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CHILD AND MAN

A JOURNAL FOR CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

Editorial: <i>True comprehensiveness</i>	page 5
Hugh Hetherington: <i>Britain's oldest comprehensive</i>	7
Alan Howard: <i>Nature of Waldorf education</i>	10
Derek Morrell: <i>Happiness is not a meal ticket</i>	13
<i>What is a Comprehensive School?</i>	17
F. M. Newell: <i>Steiner school pupils excel in creativity</i>	20
Earl Ogletree: <i>Steiner in America</i>	23
Eileen Goodwin: <i>All-age cricket</i>	26
Colette Courtais: <i>A new impulse in French nursery schools</i>	29
Margaret Heitler: <i>Under one roof</i>	31
R. Lissau: <i>Q and F</i>	34
Drummond Hunter: <i>Education for life</i>	37
Comment	39
Book Reviews	42
Notes on our contributors	44
List of schools	46

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EDITORIAL

True comprehensiveness

WALDORF or Steiner education is now entering its second 50 years of existence. "We owe to the Waldorf schools", said Professor H. Becker of the Max Planck Institute for Educational Research, on the occasion last autumn of the golden jubilee celebrations in Stuttgart, "the idea of a college of teachers as an institution for regular deliberation and organized conversations, not about marks and streaming, but about the actual content of the lessons".

Another point Professor Becker made was that, right from their inception, Waldorf schools have always cultivated their own kindergarten. Steiner, he said, "did not yet know of the results of modern research, which show that social integration must begin earlier than we have until recently assumed. But he anticipated, out of his instinctive genius, what has today become a central theme in educational discussions—education before school age".

Stuttgart, said the mayor of that city on the same occasion, "has repeatedly been able to support the development of the Stuttgart Waldorf schools, for we are firmly convinced that nothing is more beneficial to the state schools system than the counter-balance of independent schools which so often have blazed the trail in educational progress. Waldorf education can well be called Germany's most successful contribution to the theory and practice of education in the world".

The state Minister of Education, Dr. Hahn, said the Waldorf schools were of the highest interest in connexion with the current much discussed reform of the West German schools system. Their experience of working for 50 years as comprehensive schools could not be ignored. A study of Waldorf pedagogy would show that many of the ideas which today are looked upon as new, had been tested out in Waldorf schools during the last half century. Proofs of this, Dr. Hahn said, were to be found in the craft and art teaching in Waldorf schools, the early start with foreign languages, the main lesson system, and their comprehensive structure.

In the United Kingdom, each of the six Steiner schools celebrated the jubilee of Waldorf education in its own way, and through their association, the Steiner Schools Fellowship, arranged a luncheon at Brown's Hotel in London which many of their teachers attended, and to which prominent educationists were invited, together with Waldorf teachers from Scandinavia, West Germany, America and France. The result was an educational galaxy. The Under Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mr. Edward Short attended (he

sat in the centre of the high table, between Mr. L. F. Edmunds, principal of Emerson College and Mr. Ron Jarman, secretary of the S. S. F.), bringing with him Miss Alice Bacon, Minister of State for Education and Mr. W. R. Elliott, his senior chief inspector.

Both sides, the employers and the employed, of the state school system in England and Wales were represented at the luncheon, the former by Sir William Alexander, secretary of the Association of Education Committees, the latter by the deputy of Mr. Fred Jarvis of the National Union of Teachers (Mr. Jarvis himself had intended to come, but at the last minute was too involved with the teachers' strike). Among other prominent educationists at the luncheon was Professor E. D. C. Peterson, head of the Oxford Institute of Education.

It looks as if Steiner or Waldorf education for normal children is now going to get the deserved and valuable recognition that the other wing of Steiner education, the one devoted to handicapped children, has long since enjoyed. Nothing could be of greater importance, either to Steiner schools themselves or the state system of education. It is true that many of the ideas Steiner incorporated in the first Waldorf school 50 years ago are now beginning to permeate the educational world, as Dr. Hahn pointed out, by some process of spiritual osmosis (or is it rather that we are all influenced by the ruling *Zeitgeist*?). But a more conscious study of Waldorf education for normal children is urgently needed. The question mark of 2,000 A.D. is not far off, and the younger generation are showing, to put it mildly, more than a few signs of bewilderment.

Perhaps the most obvious thing that Steiner schools have to offer is their true comprehensiveness. They have both primary and secondary levels, they are in intention (the intention would be completely fulfilled if, for financial survival, they did not have to charge fees for most of their pupils) for children of all social strata, their classes are unstreamed throughout the length of their 12-year course, their teachers have the experience, the theory and a curriculum which enable them both to teach such classes (no easy matter) and to teach without the tramlines of an examination syllabus to guide them (still less easy).

Yes, true comprehensiveness. "Wholeness" would perhaps be a better word, the "health" which every thinking person is seeking these days. Witness the ecumenical movement in the church (who would ever have dreamed, only a few years back, that Anglicans and Baptists would seek to unite?); the multidisciplinary approach at the universities, especially the new ones such as Sussex, Keele and Essex; the political, economic and social linking that is going on in Europe; the drive towards social integration in the United States and elsewhere (not, however, in South Africa).

F. M. N.

Britain's oldest comprehensive

Coming to terms with examinations.

HUGH HETHERINGTON

THE comprehensive state school is a postwar phenomenon, but the ideal of comprehensive education dates back to Rousseau. The ideal of such an education is founded on the belief that, at least in the greater part of their 10 to 12 years of schooling, children have so much in common that they should be kept together in the same establishment. It is obvious, although regrettable, that such an ideal has political overtones and so has been subjected to political controversy. Teachers and students of education do well to avoid the political, and look rather at the social and educational implications of the arguments for and against comprehensive schooling.

Steiner's conception of a good school was comprehensive from the outset. Since Michael Hall, Forest Row, Sussex, was founded in 1925 on the lines he suggested, the school can fairly claim to be the oldest comprehensive school in the country. While it has never had any difficulty in maintaining its comprehensive character up to its eighth class (when the children are 14-plus), the necessity of preparing for examinations, and to some lesser extent the varying needs of youngsters of this age, have made some form of streaming after that inevitable. It seems that the necessity for this will remain in the foreseeable future. The purpose of this article is to describe what the problems are, and how they have been tackled at Michael Hall.

The first eight years

Children are admitted into the school proper at 6-plus and are expected to remain until they are 18-plus, unless they need to take up an apprenticeship earlier. Those seeking university entrance are able, if necessary, to stay for a thirteenth year to complete their A-level courses. During the first eight years the curriculum offered to all children is the same.

Mixed ability classes are formed with an age range of not more than 12 months. If many children join late and have not started a foreign language, a lower language group may be formed, but such arrangements are looked upon as emergency ones and undesirable. The ideal is, and remains, that given good, imaginative teaching and some extra help where needed, all children should remain together for all subjects until they are 14-plus. Differentiation between children is made in the kind of individual task they are set

either for work in class or at home. Here the work of the cleverest child may be very different from that given to the least intellectual, although both tasks will have in common that aspect of the subject which is suitable to the common age of the two children concerned.

We have now touched upon the whole problem of handling mixed ability classes. Such a practice has been attacked as egalitarianism gone mad or defended as essential social therapy. We must confine ourselves to the question: Is it educationally desirable? In attempting a short answer we must distinguish between "mental age", a limited and misleading concept, and overall maturity, which is correlated most closely, as far as psychologically healthy children are concerned, with chronological age.

The clever child can always be pushed on, segregated in a group with others of his kind, and appear to do wonderfully well. In fact he tends to have little of that real emotional connexion with the subject which will lead to original judgment. He will imitate or adopt the judgments of others and remain indifferent himself. He will thus tend to grow up into a cynical intellectual, "uninvolved" and "uncommitted", to use two fashionable epithets. Able children must indeed be fully stretched, but at their own level of judgment-maturity. I believe that good teachers everywhere know this; streaming is a negation in practice of this truth.

At 14-plus

After 14-plus the intellectual differences become increasingly marked as the intellect itself becomes ever more under the direct control of the developing individuality. These differences can no longer be catered for without streaming to some limited extent. In order to explain where streaming takes place at Michael Hall and where it does not, we must differentiate between the various kinds of lessons and their different aims. Firstly, there are the main lessons, given for two hours each morning in one subject for up to six weeks at a stretch. These cover the so-called general subjects in the humanities and sciences. In these main lessons the subjects are given comprehensive treatment with constant reference to other disciplines. Thus physics or chemistry may include a study of renaissance thought or some of the problems of the industrial revolution, history may make excursions into literature, philosophy or economics.

Secondly, there are those subjects which require constant practice and must therefore be given regularly. In this group we find languages, sciences and mathematics. It will be noted that most of the subjects in this group will be handled or at least touched

upon in the main lessons, but there the approach is then to the overall grasp rather than to the memory, or to the acquiring of specific skills.

Thirdly, there are the art and craft lessons. One art or craft is given for at least a month at a time in probably two double lessons a week. In addition a singing and music appreciation lesson is given weekly. Fourthly, there are the movement lessons: eurythmy, gymnastics and games. These again must of course be practised regularly.

