book *The Century of the Child* was published in 1900. "The next century will be the century of the child just as the last century has been the woman's century. When the child gets his rights, morality will be perfect." Perhaps we do not have to be so romantically inclined or so passionately engaged to notice that children and the quality of childhood face new threats in the 21st century. We should take to heart such warnings as this:

What has become clear from this short analysis of international educational research is that the drive of successive English governments to introduce formal scholastic teaching at ever earlier ages serves merely to create the failure it seeks to avoid. Until our first phase of education—for our three-, four- and five-year-olds—has goals, curriculum content and appropriate teaching strategies to prepare children for formal schooling, ... our educational "beginnings" will not be as "sound" as we might hope.

We should also applaud brave politicians, such as Jane Davidson, the new Minister of Education for Wales, who stood up to the prevailing trend and ended the formal educational testing of seven-year-olds so that Wales could be a place "where our children get the best start in life" in favor of a curriculum that is less formal and more child-centered. Or when the Swedish government took pride in its Early Years curriculum because it is the shortest and least prescriptive in Europe.

We live in our world,
A world that is too small
For you to enter
Even on hands and knees,
The adult subterfuge.
And though you probe and pry
With analytic eye,
And eavesdrop all our talk
With an amused look,
You cannot find our center
Where we dance, where we play,
Where life is still asleep
Under the closed flower,
Under the smooth shell
Of eggs in the cupped nest
That mock the faded blue
Of your remoter heaven.

Our analytical approach has its limitations. Because we are working and caring for children, we should allow our feelings to participate in this debate. Children have the gift of “becoming” in the sense used by Walt Whitman:

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he looked upon, that object he became
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part
of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

In this gift of “becoming” we can find the roots of our humanity, our compassion, empathy and tolerance. Do we really need to squander these because of short-term goals and a lack of foresight and due attention? Listening to the children themselves would be a good start.

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CHILDHOOD FALLS SILENT

The Loss of Speech and How We Need to Foster Speech
in the Age of Electronic Media

by

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translated by

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It is taken for granted in civilized nations that every school graduate should be able to read and write. But the reality is different. Especially in the highly developed, rich industrial nations of the world, a new form of illiteracy is rapidly spreading which is called functional or post illiteracy because it involves people who, in spite, of having finished school, have failed to learn how to read and write. In the USA in 1994 it was estimated that 70 million people (28% of the population) fell into this category. In addition to this there are millions of so-called alliterates, people who can read but are not interested in reading. Altogether, according to international studies, this group of non-readers today represents a third of the population of most OECD states. In 1995, Barry Sanders impressively described the catastrophic social and cultural consequences of this development in his book *A Is for Ox: The Collapse of Literacy and the Rise of Violence in an Electronic Age*. The consequences he refers to affect us all.

While this problem of the declining ability to read and write is just beginning to be noticed, there arises another, until now unimaginable, degeneration of human cultural skills. Not only the command of written language has been lost to large parts of the population, but gradually the deterioration of the spoken word as well. As unbelievable as it may sound, speech is falling silent!

Joachim Kutschke found some bitter words for it in the magazine *Der Spiegel* (38/1993): "Whether they are at home at the dinner table or in the car on the road, German families (or what is left of them), have ceased to converse. Their only utterances consist of functional instructions: 'Don't be late!'; 'Stop that'; 'Hurry up'; and the binary answers of the little ones: 'Yes.' 'No.' 'Yes.' ... end of conversation. Those of us who have been spoiled and tranquilized as children by the babysitter called television evidently



fall silent later on in life as well. Thus mass media silences us more and more. Are we producing a generation of mute zombies?”

Konrad Adam reported in 1993 that experienced primary school teachers expressed dismay about the inability of first graders to deal with speech at all: “The children have great difficulties understanding instructions, executing them and recounting events. Those who have grown up in healthy circumstances (which are no longer typical) would be astounded

to discover in how many families today, days and weeks go by with hardly a word spoken.” (Reported in the German newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 18, 1993.) This problem has grown to such an extent that in Great Britain, according to a press release in 1996, emergency programs had to be set up “where first graders learn how to greet people or how to ask the way.”

Disturbances in Speech Development at Preschool Age

As families fall silent in daily life and in front of the television screen, dramatic consequences in the acquisition of speech by young children are being observed. Physicians dealing with speech and hearing problems in children long ago sounded the alarm, since the phonetics expert Manfred Heinemann in Mainz, Germany, came across an unexpectedly high number of cases of children at the age of three-and-a-half to four years in need of treatment. Research carried out from 1988 to 1992 found an average of 25 percent of the children had speech disorders, half of these cases being classed as mild and the other half ranging to severe. At first this result seemed unbelievable as a comparable study ten years earlier found only four percent, a figure which corresponded to previous results. The numbers were examined and no change was noted. But in the last ten years the level had risen by more than 20% — a frightening diagnosis!

