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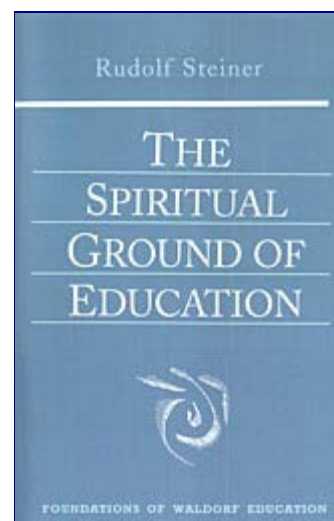


### *A READER'S JOURNAL*

**The Spiritual Ground of Education, GA#305  
9 Lectures in Oxford, England — August 16-  
29, 1922**

by  
**Rudolf Steiner**

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Steiner begins his lecture series to an English audience in Oxford by apologizing for not speaking in their native language. He explains that we all have spiritual beliefs which help us feel we are more than just beings on Earth between birth and death, but admits that such beliefs are difficult to reconcile with the tenets of natural science. Even though we may know of spirit, it is another matter entirely to use what we know and to fill our work and everyday life with spirit. He adds, "And what is the primary area of life in which we must come to terms with spirit? It is education." (Page 4) With this short affirmation, he threw down the gauntlet to open the minds and hearts of those present to learn about the spiritual foundation of education. By this, he did not mean some religious education or parochial school form of education, but rather the spiritual realities involved with the growth and maturation of children. He says, "We are called to work with the unconscious spirit, to link ourselves not only with the natural, but with the divine order of the world." (Page 5) How are we to do that? As Yogi Berra said, "We can observe a lot by just watching."

**[page 5] When we observe children, we must feel how necessary it is to have spiritual understanding and vision before we can adequately follow what takes place in them each day — what takes place in the soul and spirit. We should consider how the very youngest children are completely different in later childhood, let alone adulthood. We should bear in mind the great amount of sleep children need in their early days of life. We must wonder what takes place in that interchange between spirit and body when a baby spends nearly twenty-two hours asleep. Today, in both philosophy and practical life, it is thought that one can no more see into the soul of a child than one can see into the soul of an animal or plant — here we encounter the limit of human knowledge.**

It is easier said than done, you may be thinking, to overcome this prejudice of otherwise competent scientists and thinkers. Steiner shows us it is indeed possible to overcome this presumed limit of human knowledge, showing us that it is within our abilities to observe the complete human of body, soul, and spirit. Steiner knows that the science most teachers provide us in schools ill-prepares us for such abilities, even claiming they are impossible. Undaunted, Steiner proceeds to build up exactly those abilities in Waldorf schools's administrators and teachers, building expectations of success in them. "I will speak to you about how to develop a kind of knowledge that assures genuine insight into the inner texture of childhood life. Devoted, unprejudiced observation of life goes a long way in bringing about such understanding." (Page 5)

He directs our observation to the first seven years of a child's life when the blood pulses quicker than it does later in life and the entire child is like one sense organ, perceiving and imitating everything which happens around it. This is the reason children need a lot of sleep, they must shut out the hustle and bustle of the world, like the eye closes when too much light tries to enter it. From every sound children hear, an inner gesture arises(1). This leads to the child learning language.

After the age of seven, a change takes place in children as they enter elementary school. They go from absorbing what they observe around them to absorbing what lives in what they observe. If a teacher has authority, the child absorbs that authority. (Page 9)

**[page 9] They enter a stage that should be based primarily on the principle of authority — the authority children encounter in teachers.**

**Let's not deceive ourselves by thinking that the children between seven and fourteen whom we are educating do not adopt the judgments we express. If we make them listen to a judgment we express in a certain phrase, we present them with something that properly belongs only to a later age. The true nature of children wants to be able to believe in us. They want to have an instinctive feeling that this is someone who can tell me something.**

Elementary school children do not need a teacher to prove anything to them, but rather to tell them things. Teachers do best to use a gentle humor rather than reasoning and logic. Children progress from seven to fourteen by going from all sense organ to all soul. Anything abstract presented to them before fourteen can cause their souls to become rigid.

**[page 10] For children between seven and fourteen, it is far more significant to tell them about something in a kind and loving way than it is to demonstrate by proof. During lessons, kind humor and congeniality are far more valuable than logic. Such children do not yet need logic; they need us and our humanity.**

Children during this time move from being imitators to becoming followers. As they move from sense organ to soul, they follow the actions of their teachers, what they experience in their teachers, they take into their soul. It is incumbent on teachers to be sensitive to what is happening in each child's soul.

**[page 10] Their sense organs have now become independent. The soul of these children has only now come into its own, and we must treat this soul with infinite tenderness. As teachers, we must become continually more intimate with what happens day by day in children's souls. Hence, in the Waldorf school, we place the greatest importance on the ability of those who teach children from seven to fourteen to give them what is appropriate for their age, with artistic love and loving art.**

How can a teacher become intimate with a child's soul, if each year a new set of children arrive? For this reason each Waldorf School teacher stays with one set of children as they mature from 7 to 14, making possible a deeper intimacy with a child's soul than in traditional public schools where, in elementary schools, children stay in one classroom with one teacher for a year, and, in high school, the teachers are switched every hour or so. How can public school teachers acquire but a superficial connection with a child's soul given the scant amount of time they have to spend with a given child?