Of these four groups, streaming is called for only in the second, namely languages, sciences and mathematics. The mother tongue is given regular practice twice weekly, but of course is being constantly exercised in other lessons. The pupils are not streamed for this subject until 17-plus.

After seventeen

This general pattern would no doubt continue after 17-plus, were it not for the existence of external examinations. For the last two years at school, Michael Hall has to modify its curriculum by making room for up to 25 examination lessons a week, retaining some 15 non-examination lessons. The former are all streamed in O and A level courses, the latter comprise what is salvaged of the original Steiner curriculum and are unstreamed. These latter are as follows: seven periods a week of main lesson; two to three movement lessons; three art/craft lessons; one to two singing and music appreciation lessons; one discussion lesson.

That this separation into streamed and unstreamed lessons is not welcomed, will be obvious. The first baneful result is that, quite naturally, pupils look upon the examination lessons as the first priority and the others, at best, as interesting luxuries. The only way in the end to overcome the difficulty is to take *all* school work into account as evidence for fitness for further education or entry into industry and to examine it accordingly.

If and when this is finally done and the schools are left free to devise their own curriculum for the last four years, Michael Hall will be able to call itself a fully comprehensive school with the minimum of segregation between its pupils. It would be tempting to describe what might be done, if the school were left quite free of external examinations in the upper classes, but this lies beyond the scope of this article. In any case it would be unwise to embark on such a description without some years of practical experience to draw upon. Let us hope that some day they will be to hand.

Nature of Waldorf education

Each of the Waldorf schools is autonomous, but all have something in common.

ALAN HOWARD

THE first Waldorf school came into existence at the instigation of a group of business men in Stuttgart, the leading spirit among them being Dr. Emil Molt, managing director of the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory. It is said he made one stipulation: that it should be a school where the children of his employees could sit down together with those of the firm's directors if they so chose.

That was 50 years ago, in the social upheaval following the first world war. A strong feeling was abroad—even though it may not have persisted—that preferential treatment in education for children of the rich should be done away with. If society was to be improved, children should be educated together, so that, apart from learning what they normally learn in school, they might also learn something from one another as human beings.

That was a vital and realistic act of comprehensiveness in the first Waldorf school. Though the Waldorf schools that followed have become dependent on fees, and though in some cases the fees have become prohibitive for many people, when it is a case of admitting a child it is still the child that matters and not the social milieu from which it comes. That does not mean that the fee is waived. That would be economic suicide, but all Waldorf schools have scholarship assistance arrangements, whereby no child need be excluded on financial grounds.

Steiner himself went further than this. He noticed, probably more than any other man of his time, that while there was a move generally in the world to get rid of class distinctions and privileges based on wealth, we were fast slipping into another kind of distinction, based on intellect.

How far that has gone in our day it is hardly necessary to dwell on. The struggle for intellectual status and the fond illusion that, if only we can find the right way, everybody can attain it, have now reached gigantic proportions. Hardly is a child in the kindergarten before parents are planning and worrying about his university career. The question with which children are greeted on their return from school—"How did you get on in school today?"—still carries the anxious implication, "Did you get on *better* than Tommy or Jane" in arithmetic or spelling or what have you.

The struggle is all the more acute because its rewards are

believed to be open to all. In the past you were born into a certain class, and there was nothing much you could do about it. But the possibilities of intellectual superiority, with all the social perquisites that go with it, have nothing to do with birth or heredity. It is fair game for all. Silk purses can be made out of sows ears, and the "ideal" of competition rampant in the business world, where many a man starting with nothing has made a fortune, have become the ideal of the classroom.

Schools have become places where, if you are prepared to learn the technique of pitting your brains against others, you can do as well as anyone else. At appropriate intervals you carry home a report which not only shows just where you stand in the class (-room) struggle, but also explains how you can improve that position.

The difference

In shaping the first Waldorf school, Steiner abolished all that. There was to be no classification of children from the start into intellectual "streams", no class lists, no examinations, no holding back a grade or promoting a grade, no prizes, no honours boards, no reports with marks or snobbish Greek symbols, no compulsory homework, no punishments of additional learning material.

It was to be a school where teachers and children met as human beings to share an experience in the knowledge of man's evolution and development in the world.

Why did Steiner do this? It would call for another article or two describing his researches and conclusions about man and the world to do justice to such a question. Suffice it to say that he made his programme on the basis of what was then and still is an unusual view of man—unusual in the sense while we pay lip service to it we are still reluctant to make it the basis of our practical activities.

He believed that the essential being of man was spiritual, not physical, and that he must be treated as such. The physical was simply the form in which that spirit lived, the instrument whereby it acted. The individual spirit in each child was the important entity. What it had received through inheritance by way of physical brain power was not to be the criterion of human worth, and while education had as one part of its task the development and training of that brain power, it had a far higher, and indeed more truly social, task in preserving in each child a sense of human worth.

He also held that the individual entity had even had previous experience of being human, and would have subsequent experiences in the future; that the essential thing any child—any human being at all at whatever age—had to learn was just the business of being human, of understanding all that is implicit in humanity.

What one did, whether as genius or as unskilled workman in contributing to the present form and standard of civilization, was simply incidental, a temporary environment for the continuing work of moral and human evolution.

For Steiner all men and all ages contribute to the evolutionary aims of man and these are different from the aims of any particular civilization, which so often makes a typical product of the age into an ideal for education and life. The education of Chinese children, for instance, on the sayings of Chairman Mao and the ability to fire a rifle, is a case in point.

School, for Steiner, was to be a place where one could first experience the fact and potential of being human—not just clever or stupid, gifted or ungifted—but human; and where young human beings would acquire knowledge not as a thing in itself, or as a currency for purchasing social position or place, but as a means of understanding their own nature. The child was to be allowed to grow in a sphere removed from competitive pressures, and where at any point he could have the feeling as he listened to his teachers, “This is my story he is telling, the story of man to which I belong, of which I am an essential part, and to which I have to make my contribution in the future”.

Conclusions

In a word, Waldorf education is essentially moral; not didactically moral, but creatively moral. It uses knowledge as cumulative human experience for the purpose of helping all human beings to make what contribution they can, in whatever sphere they find themselves, for the benefit of all mankind. You can't be more comprehensive than that.

Such has been the character of Waldorf education ever since it was initiated 50 years ago, and is still what is striven after in its 80 schools in places as far apart as Bergen in the north and Sydney in the south, Vienna in the east and Honolulu in the west. All these schools are autonomous, all are different. No one school has any jurisdiction or authority over any other, no bureaucratic organization binds them together. Yet they form a whole in the educational ideal that inspires them all.

It has not been, and still is not, easy to maintain this ideal. The pressures from the everyday world, which by and large determine educational aims and methods, have more than once almost overwhelmed the Waldorf schools. Compromises have had to be made. But the schools have not only survived, but there are many indications that what they strive for is slowly making its way into the thinking of more and more people in the free world. The very preoccupation with the concept of comprehensiveness in public education is a case in point.

Happiness is not a meal ticket

A few months before his death last year, Derek Morrell gave an uncompromising talk on curriculum to the Anglo-American Educational Alliance. Below is an extract.

DEREK MORRELL

TO UNDERSTAND what is really going on in school, we have to come to grips with extremely complex, constantly changing and immensely particular systems of person interaction, involving complex relationships between the experience, language and values which the pupils bring into the school from their homes and neighbourhoods, and those which are imported by the teacher.

In a nutshell, if there is positive reciprocity of feeling and aspiration as between the teachers and the taught, satisfying to both, there is a describable curricular reality: the teachers are contributing to the learning which is taking place, they are helping to create new realities. But if there is no such reciprocity, if there is a total absence of mutual emotional satisfaction, the curriculum remains simply an idea in the minds of the teachers: it lacks reality, even though the teachers teach and the children go through the motions of scholastic activity.

Learning will, of course, be taking place—for instance, some children with strong feelings and aspirations imported from school or neighbourhood will be able to establish a direct relationship with the books and other materials available in schools despite the teachers' inability to establish a positive personal relationship, whilst others may be learning to reject school as a boring, irrelevant place—but the learning will not be part of any curriculum describable as an organized, purposive intervention in the child's learning.

And if there is negative reciprocity of feeling and aspiration, involving mutual emotional dissatisfaction, then the curricular reality is likely to be destructive or diseducative: indeed, it may explode in violence, and sometimes does.

You will see at once that this is very much a turncoat's perspective on curriculum. When I was at the Schools Council I should have found it difficult to perceive, as clearly as I now do, that the curriculum—if it exists at all—is a structure erected on a base of reciprocal personal relationships. I should also have found it difficult to assert, as again I now do, that in curriculum we are concerned with human beings whose feelings and aspirations are far more real and immediately important to them than the cognitive development which is the educators' main stock-in-trade.

Indeed, value attaches to cognitive development only because it

enables people to organize their feelings in interaction with those of others, to frame realistic aspirations, and to acquire know-how in giving effect to them. It is not an end in itself: it is both a tool and a product of successful living, a means of maximizing the emotional satisfactions of being alive, an aid to coming to terms with the facts of pain, suffering and death.