Since then further research has been carried out, and national and international congresses of speech specialists have dedicated themselves to this problem, but still the numbers have not changed. Today we have to assume that on average every third or fourth child of preschool age suffers from a delay in, or disturbance of, his/her speech development, independent of social class or the level of educational opportunity. Children of academics are affected as much as those of unskilled workers.

It has also come to light that speech disorders can have an effect on the entire motor and sensory development. Even years after therapy most of the children still show noticeable deficits. Follow-up research on second and third graders who had speech therapy for difficulties four years earlier

showed that 44 percent of them still had deficits and 36 percent had difficulty with spelling. Their short-term memory was less well-developed and they had noticeable difficulty in dealing with sentence structures. Many of the children displayed deficient motor skills as well. Thus disturbances in the development of speech and language can lead to permanent handicaps for all the young child's further developmental steps.

“Talk To Me!”

For thousands of years speech has enveloped people like the air we breathe. Children grew into it instinctively, learning to speak was a gift of nature. Today, however, this is no longer the case. In 1997 a leading health insurance company felt compelled to publish a book with the title *Talk to Me!* with the sole purpose of stimulating parents to speak to their children! The reason is obvious: It would be unaffordable for the health insurance company if every third or fourth child required speech therapy, not to mention that there would not be enough specialists to deal with the onslaught. All observers agree that preventative measures are needed!

For this, however, you need to know the causes, and these prove to be complex. Specialists like Manfred Heinemann and Theo Borbonus, director of a speech therapy school in Wuppertal, Germany, emphasize that the increase in cases of speech disorders is due less to medical factors than to the changed sociocultural conditions in which children grow up today. “Hearing problems the result of medical cause have in fact increased,” says Heinemann, but physicians and therapists agree that the main cause lies in the increasing lack of conversation between parents and children.

Parents today “have less time for their children. On average only twelve minutes per day remain for the mother to have a real conversation with her offspring,” reports Borbonus. He adds: “High unemployment, heightened competitive pressure, pressure to rationalize and painful cuts into the social security system—all make people more disheartened, more speechless and colder.”

Television Harms Speech Development

The most significant factor in this situation is television; television is commanding more and more time from both parents and children. In Germany, consumption has climbed from an average of 70 minutes per day in 1964 to 201 minutes per day among adults. (Only the actual viewing time has been counted; the time when the television is running is much longer). In practice this means about three-and-a-half hours of non-communication between parents and their children. Fathers and mothers who work outside of the home thus have hardly any leisure time left with their children, so it is necessary for them to provide their children with their own TV which, as recent statistics have shown the children spend three to four hours a day watching.

It is particularly alarming that children between three and five years of age watch an average of two or more hours daily, some up to five and six hours. Heinemann remarks on this: "These are the children, in our experience, who also watch videos and play with a Game-Boy or the computer." And they are the ones who develop speech problems and have to be treated in a speech clinic. It is not only the silence in front of the screen that has a disadvantageous effect on speech development in these children. Heinemann claims that this medium has an extremely unfavorable effect because it is "overvaluing visual information. Even children's programs are often completely unrealistic," he criticizes, "and 'fast cuts' do not allow the child opportunity to follow the action sufficiently. Many programs also present stereotypical patterns, so that children's own imaginative capacities are not stimulated." The language children use at play with others is correspondingly impoverished, limited, reduced to comic-book exclamations, disconnected sentence fragments, out of context, and bizarre sound imitations accompanied by mechanical, robot-like movements.

A further difficulty is that their preoccupation with the TV screen deprives them of spontaneous creative play and natural movement, thus significantly impairing their development by depriving them of the stimuli urgently needed for developing fine- and gross-motor control and the development and functioning of their sense organs. When diverse information from the environment is absent, then the development of the brain can be harmed, according to Borbonus. Creativity, imagination and intelligence fall by the wayside. In his many years of educational practice, he has observed that children are impeded through lack of primary experiences in developing their senses of warmth and balance, their senses of smell and taste and their senses of touch and motion. The lack of adequate playgrounds and stimulating surroundings in the big cities contributes to and reinforces the deficiency. Children need an environment that promotes development. "Human warmth, play, and movement are indispensable," according to Borbonus.