**[page 10, 11] It is essential to the education we are speaking of that teachers know the human being, and that they know what each age requires of us in teaching. What is required for the first year? What is required up to the seventh year? What is required during the elementary school period? The way we educate children up to the tenth year must be different; and again we must use different methods when we introduce them to human knowledge between ten and fourteen. The spiritual ground of education requires that we hold in our souls a lively image of a child's nature for each year, and even each week.**

Steiner says that we must not limit growth, but enable growth in our children. How many children grow up only to be pushed into being a doctor or lawyer by their parents? And how many of those change careers as soon as their parents' injunctions to them lose their effect? Children are not trees to be pruned into topiary designs nor grafted upon to yield fruit against their nature, are they?

**[page 11, 12] A child's hand is small, and it must be allowed to grow and not constrained. The ideas and soul development of children are also small and delicate and we must not limit them with hard rules, as though such limits must be retained in the same form thirty years later, once children have grown up. The ideas we bring children must be formed so that they are able to grow.**

The key to teaching children is what Gregory Bateson called second order learning, or "learning to learn." When they reach the great graduate school called life in their twenties, that is when the real life learning takes place, but it cannot happen if they were shaped and grafted into shapes desired by parents and educators. No, it can only happen if they have first learned how to learn.

**[page 12] The Waldorf school is really a preparatory school; every school should prepare children for the great school of adulthood, which is life itself. We must not learn at school for the sake of performance; rather, we must learn at school so that we can learn further from life.**

The child between 0 and 7 receives learning via a deep spiritual intuition; between 7 and 14, receives learning from an unconscious inspiration; and only after 14 receives learning from images from their teachers and the world around them. To enable this process, Steiner says, "It is immensely important that we do not call on the intellect too early, consciously or unconsciously, as people are prone to do today." (Page 13) He said this in 1922, almost a hundred years ago, and one can see even stronger tendencies towards pushing early intellectual development today, e. g., the lionizing of young children with skewed thinking development.

When children begin to speak they naturally form consonants and vowels, usually taking "mama" as their first word, consisting of a consonant *m* and a vowel *a* repeated. In my thinking about the *process* and *content* of language, I imagined that the more solid consonants made up the content of language, and the less solid flowing vowels the process. Steiner makes a good case for the opposite view: vowels are the content (soul) and consonants the process (spirit) of language.

**[page 16] If I may use an image to indicate what is meant (not to explain it), I would say that, when we speak, our speech comes from words — sounds made up of consonants and vowels. Observe the great difference between consonants and vowels in speech. Consonants round off a sound, give it angularity, make it into a breath sound or a wave sound, according to how we form the sound with one organ or another, with lips or teeth. Vowels arise in a very different way. They arise while guiding the breath stream through the vocal organs in a certain way. By means of vowels, we do not give contour but build the substance of a sound. Vowels provide the substance, or content, and consonants mold and sculpt the substance provided by the vowels.**

**And now, using the words *spirit* and *soul* in the sense we are giving them here, we can say that spirit is in the consonants of speech, and soul is in the vowels.[\(2\)](#)**

Why did John write, "In the beginning was the Word" instead of "In the beginning was the Spirit"? If you have wondered about that, as I have, Steiner explains why here.

**[page 17, 18] We see only the outer form of a person, but soul and spirit are within, just as they are within speech. But we no longer notice this.**

**There was a time in past ages, however, when people did notice this. They did not say, "In the beginning was the Spirit" (which would have been too abstract), but "In the**

**beginning was the word." People still had a living sense of how spirit is carried on the waves of speech. It is this spirit and its nature that we mean when using the word *spiritual*. It is not revealed by intellect, nor by what we call mind. *Mind* and *spirit* are distinct from each other. They differ as much as my person differs from the reflection I see in a mirror. When I hold a mirror and look at myself, my reflection is in the mirror. The reflection moves exactly as I do, and it looks like me, but it is not me. It differs from me because it is an image, whereas I am a reality.**

**Spirit is the reality of hidden depths. Intellect contains only an image of spirit. Mind is a reflected image of spirit.**

Our mind is passive, like our eyes are passive so that they can receive a detailed image of the world. If our eyeballs moved actively while receiving an image, the distortions would be in the eye not in the world. If our mind were also active, there would also be distortions. "Mind is the passive image of spirit." (Page 18) It is the soul which can receive impressions from the world, whereas the mind can only receive reflections of the world.