* * *

I have deliberately just faced you up with those aspects of the human condition which are hard to take since you will have misunderstood what I am trying to say if you write me off as interested only in warm personal relationships, and not at all in the content of curriculum. I am emphatically not saying that all should be sweetness and light, that permissiveness should reign supreme, that it does not matter what the children learn, or that cognitive development is of secondary importance. On the contrary, it matters very much what the children learn, and cognitive development is of primary importance.

My point is rather that it is a waste of time to fuss about what we think the children should learn if we do not understand how to organize a system of pupil-teacher relationships which is productive of our intended learnings. And cognitive development is not something apart from growth towards emotional maturity: it is both the tool and the product of such growth. To live is to feel. To know and to think is to acquire the ability to select those responses to environmental pressures and opportunities which will maximize a feeling of well-being, or happiness—which is the result of maintaining secure identity within a constantly changing and often threatening relational system.

The object of the exercise is to help children towards an integrity of two rationalities—that of feeling, which is no less real than cognitive rationality, but which may be largely private to the individual child, reflecting his experience of a hostile, unloving world; and that of cognitive rationality, which has to be painfully built by the careful, disciplined analysis of all available experience, and which then provides a means of sharing our feelings with others, maximizing those which are productive of reciprocal satisfaction, and minimizing those which shut us up in a hostile private world.

Let us now run a crude check on this curricular hypothesis by looking at some familiar situations. We all know that examination objectives seem to work with some children, but not with others. We all know that some children remain bright, curious and responsive to stimulus throughout the early and middle years of their schooling, but seem to lose heart, becoming dull, apathetic and unresponsive in early adolescence. The question is why?

The particular answers are immensely complex, and so highly

individualized as to fall well outside the scope of this talk. But I suggest that the general answer is clear enough. Wherever opting out occurs, the reason or reasons need to be sought in some breakdown of positive reciprocity of feeling and aspiration as between teachers and taught. The typical British secondary school teacher is a subject specialist. At his best he is genuinely keen on his subject: he has a real feel for it and for its relevance to at least some of his pupils' needs, and a perfectly legitimate aspiration that they should have the opportunity of sharing his values.

At second best, he knows his stuff, and, being himself a product of a society which values success in academic tests, he sees an emotional reward for his efforts in enabling his pupils to achieve a similar success. (There are of course other categories, but it would be kinder not to mention them).

But if the teacher is to influence the learnings which actually take place, these feelings and aspirations on the part of the teacher have to interact positively with the feelings and aspirations of his pupils. At best, the teacher with a real feel for his subject communicates his feelings and aspirations to his pupils, and these engage positively with sufficiently harmonious feelings and aspirations which are latent, emergent or present in his pupils.

At second best, the pupils see value for themselves in academic success, and this too can engage positively with the feelings and aspirations of either of my two categories of teacher—even though, in relation to the first of these categories, the reciprocity may be far from perfect, with the teacher seeing intrinsic value in his subject and the pupil seeing success in it as a meal and status ticket.

* * *

But, at worst, a teacher whose criterion of success is academic achievement finds himself confronted with young adolescents who, as they emerge from the emotionally dependent world of childhood, can see no realistic possibility of achieving a satisfying adult identity by surmounting the hurdles erected by a meritocratic society—whether because they reject the values of that society, as represented by the teacher, or because (not being fools) they are beginning to realize their own limitations or because they are beginning to find that other learning situations, external to the school, are more rewarding.

There is then no possibility of reciprocity of feeling or aspiration, and opting out occurs—as it is bound to do unless the teacher is responsive to the feelings and aspirations of the pupils, and adjusts his own position—if society will permit him to do so—in order to create or re-create a positive reciprocity of relationships.

It is I think profitable to pursue this example a little further, and to ask what has really been learnt by those pupils who have interacted positively with the teacher, but where the pay-off of emo-

tional satisfaction is, on the side of the teacher, a good score of examination success and, on the side of the pupils, a meal and status ticket.

We all know that much of what is committed to memory for the purposes of passing examinations is extremely transient: quite soon after the examination most of the pupils who did well, but then dropped the subject, could not repeat their success. What then is the residual learning? Naturally it differs with different pupils, but for many—perhaps most—it includes some skill in the techniques of passing examinations, coupled with reinforcement of a feeling imported from home and neighbourhood that life is a competition, in which the prizes go to those who can beat the other chap by treating resources of skill and knowledge as private possessions, not to be shared if the result would be competitive disadvantage.

But do we like the kind of society which these learnings have helped to produce? Or would we prefer to lay more emphasis on the sharing of resources, on inclusive rather than exclusive relationships, on reciprocal acceptance, communication and co-operation rather than on the loneliness of the competitor?

It is becoming fashionable to say more loudly than in the recent past, that the objectives of teaching include the fostering of autonomous moral responsibility. It is increasingly seen that institutional authority is relative to changing social norms, and that the successful management of social change demands a body of citizens who can make responsible choices with less support than in the past from precedent, tradition and dogma.

So far, so good. But what is really being learnt if the teacher preaches autonomous moral responsibility, but in fact consistently rewards—even by a nod or a yes—conformity with his own opinions? The learning that then occurs is that the teacher represents a hypocritical society, which does not believe or practise what it preaches, that the structure of authority is still wholly institutional, and that what is really desired is conformity to the views of those with established positions in an executive hierarchy.

Authority then becomes confused with authoritarianism, and, in rejecting the latter, those pupils who decline to conform may also reject the former—with disastrous results for themselves and for society.

(Reprinted by kind permission from The Times Educational Supplement).

What is a comprehensive school?

Reproduced from the Spring 1970 issue of the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School's News Sheet.

THE idea is not of course new in Scotland. For generations there have been such schools in most of the Burghs up and down the country—such as Haddington, Dunbar, North Berwick, Falkirk, to name just a few places near at hand. They are open to anyone in the district and have always accommodated the children round about; and as far as these schools in the smaller towns are concerned, the question of the mixing of abilities and social classes is relatively simple. It occurs naturally. In the larger towns, however, such as Edinburgh and Glasgow, the situation is rather different. Here, among others, independent and semi-independent schools, some for boys and some for girls, selective and fee-paying, have also developed. These are not schools set up for the benefit of any particular district, but children travel to them from all parts of the town and the surrounding country areas.

As the main idea behind the Comprehensive system is to bring about a mixture of sexes, abilities and social classes in each school, the problem for these latter schools is quite considerable. Some are situated in districts which are not socially mixed, others are in parts of the town which are not residential. As the law stands at present, the Government has no control over purely independent schools such as ours which, in any case, is already comprehensive.

Much has been said and written in recent months for and against these changes; but the question arises—can children of widely differing abilities really be mixed together in the same class, or is it simply a matter of everyone at a particular school wearing the same blazer and going in by the same gate, thereafter to be split up into various streams according to ability? The headmaster of a large, new Comprehensive school in the Edinburgh area recently told the writer that he was able to keep all the children together in class up to the end of Second Year (Senior), age 14, (our Class 8), but after that he had to stream them. And he was able to keep them together as far as this because his school district was a fairly level middle-class one. After this, presumably, it was simply a question of the same blazer and the same gate.

This, however, is not a comprehensive school in the real sense. The value of having children of varying ability together in the one class is, that they learn to appreciate those differences and to value, in others, qualities which they do not themselves possess. For example, an intellectually clever child learns to respect perhaps the much greater artistic ability—in painting, drawing, acting or music

—which he sees in others in his class, and the presence of these others stimulates him to improve his own weaker abilities; while the presence of the intellectually cleverer pupils is a stimulus to the not so clever. Quite the opposite situation is produced if we place all the more intellectual children in the one stream and all the less gifted in another. The first tend to over-value their abilities, while the second undervalue their powers and feel that they belong to a less important world. All this is very undesirable. Very few children have not some quality, even simply one of character, which is not a valuable contribution to a class. A less clever pupil who has to work hard to master the more intellectual subjects is an example from which the clever children can learn. The latter—who find intellectual activities easy—do not always possess the stamina to overcome some harder problem which may meet them in later life, and it is good that they should be able to see, during their school years, how people face up to difficulties. Again, the less clever child is often very warm-hearted and helpful and can bring to his class just those qualities which are essential to social life. In short, a school class should be a representative section of human life, and because of this each pupil is better fitted for life in the world outside.

This is a part—but a part only—of a true social training. For it is not a mere mixing, for example, of the social classes in a school which will produce a greater social harmony in the world. And if even this mixing has to stop at the age of 14, after which the young people are all streamed off in accordance with ability, the most valuable part of the training will be lost.