Disastrous Consequences of a False Paradigm

One thing is obvious: The roots of the problem reach deep into the common habits and living conditions of our time. Speech problems are just the tip of an iceberg that is beginning to threaten our entire culture and civilization. Tremendous efforts are necessary to correct these tendencies. The prospect of success will be small if we do not succeed in changing something decisively in ourselves, in our habitual way of thinking. Take the habit of wanting to grasp everything that is linked with speaking and listening with the purely technical model of transmitting and receiving, of input and output resembling data exchange between two computers. This conception is widespread in scientific communities today and has been applied to the complex process of speech development in children. It is claimed that this process of development simply depends on the right input from the surroundings and this cannot be provided better than through radio and television, as hardly any adult

ever attains the speaker's perfectly trained language-use, not to mention the wealth of other educational possibilities that radio and television provide. It is claimed that television is the ideal source of learning for young children and nowhere else can speech development be better promoted.

We see how grotesquely this view is at odds with reality when Sally Ward, a leading English academic in the area of speech development in children, in 1966 presented the results of ten years of research. She had found out that, by nine months of age, 20 percent of the investigated children were behind in development when parents used television as a babysitter. If television viewing was continued, most of the children at three years of age were one year behind. That means they spoke the language of a two-year-old—a circumstance that endangered their whole development. When parents showed insight and switched the television off, replacing it with direct contact with the child, then the nine month-old-baby could be brought back to a normal stage of development within four months, through nothing but words—solely as a consequence of *live* speech spoken by their parents!

In 1990 many scientists still considered it a 'barbarous thought experiment' to expose children in their first years of life exclusively to speech through electronic media in order to find out if they could learn to speak that way. Now this idea for an experiment has become cruel reality, and it teaches us that speech from a loudspeaker delays childhood development. Speech from the mouth of their mother, on the other hand, is so constructive and helpful to progress that the children involved can overcome deficits that may already have arisen.

So researchers have to ask the question: What distinguishes the speech coming through a loudspeaker from live speech from the mouth of a human being? Physically, it is asserted, there is no difference at all. So how can it be that artificially generated speech interferes with brain function in children, whereas the original speech helps it to develop in a healthy manner?

Speech Is Not a Taxi

Linguistically, human speech has become viewed as nothing other than a means of transportation by which information goes from 'transmitter' to 'receiver.' However, this attitude, dating back to the nineteenth century, has taken a toll. If it is just a question of content that has to be transported, then the spoken word has no particular importance of its own, for the information could reach its destination by a variety of means such as print, signs, illustrations, or gestures. What medium is chosen does not matter to the information any more than it would matter to the passenger of a taxi to be brought to the airport in a Daimler, a Volvo or a Ford.

However for the child, who is finding his way into the world of language, the medium is by no means a matter of indifference. It is through the words spoken to them that children attain, in the most fundamental sense, their true inner stature as human beings. Here we are not talking primarily about transferring information, but about a totally different, much more significant

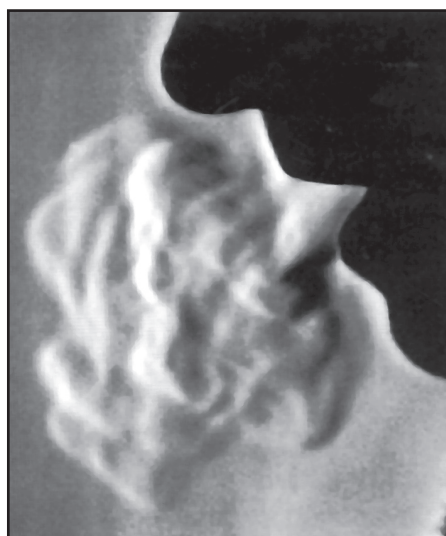
process. Before the young child is able to form a single sentence, he has to perfect the control and coordination of more than a hundred muscles, all of which are involved in the act of speaking. This is an extremely complicated process, more difficult than any other movement capability that the human being acquires. And still it is only one of the processes which a child needs to master to attain control over his body. From the first day of life the child is exercising the muscles of his whole body and their coordination. Beginning with the first hand and eye movements, through the processes of gaining uprightness, balance and the ability to walk, and finally with the attainment of fine motor coordination, the child is a “being of movement.” Out of this activity the articulation of the sounds of speech emerge like a ripening fruit.

Speech Is a Skill and Art of Movement

As impossible as it is to comprehend the whole of a concert by an analysis of the sound frequencies, so is the spoken word not limited to the production of sound waves and the transfer of information. The sounds of speech are not produced by a vibrating vocal chord but by an artist of movement who has expended the utmost effort on ‘tuning’ his instrument to the point where it is able to extract the countless sounds and nuances of speech from the flow of the breath.

If we could observe this unconscious activity we would discover that sculptural forms are continually being created, akin to the work of a sculptor in wood or stone. Only here the material is the soft musculature in which the forms are continually being shaped and reshaped. To articulate speech it is by no means enough to send the flow of breath through the larynx and to release it as a sound out of the mouth. In fact, on its way through the windpipe, throat and mouth to the outside, breath has to run through a hollow passage formed like a relief—a kind of riverbed, the form of which is changed by the muscles of the palate, the uvula, the tongue, the jaw and lips, almost instantaneously, depending on the sound being created. As the flow of air passes the lips, it not only carries the sound but also a particular tendency to form according to the shape of the ‘riverbed’ just passed, and it impresses this into the air in front of the mouth. From the inner reliefs of muscles outward, sculptural forms of air are generated.

In 1924 Rudolf Steiner was the first to point out these invisible forms



The form in the air of an “A” taken with the Toepler device. Photo by Johanna Zinke



The form in the air of a "T" taken with the Toepler device. Photo by Johanna Zinke

in the air that are created in front of the mouth of the speaker. Johanna Zinke, a teacher from Dresden, followed up with decades of research demonstrating that in fact every sound creates a characteristic and recurring form in the air outside the mouth. To make these visible and to record them photographically, she initially used the natural condensation in cold air. Later she worked with cigarette smoke that was inhaled

before speaking. Photos were also taken using a Toepler optics device and an interferometer. A complete picture unfolded when the 'air-sound forms' were filmed with a high-speed camera. It was observed how, within fractions of a second, every form develops from the smallest beginnings, reaches a climax, and dissolves, each with its own tempo and unmistakable gesture. Every sound revealed itself as a flowing sculpture. Speech is in the first place a form-generating, movement process. Dynamic shapes are built, some of which float in the air for seconds after the corresponding sound-wave has died away. At the same time the entire body of the speaker performs movements corresponding to each sound, which are not perceivable to the naked eye. This has been discovered in the young science of kinesics when persons speaking were filmed with a high-speed camera and the individual pictures were carefully analyzed. It was seen that these fine movements occur exactly synchronously with the act of speaking and involve all the muscles of the body, from the head to the feet.

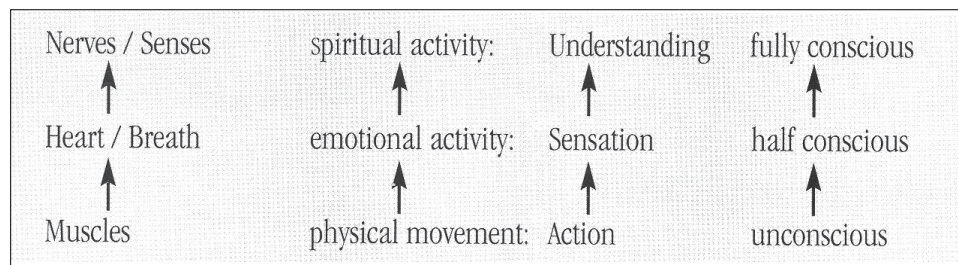
The Listener "Dances" to the Sounds

Researchers in kinesics were utterly surprised to discover that a person listening to speech unconsciously responds with just the same fine movements as those unconsciously performed by the speaker. These movements incorporated the whole body with a relatively short delay of only 40 to 50 milliseconds, precluding the possibility of conscious imitation. Condon, the individual responsible for this discovery, describes this astonishing synchronicity of movements in the speaker and the listener as follows: "Figuratively speaking, it is as if the whole body of the listener was dancing in precise and flowing accompaniment to the spoken word." Even if you cannot establish a physical connection between both processes, it is as if both speaker and listener are moving in a common medium of rhythmic movement. And this applies only for speech sounds, not for noise or disjointed vowels, as repeated tests have shown. The spoken language, however, can be of any kind. Condon found that a two-day-old baby in the USA reacts to spoken Chinese with the same minute movements as to spoken American-English.

This shows that the speech heard by the listener initially impinges on the unconscious movement aspect. Like a dancer, the listener places herself immediately in the vibrant, streaming and sculpting motility of speech. This is done directly, without consciously recognizing and processing the sound first—0.04 of a second is not time enough for conscious reflection, let alone for any kind of psychological awareness.