In the Rudolf Steiner schools the curriculum is such that we are able largely to avoid these difficulties. Children of all abilities are able to go right through together up to Class 12, because in the Main Lessons a wide range of different subjects is covered not all of which have a necessary connection with the examinations which any one child sits. Then, for the rest of the day, in classes 11 and 12, the young people work in smaller groups for their actual examination subjects. During these two years some are working for A-level Oxford, some for Scottish Highers, and some for O-level; but they are all together during the Main Lesson. This situation is not *entirely* perfect, for the Steiner School curriculum aims at exams being taken only *after* Class 12, the examination system on the Continent being somewhat different. But at least we make the best of both worlds, even if we have to omit eurythmy, handwork and some artistic work during Classes 11 and 12. Exam Art is taken by nearly all the children.

A Rudolf Steiner School is therefore more truly Comprehensive than what the new law is likely to achieve. It is right, of course, that the 11+ tests should be abolished and that a mixture of social

classes has its value; but these alone will not produce the greater social harmony that our rulers expect. A true understanding of Man—as is built up, according to age, in the lessons from Classes 1 to 12 in the Steiner schools—is the basic essential. Without this, nothing of great social importance can result. It is a question of Education, the way in which it is carried out through the years, as well as the keeping of the school classes together, which will produce the kind of people they are looking for. It is not simply enough to say: “Your school shall be Comprehensive!” It is a different kind of Education which is also required.

Emerson College

Forest Row, Sussex, England

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Steiner school pupils excel in creativity

Creativity increases with age and has four facets

F. M. NEWELL

WHEN he and his wife were both students at Emerson College, Earl Ogletree, with her help, completed his investigations for a thesis* for which he subsequently earned his doctorate from Chicago State University. He gave creativity tests to Steiner school pupils in England, Scotland and West Germany, and to their opposite numbers in state schools. He found, in short, that the former did significantly better than the latter.

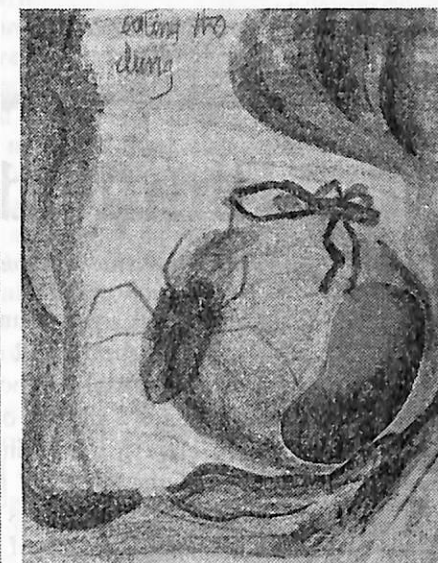
The state schools, he says, were characterized as being highly "subject-matter oriented", whereas the Steiner schools attempted "to fit the curriculum to the child in terms of his natural stages of psycho-physical development". For the experiment he chose three out of the five Steiner schools in England (Wynstones, Michael House and Elmfield), the one in Scotland (Rudolf Steiner School), and two (Stuttgart and Munich) out of some 30 Steiner schools in West Germany. The six Steiner schools chosen were matched with six corresponding state schools. In all he tested 666 state school children, and 499 Steiner school children, all at primary level (grades three to six inclusive).

The tests Ogletree administered were the "Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking". Form B (verbal and figural) of those tests was given to the fourth, fifth and six-graders, while the third graders got the verbal section of Form A and the figural section of Form B. The tests were designed to measure fluency of ideas, flexibility of ideas, originality, and elaboration of ideas. The purpose of the investigation was "to determine the effects of two methods of education upon creativity".

The data Ogletree collected on the pupils included age, occupation of parents, teachers' assessments of their pupils' creativity, and the age at which a pupil had entered a Steiner school.

Ogletree's main finding is that the Steiner school pupils obtained significantly higher scores on the tests than the state school pupils. This conclusion held with few or no exceptions, even when the total results were analysed by social class, country, grade level, age and sex.

* "A Cross-cultural study of the Creativeness of State and Steiner School Pupils in England, Scotland and Germany".



In one of the figural tests of creativity the children were given a yellow bean-shaped form to stick on blank white paper and asked to make a picture. In the four answers above (the originals are in colour crayon), the form has been made into an owl (top left), a grub on a rose, a mushroom, and a ball of dung being eaten by sacred scarab beetles.

He also found that the English pupils, whether in Steiner or state schools, scored significantly higher on most of the creativity measures than their Scottish and German peers. The German pupils, taken as a whole, surpassed Scottish pupils on the verbal measures, while the Scottish pupils outscored both German and English pupils on the figural measures.

Two other of Ogletree's findings were that creativity increased with age, and that the girls excelled boys significantly.

Since his return to the United States and the award of his doctorate, Ogletree has obtained an assistant professorship in Chicago State University and, with his wife, has been the prime mover in the recent opening of a Steiner school in an inner-city district of Detroit.

Elmfield School

An educational trust based on the work of Rudolf Steiner

Elmfield School was founded in 1946 on the outskirts of Stourbridge, 12 miles from Birmingham. It is a day school for boys and girls from 4 - 17 years of age. Children of 3 are admitted to the nursery class for mornings only. Pupils are prepared for the General Certificate of Education ('O' level) which enables them to enter Grammar Schools and Colleges of Further Education.

All enquiries should be addressed to:

THE SECRETARY, ELMFIELD SCHOOL,
LOVE LANE, STOURBRIDGE, WORCS.
Tel: Stourbridge (0384 3) 4633

Steiner in America

Student reactions to Steiner's picture of child development.

EARL OGLETREE

RECENTLY I used A. C. Harwood's *Recovery of Man in Childhood* as one of three required textbooks for an undergraduate teaching course. My motive for its inclusion was not to proselytize Steiner or Waldorf education, but to give the undergraduates a different view of child development and curricular practices, in relation to conventional theories and ideas in these areas.

Conventional curricular practices, for the most part, "fit the child" into a prescribed programme, which has either been established by tradition or based on clever, intellectual schema thought out by educators and administrators, who have never taught children or whose experiences in a classroom are ancient history. This prescribed curriculum, in most cases, has little relationship to the way children develop and learn.

To see the harvest of this approach, one only has to view the educational havoc and chaos prevalent in the inner-city public schools of New York and Chicago, for example, where academic achievement standards are low and discipline problems and dropout rates high. This disparity is in no small part the result of an incompatibility between the school system's curricula offerings (including teaching methodology) and the pupil's style of learning, his cognitive and affective needs and development. There is little question that this gap must be bridged before any meaningful and effective kinds of education can take place.

It is encouraging to find teachers and administrators at all levels taking the work of Jean Piaget, James Bruner, Ilg, Ames and other child developmentalists seriously as a rationale for curriculum development. They are honestly seeking ways to implement curricula innovations in terms of the learner's needs. To date, however, attempts have been less than ideal or even practical. There exists a lack of real insight into human development and of a substantial rationale for what material and content are appropriate at particular age levels. One major factor is the misplaced emphasis on the cognitive aspects of development, rather than on the total child, which still undergirds the thinking of most educationists.

It is this information gap that can readily be closed by the ideas and educational practices related to human development as expounded by Steiner. The question is how? How does one translate or transpose or amalgamate Steiner's ideas on child development

with conventional ones to form a palatable rationale? My attempt was made with 60 undergraduate students.

One-third of the course was allotted to problems and discussions related to human development and behaviour. Through lecture, discussion, films and student reports, Piaget, Ilg and Ames, Bruner, Almy and Olson (all child developmentalists) were dealt with in some depth, along with Harwood's book, to ascertain the existence of stages of learning readiness and to develop an understanding of human development. Using Piaget's conservation of matter, area and volume, students also worked with children and elementary school pupils to determine whether the subject's level of cognitive development was preconceptual, concrete operational or formal operational.

The students were, in addition, asked to summarize in their own words Harwood's presentation and that of the above educational theorists, of the learning styles and characteristics of the learner at the four major levels of development—1-7, 7-9, 9-14 and over 14. In the light of these characteristics they developed a lesson on an appropriate topic for a particular stage of development which would involve the learner motorically, affectively and cognitively, placing greater emphasis on one or two of these areas, depending upon age level.

The students found the course work relevant, but had difficulty with Steiner's ideas as expounded in the Harwood book. Some students were delighted with the different view of human development, others found it too difficult to grasp. Here are some of the students' answers to the question: "What *did* you find or *not* find interesting about the Harwood book? Comment freely".

Let me begin with the negative reactions. "Too theoretical and philosophical". "An excellent book with some very good ideas and concepts pertaining to child development, but too difficult to comprehend without re-reading a number of times". "Didn't give the book a chance; rejected it immediately. Never allowed myself time to sit down and really attempt to absorb its meaning. Too difficult". "Too difficult, too boring; I like books that get to the point and don't confuse the reader".

Most of the negative comments dealt with difficulties in comprehension. Several students commented that to "grasp the meaning one must make pictorial images of the concepts presented", as it was difficult to link them logically. Harwood's metaphoric and rather poetic style did not enhance the readability of the book as far as these students were concerned.