Speech Resounds through the Whole Person

We are now in the most profound, most elementary layer of speech, where it is pure movement. The very essence of speech arises out of movement. It is the nature of speech to transform the hard rigidity of a corner or edge into a flowing process of muscular movements and air-sound sculptures that continuously unfold from E to D to G and back to E. This process of movement enters the muscles and limbs of the listener, so that the same process seizes them. Literally the whole person listens. Even the larynx of the listener continually joins in the speaking and singing of what the other speaks or sings. But this is just the first step in the process of listening. In the next phase of the process, the movement changes from being purely muscular activity and enters the rhythmic system of heart and lung. There it causes, as every narrator can observe in his listeners, tension and easing of tension, acceleration and slowing down of the natural rhythms, and these fine deviations now take hold of the soul as well and are experienced vividly. The physical movement changes into a soul-movement. From the realm of the unconscious, that resembles deep sleep, we enter the realm of dreamy, half-conscious feelings. Only in the third step does the movement reach the nerve-sense pole, the head, where it changes once again, this time into activity in the spiritual realm that enters the wakeful consciousness as an idea or imagination. In this conceptual sphere the concept edge becomes something firm and motionless, whereas in the physical event of sound shaping it has still been a pure movement, and on the soul level an animated emotion. Thus speech resounds throughout the entire human being; and it moves from below upwards, not the reverse (see box below).



Acquisition of Speech and the Development of the Brain

These steps in the process of listening from below upward correspond to the process that the child undergoes when she learns to speak. Here, too, the starting point can not be found in the cool, calculating head, but in

the completely unconscious, selfless movement of the body. This activity takes place simultaneously with the speech movements of the speaker and in this light we must revise our current ideas about children learning through imitation. Rather than imitating an example we could say that they go with the flow of an example. The case of the American newborn mentioned above, whose physical movements resonated to the sounds of the Chinese language



as much as to the English language, demonstrates how this process is really functioning. The child does not wait motionlessly listening to the incoming speech sounds, in order to try to imitate them with her own attempts at movement. Rather, she puts herself from the first moment onwards with her whole physical body into the movement sphere of sounds. She “dances along” with full precision and regularity, and in unison to the flow of speech of the adult, without adding her own interpretation. Condon has summarized this in the title of his research report: “Neonate Movement Is Synchronized with Adult Speech.” This does not have anything to do with feeling or thinking, but is pure activity: formative movement. And out of this movement the child develops the ability to speak.

A profound mystery dwells within this process, about which we should become more and more aware if we want to support the development of speech in the child in the right way. As the child learns to form sounds, this activity simultaneously works on the development of the brain, which only through this experience reaches its final maturity. In this way the foundation is laid for all later intelligence, with the adult participating in a decisive way. Whether we adults recognize it or not, we have an effect on the physical body of the child through the spoken word and we consequently influence the emotional and spiritual possibilities for the child’s development later in life. Which of us is aware of this immense responsibility when we talk to a child?

The Loudspeaker Is Autistic

No loudspeaker can take on this responsibility. Actually, the loudspeaker proves to be hopelessly deficient in providing what is essential in early childhood. The sounds are lacking the most crucial quality on which speech development depends: the human being and the intention in speech. It is precisely this human intention that works deeply into the child, shaping the musculature so that speech arises, sounds formed by the warm, moist breath sculpting ever-changing forms in the surrounding air. An active will is at work and it awakens the will in the child to form sounds for herself. For only will ignites will; only a fully present “I” awakens the “I” of the child and arouses her to engage the instruments of speech and to fully develop their

function. What speech scientists blandly call “interaction” reveals itself as a spiritual event between two beings, between two wills, a driving force that works out of the spiritual down into the physical processes, as much in the adult as in the child.

The loudspeaker lacks this dimension entirely. It is impossible for it to sculpt these air-sound forms. It produces nothing but sound waves, mechanical vibrations of a paper membrane that address themselves to nobody in particular and do not expect a reaction from anybody. In fact children do react to these sounds with the imperceptible movements in their bodies, but their own sound forming will is not engaged and therefore no significant speech development happens, as the findings of Sally Ward clearly demonstrate. The loudspeaker will always be autistic, unable to contribute to child development.

The Music in Speech—The Element in Which Children Thrive

Speech lives in community. As soon as one person speaks and another listens (as kinesics shows), both speaker and listener enter a common sphere of movement and flowing sculpture that seizes them and washes around them like a form-creating sea. This common sphere does not only comprise the word as such, but everything that can be called musical in speech: intonation and emphasis, timbre and tone, rhythmical structures, pitch and nuances of the voice—loud and soft, fast and slow—these are all elements of speech that have a much deeper effect on the child than the actual content of the spoken language.

Children find themselves in their element every place where singing and playing, speaking, and moving flow together to a unity. For good reasons they demand songs and rhymes, verses and circle games to be sung and spoken not only once but over and over again. They do not care for the conceptual information, for which a single communication would be enough. Rather, for them, it is the forming and sculpting quality of the word as music which is important; in harmony with this they form their whole organism. In the same way that we need to eat and drink with rhythmic regularity in order to nourish the body, the “speech body of the child lives off rhythmic repetition. Children themselves discover compositions of sounds that contain nothing other than the music of speech and the joy of rhythm, as the following German verse for choosing a person clearly demonstrates:

- Enne denne dubbe denne
- Dubbe denne dalia
- Ebbe bebbe bembio
- Bio bio buff!

Unburdened by conceptual information the children can dream into the sound magic of this rhyme, carried pleasantly by the steady rhythm of each word, until finally the wake-up comes and the one who will do the seeking or catching is chosen!

Those who want to do children a favor should consciously encourage the kinds of speech and movement games that used to arise automatically in children's play. When choosing children's books we should not gauge the value of the text so much on the intellectual or conceptual content as on the musical and rhythmic quality of the language, the image-creating power of the words and the artistic composition of the sentences. These aspects make up the real nourishment which children need and relish.



Perhaps, to some degree, one has to become like a child again to feel wonder at the musical quality of poetically formed language and to feel its health-giving, uplifting power. This will give us a sense of what it is like to live in the realm of creative, formative forces of life which children inhabit with their entire being.

Words Create Images that Build Our Soul-life

These life-forces however, transform themselves into something higher, following a principal common to all development. When their work on the physical organization of the body is complete and the most important functions have developed, the magical effect of speech on the body of the child slowly declines, and instead we see speech now working formatively in the realm of fantasy and inner imagination. Just as the single sound selflessly becomes part of the word and in a way disappears within it, so does the molding quality of the sound recede behind the emotional experience of the image that is conjured up from the linked sounds of the word. This begins to occur from the third or fourth year of life onwards. The molding quality still acts in the background as demonstrated by the joy children continue to display in rhymes, rhythmic sound games, word tricks and verses—continuing into the first school years. However the image that arises out of the sound composition comes more and more to the fore, and this image is more alive for the children the more it arises out of the sounds themselves. Two examples make this clear:

In the fairy tale *The Bremen Town Musicians*, the donkey says to the runaway dog: “Why do you gasp so, *Packan*?” Even if the children have never heard the word *gasp*, they understand it from the onomatopoeic sounds and see with their inner eye the dog with his tongue hanging out and panting for air. The sharp teeth become a concrete image through the onomatopoeic quality of the dog's name *Packan* (English: “get him!”), which makes the sharp bite of the animal audible through the P and K. In this way it is possible for the sounds to create very concrete, almost sensually comprehensible images in the soul of the child. As rich as sensory reality are the possibilities of language

to name every thing and every being with its own appropriate name. And so the donkey talks in a very different way to the pitiful looking cat. He greets her with the words: “What has crossed your path, old Muzzle-wiper?” The consonant sequence (M–W) characterizes the elegant aesthetics of the cat, wiping her snout with her velvety paws and licking them with her tongue. Children are delighted when the images arise out of the sounds.

These images, however, have a completely different quality than television images. It is of most importance for adults to recognize that one is shot on the retina as a prefabricated image from the outside while the other is formed by the child from the image-creating powers of her own soul and is therefore an active, creative achievement. The technically produced and forcibly coerced images paralyze the inner image-creating power of the child, and with it an essential part of her spiritual and psychological development. Lasting skills can only grow out of intensive, self-motivated activity.

A New “Undertone” in the Words

As important as was the formative/sculpting impact of speech on the physical organs during the first years of life, equally important for the future life of the child is the unfolding of the soul faculties of fantasy and imagination. Children, however, rarely find the appropriate environment for this unfolding to occur, since the general usage of language has become highly abstract, without our being aware of it.

It can be very significant for the healthy development of children when adults try to use an image-rich and concrete language. We can educate ourselves to do this if we look for the images that lie dormant and unnoticed in every word. Often it just needs a little jolt in our consciousness to notice them and suddenly you grasp something, you understand it, feeling enlightened you re-collect that the adjective hard-headed means a hard head! Many images have become so pale that you can no longer detect them behind the word, in spite of all efforts. In these cases an etymological dictionary that shows the backgrounds and the original meanings of words can be useful. It is well worth leafing through one from time to time. Who would know, for example, that the German word *Treue* (English: “faithfulness”) dates back to an old Indo-European word which referred to the solid wooden core of an oak tree! What a beautiful image of faithfulness!

Sometimes etymological dictionaries give you something to chew on. If one looks, for example, for the original image in the German word *denken* [to think], one is told that it is related to the German word *dunken* = *scheinen* [to seem to] that means “to appear.” What is meant by this you only conceive when you understand *Schein* [appearance, shine], not philosophically and abstractly but sensually and concretely, as “shine of light.” Then *to think* means “to ignite an inner light.”