On the other hand, at least half of the students enjoyed the book and found it relevant and interesting. Herewith are some of their comments. "Found psychology of learning relevant and applicable". "Text was rather difficult but with re-reading it revealed

many important observations of child-development all teachers should realize". "Most interesting book". "Adolescent section very interesting". "Enjoyed reading Harwood book, even though it was difficult to read in places, because it could be directly related to children. I could relate it to my nephew in relation to his growth characteristics and Harwood's comments". "Excellent insights into developmental stages of childhood; more class time needed to discuss this book". "The presentation of facts concerning the physical growth and psychic maturation of the child was quite fascinating and even mystical at times".

In all fairness, it must be pointed out that although most of the students had had several courses in philosophy and child and educational psychology, their knowledge and background in the field, nevertheless, were limited. In addition, they had had little experience working with children either singly or in groups.

With some of my graduate students, especially inservice teachers, who have had actual classroom experience, Steiner's ideas, when related in an intellectual form to curriculum development and child development, there was greater receptivity and rapport. Even they, however, did not grasp the full significance of Steiner's rationale of the growth and developmental processes, although they did agree that it made sense. There was an openness and a hypothetical acceptance.

A few undergraduate students had little or no difficulty grasping Steiner's educational and developmental principles and were actually excited about the ideas. It should also be added that college students generally are caught up in the throes and pressures of examinations essays and voluminous lists of required readings. To most of them reading or studying a book is a matter of skimming and perusing, and not contemplating, to ready themselves for exams. As indicated by the responses, most students could not comprehend the ideas presented in Harwood's book by merely one reading. It took several. Several students commented: "One must be able to grasp these concepts in pictures, in wholes, as it were, and live with them for a time".

An alternative would be to present Steiner's ideas in more of an intellectual and logically rational form. Steiner himself, when asked by Dr. Unger and Adolf Arenson (see *Fruits of Earnest Study of the Lectures of Rudolf Steiner*, a commemoration address given by Arenson in Stuttgart, March 30, 1930) how much of the esoteric information might one reveal in open lectures, replied: "Everything, even the most intimate, if it is developed in purely intellectual form, and if it is logically substantiated". That perhaps gives the key to presenting Steiner's educational ideas in contemporary terms today.

All-age cricket

Sixth-form colleges are a form of segregation.

EILEEN GOODWIN

A RECENT visitor to the hostel for boarders at Wynstones was struck by the sight of a game of cricket on the lawn in which young people of various ages from 8 to 18 were happily playing together. "That", he said, "is an unusual sight. So often boys of one age think it beneath their dignity to play with younger children". His remark highlighted a feature which is fundamental to the way of life of a Steiner school. Pupils enter these schools at six, or at five if there is a kindergarten, and continue until 18 or 19, and so a community is developed where all ages of children and adolescents can live and grow together.

This experience of living with a wide age range is a vital part of education. Just as it is natural and healthy for boys and girls to be educated together and to have both men and women on the staff, so it is natural and healthy to have a society which includes all ages and stages of development. It is valuable for an immature personality to experience the stages of life above and beneath his own. To be cut off from others who are in a stage of development he has recently gone through or is about to enter, bars him from an essential factor in his own harmonious development and self-understanding, and encourages the growth of barriers between himself and other people.

* * *

A vital process in the development of a child's personality is the gradual change from his experience of unquestioning acceptance of life and the people round him, to the awakening of objective awareness of himself and other people. This dawning sense of his own individuality as a separate person needs to base itself on a feeling of what led up to the present stage. A child is not by nature objectively conscious of the stages that he has come through, and the presence of younger children acts as a living example from which he unreflectingly draws an impression of the previous stage and of that to which he will continue.

This continuity helps to build up an experience of inner coherence and integration which is indispensable if his developing personality is to find its true strength. For to say that a child is living in his "formative years" means that an experience of this kind, even though it remains below the level of conscious thought,

takes root in him and becomes the basis of a fundamental attitude to life. And in the first tender stages of self awareness he is especially apt to lose this feeling of coherence and a disastrous feeling of disorientation may result.

Is not the current lack of a clear picture of how man has reached his present stage largely responsible for the disorientation felt by many of the younger generation? If those to whom a young person looks up cannot give him some sense of meaning to life, it is as if he suddenly awoke and found himself engaged in an exhausting march in a long column across barren land, for which no one could give him a reason.

Is not the natural reaction simply to drop out of the line? This tendency is strengthened if in his most impressionable years the natural sequence of his experience is disrupted, so that he loses the sense of his own continuity which should come from living in a natural community. And has not the helplessness which the older generation feel in the face of this resentment of the young also been contributed to by their own frequent inability to maintain a living contact with each stage of life?

* * *

It is natural in a family for the different members to flourish together, and learn tolerance for each other's difficulties and consideration for each other's needs. Especially now when so many young people come from broken homes, they need the experience of living in an environment resembling a family. Such an environment encourages the older members to care for the younger ones—it tempers their budding egoism with the quality of protectiveness and balances their urge for freedom with a sense of responsibility. And the younger children need heroes to worship; they are at a stage when to look up to someone older as a guide is an essential part of their moral development. Children learn not by moral precept but by example. They need a pattern to model themselves on for each successive stage if they are to develop as they should.

There is great doubt nowadays as to the point when an adolescent becomes adult. At what age should he or she marry, vote, take a mortgage or the pill? The maturing of a school child into an adult is of course a continuous process. He has experienced a change from each class, from kindergarten onwards, and, as his group has become a new class each year, he has become aware of the responsibilities which go with that stage towards the children below him. This process reaches a culmination when he attains the age of 17 or 18. He is now able to discuss things on a level with an adult, that is to say, he has reached the normal stage of consciousness of an adult.

At this point he needs as much as ever younger children round

him, for he is just reaching the possibility of mature understanding of himself in the light of his earlier experience. He needs the presence of younger children in order to relate himself in full consciousness to the social environment in which he has lived with the relative unawareness of a child. The ideal is not that, having been rather isolated from other age groups, he should suddenly be given authority over them as a prefect, still less that he be torn out of his environment and transplanted into a sixth form college where he is deprived of the continuity which the environment had provided.

It is quite false to assume that, because a child has reached a certain level of intellectual maturity, as proved by the acquisition of a number of O-levels, he has also graduated in human relations and has reached such a level of self-understanding that he has no need to continue in a social environment which is naturally educative in that respect.

By remaining in that environment, the senior student can participate in various ways in the running of daily life and thus learn a valuable new aspect of human relations: to exert authority without threats of physical force. This is an essential stage in becoming a mature adult and in taking the first steps towards his future role as a parent. Can the opportunity to take a course in mothercraft compensate for the lack of living with small children just at the age when the student begins to ask why certain things are done with them, especially having regard to the fact that for many people the most responsible job they ever undertake is the upbringing of their own children?

* * *

The whole of life is a struggle to balance the conflicting needs of the individual self and of other needs which pull on our attention. There is always the temptation to pursue our chosen path in selfish isolation rather than to remain a member of society and make a more limited contribution. It is fatally easy to build for ourselves ideal conditions for our own work, but these immediately isolate us from the reality of the world. The community in which a young person's most impressionable years are spent should be a comprehensive one where human life is unfolding in all its aspects and which is a true reflection of a balanced society in the outside world. In such an environment the immature personality can best find his way to his own self and to other people.

A new impulse in French nursery schools

Knowledge of children calls for participation.

COLETTE COURTAIS

THE FIRST homes for children in France, the *salles d'asile*, were founded in the last century to shelter abandoned children, and with the devoted help of Pauline Kergomard, they established their image, from the outset, as the first nursery schools. They were soon to receive official recognition.

The original impulse of concern for children has survived in the nursery schools. These do not pretend to play the role of the family, for they recognize that the family is irreplaceable. But, even where a child receives affection at home, there still remain vital sources of enrichment which are not necessarily open to him. Technology has invaded even family life and individuals are harassed by the inhuman pressures and tempo of daily existence. Fruitful exchange within the family becomes less and less frequent; certain values of which children are still in great need are less and less recognized.

In the context of our technological civilization where a purely rationalistic way of thinking so often prevails, French nursery schools occupy a distinct position as compared with the primary schools. Unlike the latter their aim is not just to impart knowledge, but rather to help a child to blossom and develop harmoniously. This attitude has led the nursery schools to explore domains which used to be considered as out-of-date or unreal. Literary and artistic movements reacting against pure rationalism have found a sympathetic echo in nursery schools.

Fairy tales, legends and sometimes myths are the basis of the nursery teachers' daily work. At a recent national conference the nursery schools affirmed their wish to become "conservatoires of fairy tales and legends". At the following conference the significance of festivals was studied. Christmas, Candlemass, Carnival Time, Easter and Mothers' Day (a modern invention particularly appropriate to nursery schools)—all now belong to school life. They are special moments which the child lives intensely, for which he waits impatiently and which he remembers with happiness.

As the year unfolds, the seasons permeate life rhythmically with their individual qualities. Autumn and winter give a living force to the value of shelter and protection, to the warm intimacy of the home, whereas spring and summer point to the value of opening

oneself to the world.

"It is from within the certainty of being protected and of finding one's centre, that forces of expansion can blossom. It is in this certainty that life takes roots and springs up. The happiness of being enfolded is wholesome". This was said four years ago by Madame Delchet, Paris's Inspector of Nursery Schools.