Similarly the German word *werden* [to become] is related to the Latin word *vertere* and means “turn, rotate, turn over.” But what has “become” to do with “turn over?” The riddle is solved when you get to know that *vertere* can mean “to plow” as well: The farmer turns over the clod of

earth so that it becomes fertile for the new seed, and as such he turns the formerly visible soil over to become invisible and vice versa, the previously invisible becomes visible. In the same way the annual plant “turns over” in spring from invisibility to visibility and in autumn back to invisibility. As the adult makes such forays into the history of words and begins to listen more concretely, very soon his own language becomes more concrete, more substantial and more saturated with images. The more he “tastes” the life-juice of words, the more nourishing his speech will become for the souls of children. Outwardly the words don’t change. However something begins to permeate them—which Steiner called an “undertone.” It goes straight to the heart and creates a new level of interaction.

The relationship to speech changes completely when puberty starts. The young person sorts the conceptual structures and the laws of logic out of the language and starts to juggle with them like a virtuoso. He leaves the spoken language behind him completely and rises up to the sphere of pure thinking where mathematicians of all languages and nations reach the same incontestable results. But this is another subject that will not be dealt with here.

In the Beginning Is the Word

Our considerations have shown us the significance of the creative power of ‘the Word’ with ramifications for the entire life of a person growing up. ‘The Word’ sculpts the organs of the small child, it gives life and form to the soul-life, and it releases the spirit of the adolescent. Without “the Word” a person would not become a human being: no growth, no development would be possible. “In the beginning was the word.” The profound truth of this biblical quote takes on a new meaning in the face of the current speech catastrophe. In German the words *Wort* [word] and *werden* [to become] have nearly the same linguistic root.

In the creative word there is always the potential for something to come into being, in the sense of a “turning over” as described above. That which lives in the speaker in the form of thoughts and feelings is “turned over” by speech to become outwardly audible sounds passing through the air to the listener. Then in the listener the acoustic sound phenomena “turn over” again to become the inner perception of concepts and emotions. The word changes the super-sensory into the sensory and the sensory into the super-sensory. This principal of speech does not, however, work through machines. It needs the human being as medium of the word. Only then can speech be instrumental in leading the “I” of the child down from the super-sensory world to the sensory world; only then can speech release from the sensory world the super-sensory forces which the child needs to unite soul and spirit with the physical body.

The adult has the chance to place oneself in the service of the creative phenomenon of speech and we must constantly remind ourselves that, although it is I who speaks, and without me the words would have no effect, still the power of the word does not come from me. Speech has made me human and I will pass it on to the children so that they, too, may become true human beings.

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Photographs by: Paulene Hanna and Johanna Zinke

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PAINTING AND THE CHILD

by

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translated by Irene Brown

All children love color. Every healthy child delights in the red, yellow, and blue of flowers on the green meadow or as they appear woven or dyed into his apparel. Children always have favorite colors with which they feel friendly and happy.

They seize any blunted stub of colored chalk and feel impelled to throw themselves wholly into some creative and colorful outburst on paper, floor, table, or wall! Still happier the child who can dip his brush deep in a cup of fluid color to beautify or adorn some large surface. This child has a feeling of healthy satisfaction, for colors are in their own true element in water. Their waving, shimmering, and streaming nature is manifest the moment they lose their heavy and earthy hardness. Thus it is a healthy and natural thing to dissolve and free the color from its solid state, lifting it into an activity more suited to its creative nature, as we pour it into clean cups. Children understand this quite naturally and find most happily that the brush is no pencil; and they feel, as they lay the color broadly over a flat surface, that this wide brush has quite another duty to perform from any pencil, that painting is something quite different from drawing.

Three cups of color lie before the child—red, yellow, and blue; and a dish of water nearby for cleaning his brush. He spreads the colors fondly and carefully one next to the other. But there is no green, and he would have green to paint a meadow or green tree. Then from the cup of blue color we pour a few drops into a clean white cup, followed by a few drops from the yellow, and the child is surprised to learn how the green comes out from mixing the dark earthy blue and the light sunshiny yellow!

Little children up to seven years of age (or the change of teeth) are always imitators; and most beautiful are their pictures if those near them, their father or mother, are painters, for then they “want to paint too.” The child wants to discover himself in all the little details and peculiarities of the world. He wants to feel out their forms as he paints a tree, a house, the cat or dog, or the man. Through this painting-drawing he acquires knowledge which is quite his own. He lives in the nature of things and seizes upon the characteristic

movements. It is not only a sensing of the external appearance. The man whom he represents has extra long spread fingers; and the child has a sense of his hand reaching out and gripping to take hold, for an inner organic feeling rules within him. Thus he paints—untrue to nature from the adult's point of view, but true to character, nevertheless.

If a child is slow in his intellectual development and not quite awake but dreamy, almost asleep, we may take part in his painting by describing quite vividly what we encounter or experience in our walks, or what love we are doing at home. Here is the mother washing, or the father chopping wood, the child carrying the bundle of wood to the pile, while the cat sits looking on—a many sided life! But if the child is already developed intellectually and is too precocious for his years, much good may come from leading him into a happy sensing of the nature of color for itself. Let us paint a quiet blue which withdraws into itself, then a radiating yellow, streaming toward it from one corner. This will tease and almost torment us until we place a good warm red in between, which excites the veiled quiescent blue at the same time that it softens and appeases the boldness of the yellow. Color surfaces or waves of color flowing into each other, not strengthening or crystallizing into too hardened forms, bring the over-precocious or too clever child back into the appropriate condition of the more dreamy atmosphere of childhood.

Thus there are ways of helping the young child if we paint with him, either by letting him look on and imitate us or by leaving him to himself—to his own imagination. Let us not be troubled if he smears a little, for he will tryout and experiment and cease his blundering, and he will exult and rejoice in the color. For this an old apron and some corner where the marks of his activity can do no harm are the chief essentials. And as for us, we shall resolve to enter into his presence with no pedantry or well-meant theory of education, but as we stand and look on at his accomplishment we shall enter into his purpose, in an atmosphere of understanding and friendship. For the child is quite willingly left to create by himself, to realize his aims; but, wrapped in his surroundings as he is, he will be most deeply satisfied if quite lovingly and tactfully we take part in this creative activity, and do not leave him entirely alone. However happy he may be when left alone, his joy is of a more inner nature if he may think, “Yes, this picture father and I painted together.”

To the school children painting at home we must try to bring an appreciation and reverence for the materials. A fine piece of white water color paper must be regarded for its value, and its joy and light; nor must it be arbitrarily destroyed. The best condition for its use will be enjoyed when it has been moistened on both sides, and the edges pasted on a wooden board. When it dries, it is stretched smooth and worthy of any painter. The child learns to be ordered and neat, and this well-stretched sheet rewards his effort. The broad brushes must be kept washed, and each color pure and clean. After such care in preparing to paint, all wanton carelessness that would make this superfluous is painfully avoided; and good results repay the trouble. In painting, the child comes into an inner relation with the colors which become

friends, dear to him, even though each one has something very different to say to him. Blue will key his soul to quite another tune than red, and yellow quite differently from green. Blue will have another story to tell yellow from what it tells red. They will affect the child differently, even as they influence each other differently.

We call blue a cold color; but it is not only cold—it is submissive almost to a lamenting sadness. If it is bright, then its brightness is very different from the resonant and raying brightness of yellow. Green can give us a peculiar peace; but it can also be a monotonous, philistine color. Red can be festive and proud; but it can also be aggressive and wrathful. Violet is pious, but it can also be hypocritical and even coquettish.

What infinite possibilities of expression lie in colors. How active they are with one another, and what constant possibilities lie open to the painter! There is yellow, for instance—it will ray forth gaily, but when a cold dark blue closes it in, its force is held mercilessly imprisoned; yet it can grow stronger, becoming fiery red, and break through the blue somewhere, pouring its orange-red waves forth in light!

When the child finds the colors in this true way in his own inner experience and being, then he finds them again in nature and looks at them with eyes from which shine an artist's sensitive response. Now the mountains will not be drawn in hard outlines; he will paint the darker blue of the mountain, and then something of the tender, light, greenish-blue of the sky; and where the two colors meet, the outline of the mountain will arise of itself. He sees the tree—how the sunny sides of the leaves look yellow-green, and on the shadow side are softened into a somber blue. The play of light in the color lives in the soul of the painter, for he has learned as a child to trust it. Endless wonders of color in nature now surrender to him; the growing human being will no longer become a slavish imitator of nature, but will—if it lies in his destiny—become a creative artist. And if not, he will have attained an understanding and appreciation, awakened from his dullness and no longer blasé toward the world, for he is awakened to reverence.

So color is one of the ways through which the child may be led to understanding and activity in the world. Not only taste and artistic sense, but an awakening conception, a religious acquiescence, and moral creative capacity for activity, are nourished into being. For that which is presented to us from the truest Art, even if we are not ourselves artists, is never a luxury, but a force and a help for our deepest being in our relations to the spiritual world around us.

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