The house, according to Bachelard, is not "an object" but "a large cradle". As the child grows, "the original enclosed space where life starts", opens out. In the great unknown which flows around the home, islets of familiarity with life are born. They are emotional landmarks from which a structuring of space arises.

In the elaboration of the child's world, imagination plays a vital part. In contact with the real, which is still unknown, hypotheses which give security are created. They are formulated by means of language which is not merely a way of expression but a form of behaviour, an activity of the consciousness (according to Mircea Eliade) which enters the world "as if it were creating it".

In her class, the nursery teacher tries to strengthen the children's relationships with the world, to strengthen qualities of experience by having the child re-tell previous situations, thus re-creating and confirming them, and by creating situations where the child experiences a new happiness of "taking roots and springing up".

In a Parisian school, a small girl one day brought her teacher an autumn rose. The whole group of children grew to love the rose. But one day the flower faded and was put on the window-sill, where the wind blew off the petals. To console the children, the teacher suggested that the petals were flying away to a far country. The children enjoyed imagining together what that country was like, and it became the theme of the class life: storytelling, drawing, painting, dancing. In the following spring, the class interest was especially quickened when the buds started opening—in which bud had the rose come back?

"Doubtless, we speak too much of a specific mentality of childhood," Madame Delchet once said at a congress. "Sometimes, this has become fixed for us as a series of concepts which form a screen between the child and us. So the experience of the child is arbitrarily rationalized and appears to us weak and absurd compared to our own.

"Whereas the experience of a child has always its fullness, is never absurd, and is always unfolding a living logic. Many of us in obliterating this screen, devote ourselves to reaching the living universe of the child".

Under one roof

The whole does, or at least should, come before the parts.

MARGARET HEITLER

IN COMMON with many other words, the word "comprehensive" is being overused, until its rightful meaning is all but lost. When used in connexion with "school", it mostly conjures up visions of a certain type of building, sprawling around in a mindless confusion of bits and pieces linked by certain features: floor-to-ceiling windows, flat roofs, and a neutral, pallid building medium. Gone are the Gothic-style, grey-stoned educational edifices of yore.

Many of the new erections are in fact, comprehensive schools, the pride of local education committees up and down the land. Under the flat roofs our children are gathered "comprehensively", i.e., regardless of class, academic ability and father's pay packet, all share certain amenities provided by the state. The involvement of politically orientated egalitarian idealism in education is one of those twisted entanglements that bedevil our age. In the camaraderie of childhood, it is good that all share and share alike. But how really "comprehensive" is a common roof?

Visiting one such school recently, I was amazed at the fantastic layout of the building. Daedalus and his labyrinth must have inspired the architect. A maze of passages ran in all directions, narrow staircases linked floor with floor at apparently random points. Worst of all, perhaps, given a child's environmental needs, there was no central assembly place coordinating rationally with the whole. There was only a hall, albeit with a fine stage, stuck on at a queer angle to the rest of the building. It would have been impossible for any body of children to have dispersed in an orderly way from that hall and so pass to their various class rooms.

On a visit to Norway last year, I saw a new school in a small town well within the Arctic Circle, which shows a far better understanding in this respect. The heart of the school is its assembly hall, and radiating out from it were the many classrooms. It is the pride of the town. It was good to meet this feeling for the meaningfulness of the whole environment as an educational factor, and to see it so well expressed.

I was reminded of a main staircase in a certain Steiner School where the natural curve of the stairs and well moulded wooden handrail leads one up and down stairs in a beautiful relaxed way. One would not want to push and shove one's fellows on that stairway. The young human being has also to be educated in sociability.

A "comprehensiveness" in the school building can be of the greatest help.

In the sphere of the social, one aspect of the comprehensiveness of the Steiner Schools shows up clearly—the fact that under the common roof the total age range of childhood unfolds itself. From the seven-year-olds of the first class to the young men and ladies of 18, the school is one. The hero worship of the younger for the older child and the protectiveness that the older can show for the younger have a chance to develop in the right way within the discipline of the whole school.

Within the purely educational field, as opposed to what to some may appear to be only the accidents of education, how important is the fully comprehensive school? How can you keep together the brilliantly intellectual child with the sturdy practical young thing who only wants to do things with his hands? Of course, if the passing of examinations is the only criterion of education, you cannot and you do not. But if we want more than this for our children — they certainly want more for themselves and are beginning to become vociferous—we must remember that revolt is being passed down from the university to the classroom. Full comprehensiveness could be our operative word.

A profitable study could be made of the many friendships that develop between an intellectual child and his more stolid practical pal. They probably know subconsciously their need of each other.

To grasp the importance of this need in a deeper way it is necessary to consider how the intellect of today works in the human being. The analytical thinking so much encouraged nowadays—most of us have no other—breaks down all observable phenomena into ever smaller and smaller particles and then proceeds to find from the broken pieces principles of universal application. Here the thinking can be seen to follow a pseudo-metabolic process of breaking down and rebuilding, which, some of us may justly feel as we look at our present culture, lets loose destructive forces similiar to those inherent in the digestive action of true metabolism.

The intellectual child works with these forces, and tends to channel all his energy into this kind of thinking. He has no time for artistic studies. A sensitive child can feel a real horror at this breaking down process, sensing quite rightly that there is no end to it, and that he never will have time for anything else.

The little learned ignoramus of our day faces a bottomless hole in his world. No wonder he turns to his practically minded friend with relief and watches him taking his motor bike to pieces. Here there is a very definite limit to the number of pieces that can be strewn on the pavement. Oh, how satisfying is this taking apart and the subsequent real, putting together again. In a Steiner School the

two friends would be together; no one would "stream" them apart.

In history, literature and art probably only a Steiner School at the moment gives a child a comprehensive experience of the richness of his cultural heritage. Examination needs mean bright light on a few centuries and all the rest in darkness for many children. Writers of a certain period are studied in meticulous detail, outside that period all is ignorance. The same is true of other aspects of humanity's cultural development. Culture moves in cycles, in great rhythms—surely the breaks, the gaps, must seem like a cosmic thrombosis. That this is beginning to reflect back at us, contemporary art, drama and poetry would seem to show, with their inability to portray development. "Happenings" abound, but are unrelated, and human characters neither grow nor develop for good or evil but, held in a kind of moral and spiritual paralysis, are merely the centres around which events gyrate.

And what of that moment in early childhood when we first learn to count? One of Steiner's most valuable contributions to the wellbeing of the child lies here in his insistence that the child first experiences number from the whole to the part.

We experience the truth of this even in adult life as we ponder the beginning of the world. We cannot in reality start from the parts because our natural healthy instinct always wants to know where the parts come from. From what great whole have they been brought forth? If we should lose this healthy instinct, and many people are in danger of doing so, we are indeed divided, both in ourselves and against ourselves, and we can be conquered, robbed of our primal cosmic origin and thrust into abiding meaninglessness.

* * *

In the present day, human education is spreading its net over the earth on an unprecedented scale and by means of unprecedented methods of expression and diffusion. Never have there been so many libraries, periodicals, schools, universities, laboratories—or pupils! And it is remarkable that in this magnificent whole, proportionate in scale to the new age which we are entering, there is no institution, other than Christianity, that seems capable of endowing the immense body of things taught with a true soul. Because he alone has the power to invest human endeavour and enrichment with positive aspirations and a positive objective, the Christian teacher alone is in a position to fulfil, both in the consciousness he employs and the consciousness he transmits, the total function of the educator.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in *Etudes*, April 1945.

Q and F

Have we enough examinations in Britain? Two eminent bodies propose to suppress one and introduce two more.

R. LISSAU

THE TWO bodies investigating the future of sixth forms and of university entrance have now published their joint report, *Proposals for the Curriculum and Examinations in the Sixth Form*.

Proposals can be summarized as follows. Instead of one two-year sixth-form course leading to A-level examination, we shall have two one-year courses, each of which will culminate in an examination. The first, in the sixth year, will be the qualifying examination and the results of it will be available to universities when making their selection. Candidates will have to take five subjects from widely different parts of the curriculum so as to discourage early specialization, and leave the choice of a career for the last year of school. In this year three subjects will be studied which probably will be chosen in response to the requirements of different university faculties. A-level examinations are to be discontinued.

Teachers in Steiner schools will, of course, be happy over a move that makes an early choice unnecessary. In schools which teach a broad curriculum and where there is no outer pressure, career choices are made late. This part of *Proposals* will certainly make for a happier adolescence and fewer disappointments in adult life.

But apart from this attempt to mitigate the evils of early specialization, the prospect is bleak. Two deadening attitudes will continue to be fostered in the minds of the adolescent. Firstly, outside school there is "life", inside there are "subjects". Secondly, you learn in order to pass an examination. In this eighth decade of the 20th century we ought to know enough psychology and sociology to realise that this approach is bound to produce certain social attitudes, and that these attitudes are anything but social. The "subject" is an arena in which a certain game is played, and he who knows how best to beat the umpire can score above his rivals.

Here are two quotations, the first from the present Secretary of State for Education and Science: "We treat our children like computers. The teachers feed in the data. The examining board writes the programme and the child is expected to 'click, click' and produce the answer. But the answer reveals nothing about qualities of character, of heart and of soul which are infinitely more important than the performing of mental circus tricks in mathematics or reproducing chunks of indigestible information".

The second quotation comes from the letter of a sixth-former to the *Times Educational Supplement* (January 16, 1970). In the work leading up to the O and A level examinations, he writes, "Any sense of perspective one gains of the whole spectrum of learning appears to be accidental rather than intended . . . Education of the whole man is a rare event and is in danger of becoming extinct".

The policy makers find lovely phrases, but the classroom reality is different. In the present situation the pull of mercenary rewards (marks, examination, career) is so great that even the worst teacher can hold a class together. Proper teaching, imaginative teaching, teaching in touch with reality becomes a necessity once we have given up these props.

Proposals does not suggest a continuous series of O levels, but "Qualifying" and "Further" examinations instead. So for three to four years an examination syllabus will be the paramount consideration, and this will lead to a further standardization and loss of character of individual schools. Most schools are likely to opt for such a policy.

Anger, moreover, changes to sorrow once we read *Proposals* and its annex in detail. Most of what has been said above was also urged, apparently, by some members of the two working parties. "We are agreed", you read, "that our first aim is to identify ways in which all sixth-formers can receive a balanced education suited to their needs as young people of 17 and 18 years of age. Their curriculum must not take its shape from external pressures exerted in the interests of some narrow view of what they may become".

But you must never forget or overlook, it seems, "the high quality achieved in the sixth forms of the schools in this country in the past". This means preserving an institution at the expense of a new generation, an institution which has served us well in conditions no longer relevant. The best schools in the country have admittedly produced sixth forms which have done specialized, scholarly work of a level almost comparable to that of a university. But sixth forms ought now make way for something better. This is not merely a social value judgement. Reference has already been made, in a previous issue of *Child and Man*, to the experience of Keele University that successes achieved in its final examinations are independent of whether or not the subject was studied in the sixth form. Further evidence pointing in the same direction may be found in the records of those London teaching hospitals which admit to their first M. B. courses students without scientific O levels.

The fact that the dilemma between pupil-centred and selective, elitist education was not resolved lies at the heart of *Proposals*. It would be idle to hope that the progressive forces may be able to assert themselves more as time passes. Once *Proposals* is translated

into practice, the grip of examinations over the schools will probably have been strengthened, without the avowed aim of a broader curriculum having been achieved. Only remember what happened to the G.C.E. This examination also was designed to cut out early specialization, and relied on the provision that O levels were not to be taken before the age of 15-plus. But for the sake of the élitists it was soon decided that an exceptionally able pupil, at the recommendation of his head, could sit O levels before this age, and today many schools have only exceptional boys.

With this precedent in mind *Proposals* looks ominous. Its more liberal provisions can only take effect with the goodwill of schools. "We hope that the choice of seventh-year subjects will not be made until towards the end of the sixth year [and that] the factual content be reduced". Providing schools "divide the teaching week approximately equally among subjects in the sixth form and do not encourage pupils to concentrate their attention selectively on two or three subjects at the expense of the rest, a well-balanced curriculum is assured".

But suppose there were, say 20 schools in the country which were not prepared to tag along? They would force the pace on a narrow front from an early age, select their seventh-year subjects well in advance, and give just enough time in the sixth form to two additional subjects to enable their pupils to scrape through. Would not these pupils (examinations being what they are) achieve relatively higher marks in three subjects of their "Q" examination and then in the three subjects of the "F" examination, of which two at least would be identical with those of the year before? And would it not be these pupils who would gain most university places? Within a few years more and more schools would climb on this bandwagon in order to remain "competitive", and the liberal aims of *Proposals* would be totally routed.

(Further reactions to *Proposals* for the Curriculum and Examinations in the Sixth Form will be found in "Comment" on page 39).

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"The Rudolf Steiner School, New York, over the next three years, needs class teachers, kindergarten, French, German, physical education, craft teachers. Only those interested to emigrate to the United States and to remain with the school should apply. Write, Rudolf Steiner School, 15 East 79th St., New York, N.Y. 10021, U.S.A."

Education for life

Address by Mr. Drummond Hunter at the opening of the exhibition "Growing and Knowing" in Edinburgh, organized last autumn to mark the golden jubilee of Steiner schools.

IN these sociological times it is always important to know what role one is playing at any given time. I was most honoured to be invited to open this Rudolf Steiner Exhibition, but I could not help wondering in what capacity I would be acting when I came along here this morning.

Would I be speaking to you as a trustee of the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School? No—I could hardly have been invited in that capacity! Of course, I enjoy my tea with the other trustees at those meetings which we have in the school staff room, with Steiner himself looking down upon us from the wall, but I am a new recruit, hardly "accultured" as yet, and certainly very far from being qualified to play the role of trustee in public.

On the other hand, it couldn't be that I had been invited in my capacity as Secretary of the Howard League in Scotland. True, the Howard League is concerned with a problem which was one of Rudolf Steiner's chief preoccupations, namely the problem of "education for life", or "social education" as we sometimes say; but the horrors of the penal system have very little to do with the joy in living which pervades and typifies a Steiner school . . .

Then I thought that the whole thing might have had something to do with some articles which I had written in the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Scotsman*. Certainly, not even my best friends have understood these articles; but then not even my best friends are able to understand the Steiner system of education—although, truly, there is very little to understand. No doubt Rudolf Steiner's philosophy is couched in the terminology of the early part of this century. But Mr. Justice Holmes once said, "Never mind the system—what about the *insights*?"—and Steiner's insights into the education of the child as a total person seem to me to be as valid today as they were when he was alive. However, I am not really qualified to deal with the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner and I could hardly have been asked to come here and do something which I am not competent to do.

Then it occurred to me that no system of education maintains closer relationships with the parents than does the Steiner system, and I had a flash of insight of my own: I decided that I had been invited to open this exhibition quite simply in my capacity as a parent and, above all, perhaps as a parent who had come to the Steiner system through the painful experience of having himself been formed within the traditional educational mould, and the

even more painful experience of having watched his children suffer from the same dehumanising process.

The conventional system of education seems so rational, and it is accepted with so little misgiving, that one is almost daunted by it and one certainly has to think twice before calling it in question; but, of course, this system has the appearance of rationality only because it dovetails so smoothly into the larger irrationality of a one-dimensional and materialistic society.

"The heart has her reasons which reason knows nothing of" and Rudolf Steiner's system of education which is formative rather than merely informative (being the education of the growing child along assimilative lines and in accordance with the child's physical, intellectual and emotional needs), represents a higher reason and a higher rationality than that which inspires the orthodox approach.

It is David and Goliath all over again; but we must not forget that it was the Philistine who perished. And our David is by no means a puny fellow. What other educational system in the world has 75 schools in 20 different countries—and this after only 50 years of existence and after Hitler had closed the parent school in Stuttgart during those dark years before the Second World War?

The Steiner system of education is equivalent, in the educational sphere, to the smashing of the atom; but people always come last and, although we have long since smashed the physical atom, we have hardly started on the human one.

As a parent then, and also as a trustee who has a legitimate pride in his connection with the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School, but above all, as an ordinary citizen who sees our society being reduced to some kind of empty shell by an educational process which has had all the real things sucked out of it, I am more than pleased to be here today. Conventional education is education from without inwards: and no matter how hard the "progressive" educationalists may try, no matter how "permissive" they may be, they cannot push the real things back into a system which is fatally closed.

Steiner schools are not "progressive" schools. In a sense they have already progressed, and they are working *all the time* from the other end of the spectrum. Nor are they, contrary to public belief, permissive schools. In conventional and "progressive" systems alike, authority and discipline seem to be in conflict with free expression, but this is a false dichotomy which arises only when discipline is seen, not as a spontaneous growth, but as something which must be imposed upon the day-to-day life of a school. Real freedom is "the daughter of discipline"—and I have much pleasure in opening an exhibition where you will have an opportunity to see the visible and tangible results of the kind of freedom which exists where boys and girls work happily and harmoniously together in a truly human, but at the same time, profoundly disciplined, setting.

Comment

PROPOSALS for the Curriculum and Examinations in the Sixth Form are discussed in a separate article (page 34). Here we only want to comment on one particular and promising aspect. The authors believe that both the work of the sixth form and the examinations should be arranged "so that students may be prepared for the variety of problems they will meet after leaving school. Every person, as a private citizen or at work, is confronted with moral and social questions and also with issues arising from the scientific bases of our technology. Many of the most difficult problems involve all three components and neither in private life nor in the professions and specialisms is it either possible or desirable to ignore these matters. In the future these problems are likely to become even more acute and pervasive and the development of a capacity to study, understand, and contribute to the solution of them must become a major concern of secondary and higher education".

* * *

THE point is further elaborated in the annex to *Proposals*: "The history of the last two decades has shown that with technological development comes an increase in the number and complexity of social and moral problems. Although experts and specialists are needed to provide detailed forecasts about the probable consequences of various courses of action, the final choice must be made by the community as a whole. The nature of future problems is illustrated by some of our current ones: the ethics of organ transplants; the control of pollution; the planing and management of industry; the choice of national priorities; the objectives of education. To be able to choose we need to understand what kind of evidence the experts can offer and how to interpret it. We need to have a sensitivity towards and a care for other people. We need to recognize our own values, moral and social, for what they are and appreciate that in making choices we are helping to decide about the society of the future. Finally we need to develop a critical appraisal of the strength and weakness of our society so that we may contribute to its improvement". These aims are admirable. They can only be achieved by a broad, interdisciplinary approach.

* * *

BUT having established these aims, the authors of *Proposals* fail to state how to achieve them. The sixth forms of the near

future will probably house one half of those born in any given year. Among them will be the future leaders of our society, but also most technicians, professional and commercial men, and administrators. What they will need, every single one of them, is an insight into the nature of our civilization and the complexity of its problems. So, why not give them for, say, half their time in the sixth form a common study which would be the only "subject" examined at the end of this year, and thereby become the qualification for entrance to university and the professions? The rest of the time could be divided between non-academic activities and the acquisition of specialized skills, the "subjects" which loom so large in our present-day curricula. They would be studied further for about half of the time in the seventh year and examined at the end of it. Their choice would depend on the particular career in mind.

* * *

THERE is, of course, one theoretical drawback to this suggestion. It would necessitate a choice of career at the end of the fifth, and not at the end of the sixth year as *Proposals* hopes. But this is only so in theory. Effective choices will be made much earlier unless the nature and teaching methods of our schools are radically changed. On the other hand, if the common study for the sixth year were achieved the differences between the specialized requirements of, for example, medicine and sociology, could much more easily be dealt with if a late change of career were contemplated. If universities were faced with a slightly lower standard of specialized knowledge—and this is not at all certain—it would be good to face the implication. The reduction would be in *factual* knowledge, but not in skills. The gain would be increased maturity and perception.

* * *

THE success of this approach would depend on the nature of the curriculum and the methods of examining and teaching this common study. It would have to be an interdisciplinary study and related to contemporary realities. It would link history, sociology and technology, and test the literacy, mathematical ability and social awareness of candidates. It might easily fall into two parts, one more or less permanent, the other changing year by year. The first would be concerned with the origins of natural science, the nature of scientific investigation, and the impact of science on society. The second would deal with a number of scientific problems, their solution and practical consequences. It should not be beyond the capacity of curriculum makers to ensure that an

examination based on such a course tests both general understanding of the problems of a scientifically based society, and a definite and specialized knowledge of the historical background and mathematical basis of a number of particular scientific discoveries.

* * *

THE National Foundation for Educational Research sometimes engages in academic studies which are worlds apart from what appears relevant to the practising teacher. This is not so, however, with their recent report, *Streaming in the Primary School*, a far-reaching study which took more than seven years to complete. It comes to a number of interesting conclusions. Other things being equal, there is little to choose between streamed and unstreamed schools. But positive results become obvious in unstreamed schools taught by teachers committed to this approach, as compared with the streamed schools, or unstreamed schools where the teachers are not so committed. In other words, a mere new approach is not enough, be it the approach of Steiner schools or the Initial Teaching Alphabet. For it to be effective, the teachers must also be committed to it.

Another conclusion is that there is a surprisingly large number of children in streamed schools who are placed and stay in a stream which manifestly is not the right one according to the rules of the streaming game. And so the question arises: which is the more practical—treating children as unique entities, or according to a mathematical grading on a "scientific" scale?

* * *

EARLIER this year the *Guardian* carried the story of Mrs. Thomas, a teacher apparently held in high regard, who had made a study of various reading schemes. She wrote down her conclusions and sent the manuscript to a publisher. She was given to understand that there was little chance of her work being published because of her critical views on many of the schemes she had investigated, schemes based, of course, on certain books at present in fairly large circulation. We have not studied Mrs. Thomas's conclusions in depth, and therefore cannot judge whether or not this is David's gallant fight against the Goliath of big business. But once again we must realize: the freedom of the teacher to teach according to his conscience is threatened on two sides. There is political and official interference on the one hand, and industry geared to the production and the sale of books, films and tapes for schools, on the other.

Book Reviews

Living Religion Series. Ward Lock Educational Ltd. 6s. each.

OF a series of booklets on the theme "Living Religion", four have so far been completed: Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Protestant Christian Churches. Several more are in preparation.

Each booklet offers a concise outline of the origin and history of the religion, together with the fundamental beliefs and the way of life of its adherents. The style is simple and straightforward and there are photographs and line drawings to illustrate styles in religious buildings, costumes and symbols. The accounts are given by practising members of the religions concerned.

These descriptions should be able to meet an urgent need. Now that members of so many nations and creeds are drawn together in trying to solve world-wide problems, it becomes increasingly important that they should have some understanding of one another's ideals. All religions share a common aim, the reuniting of man with his spiritual origin, but the universal ideal is often lost through lack of sympathy for the particular mode of expression.

On the whole the accounts given are informative rather than

inspiring. The expounding of fundamental beliefs, apart from the ritual or the community life which supports them, tends to be somewhat arid. But in each case quotations are given from the sacred texts, so that not only our logical understanding is involved. Also some descriptions of ways of life, as for instance that of the Buddhist monks, or of festivals like those celebrated in Jewish families, have considerable appeal.

It is perhaps inevitable that the account of the Protestant Christian Churches, with their long, complex history, should be the least satisfactory. However, the writer has given a concise, lucid outline of their development and has presented with impartiality the characteristics of the many different sects, and the part they have played in social events.

Whatever shortcomings there may be in such brief sketches, these books give the opportunity to anyone of goodwill to make himself acquainted with other forms of religious thought and to find therein some ideal with which he can feel at one.

E.H.

Your 12/14-year-old. Your Teenager. Both books by Martha Harris and others. Corgi Tavistock Clinic Mini Books 3s. each.

THESE two books, the last of a series from the famous Tavistock Clinic in London, are by experts

in child psychology and therapy. As a parent, I have to say that I found them over-earnest and yet

superficial. In all their handling of adolescent problems and the many case histories, nowhere do the authors start from the basic question—what is the human psyche? To suggest, as Steiner did, that the psyche might be composed of sympathy and antipathy, and that constant tension between these two elements makes for a healthy soul, is probably too simple an answer for them. So they build up elaborate intellectualizations to explain what is only outer manifestation of the tension. One

is left afraid that all this can only lead to further separation between parents and their offspring. An open acknowledgment that these tensions belong fundamentally to both old and young, and only show themselves very differently, might bring mutual respect and understanding between the generations. Give me Spock. So much of his advice is helpful chatter, while the parent recovers his (or her) nerve.

M.H.

Neill and Summerhill: A Man and his Work. A pictorial study by Leila Berg and John Walmsley. Penguin Education Special. 7s.

THIS booklet sets out to give us, not the ideas of Neill, but the atmosphere which he has created at Summerhill. It does so by means of photographs and through a number of short reminiscences and observations from pupils and staff, past and present. The pictures give us the background. We see no more than children at play and at work,

happy and intent on whatever they may be doing. Similar pictures could be taken in many progressive schools, except that they would not convey the same sense of casualness and physical disorder. Neill's modesty, humanity, sense of humour, imagination and love come through with overwhelming force.

R.L.

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NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Colette Courtais after spending four years in the state teachers' training school of Paris, worked for seven years in nursery schools with children of 2 to 6 years old. As participant in regular study groups when teachers of several schools met, she found their living and voluntary method of research a fertile ground for new ideas. At present studying Steiner's educational methods at Emerson College in Sussex.

Eileen Goodwin. A graduate of Reading University who spent some years in a legal office before taking the Michael Hall Teachers' Training Course (now conducted at Emerson College in Sussex). She is now an upper school teacher of English and French at Wynstones, where she lives in an annexe of the hostel.

Derek Morrell at the time of his death last December at the age of 48, was Assistant Under Secretary in charge of the children's department of the Home Office in London. He entered the Ministry of Education in 1947, and was Private Secretary to three Ministers of Education. He then turned to work which led to the creation of the Ministry's Schools Council. His power, wrote a colleague at the time of his death, derived essentially from "the capacity to see man as a whole human being". The obituary in *The Times Educational Supplement* (19.12.69) said that his special ability was to relate the insights of professionals in many fields to a view of the "totality of human experience". His indignation was particularly reserved for those who in his eyes dealt too much in "cognitive abstractions or failed to perceive a rationality in human feelings".

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Constituent Schools:

Michael Hall, Kidbrooke Park, Forest Row, Sussex.

Elmfield School, Love Lane, Stourbridge, Worcs.

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Derbyshire.

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School,
38 Colinton Road, Edinburgh.

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*Among other interests, the Fellowship is also responsible
for the following educational activities:—*

The Teachers' Training Course

The financing of Rudolf Steiner Educational
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The publication of "Child and Man"

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