**[page 19] Materialists say that they find impressions in the brain, just as the earth retains impressions after I have walked on it. But they will say that there are forces in the brain, and these make the impressions. This is not true. The soul makes the impressions, just as I make them on the ground. And it is only because those imprints are there that can I perceive the soul; I perceive a sensation in the soul. At first, the soul is hidden, but it has left its imprints in my body. If I make a very hard dent it causes me pain. Perhaps I do not immediately see what I have done, since it happened behind me. But even when I do not see what I have done, I experience the pain. Similarly, the soul leaves an impression in my body, whereas the soul itself remains hidden. I perceive the effect as passions, sympathy, and so on. I perceive the effect of the souls activity in the manifestation.**

"The map is not the territory," [Alfred Korzybski](#) famously said. A map is a necessarily imperfect, incomplete reflection of some territory. A map is a product of intellectual thinking and as such it is unreal, a mere image. Steiner says that you cannot say, "I think, therefore I can reflect on all things."

**[page 23] Rather, knowledge begins when you can say, "Although I think about everything with my image thinking, I am only a weak, impotent being."**

We moderns are constantly misled by pretending and accepting from others pretensions that maps of the world are reality instead merely appearances of reality. We can accept or refuse to accept maps of the world realizing they are products of intellectual activity, possessing as much reality as our own image in a mirror. A mirror can help us to comb our hair, but the image of us in the mirror cannot climb out of the mirror to comb our hair for us.

**[page 23] Today, at some point, we must experience the suffering that goes along with the realization that, as long as one is occupied solely with intellectual activity and observations, one lives in emptiness and mere images, remote from reality.**

How can we understand the world other than by intellectual activity and observations? We can understand it artistically, as Steiner tells us on page 24: Do not try to understand the world by entering the abstract emptiness of logic, but understand instead by *entering* the objects of the world, by going outward, by uniting with all things in a soulful and spiritual way.

**[page 24] By permeating reality with the discoveries of mere intellectual ideas, we get a renewed sense of how spirit works creatively in us.**

**And from this, we must begin to feel the reality working in children. It is not the so-called mind in us that is active; in a small child, this would not be creative. This notion would only lead us astray. Rather, in a small child, the active principle is just what we**

**come to know in the creative way described; it is this that forms the second teeth according to the first, concluding in the seventh year.**

Steiner admits few of us today can enter into objects of the world such as "sinking into a plant, until we feel gravity going down through the roots into the earth and the formative forces unfolding above. We participate in the unfolding flower and fruit of a plant, diving right into the external world. Thus we are taken up by the external world. We awaken as though from a trance. And now we no longer receive abstract thoughts, but imaginations." (Page 24) Fortunately, it is not necessary for everyone to be able to do this today.

**[page 25] A few people in the world can develop such higher knowledge; everyone else needs only sound judgment and observation. Everything these few discover, others can recognize through sound judgment and sound observation. Not everyone, for example, can observe the transits of Venus. These are visible far too rarely, and astronomers can observe them occasionally when they are visible. But does this mean that it would be illogical to speak of the transits of Venus, simply because one had not seen them? After all, the object and method of observation can be understood. It is the same thing with the spiritual world. Simply because of egotism today, people want to do everything themselves. One can argue that, as teachers, we cannot immediately become clairvoyant. We cannot train in such methods. How can we manage teaching if we are first confronted with this complicated method of reaching spirit?**

We need a simpler way of revealing the presence of spirit to our young school children. As you read this, you may be reminded of teachers who taught you in this interesting and direct way.

**[page 25] There is another way of making spiritual things fruitful and using them, however. Again, I will illustrate this with an example. Imagine I am teaching a nine- or ten-year-old girl. I want to tell her about the immortality of the human soul. If I go into philosophic dissertations, however charming, this child will make nothing of it at her age. She will remain untouched by my little lecture. But if I say to her, "Dear, see how the butterfly comes out of the chrysalis? There you have an image that you can apply to people. Look at the human body; it is like a butterfly's cocoon. The butterfly flies out of the chrysalis, and in the same way, after death, the soul flies out of the body. Only, the butterfly is visible, and the soul is invisible."**

In my graduate work in education, I wrote my [Final Paper](#) on the importance of a live teacher in a classroom. A teacher whose lesson plan is to read material to a class need not be present for the little good they do. A teacher who studies his lesson plan until he knows the true meaning of what he is to teach the next day, proves to be a powerful transmitter of knowledge to his pupils. Why? Because as he talks to them, the things he knows intimately move directly, without words, into his pupils minds, and realizing this process is happening, the students sit up and pay attention.(3) Steiner recognizes these two ways of teaching and gives examples of them, referring to his butterfly metaphor in the above passage.

**[page 25, 26] I have found two things: when a teacher describes this image to a child, the child does not understand it. The teacher might convey a charming image, but nothing reaches the soul, and the true object is missed. Another teacher might describe this picture, perhaps in the very same words, and the child will have a real insight as the whole image enters the soul.**

Both types of teachers are live in their classrooms, but the first type is talking about something they don't understand or believe to be true and their soul experience of non-understanding flows into the students's souls. The second type of teacher understands and believes the metaphor to be true and the child receives that insight into themselves regardless of the exact words used by the teacher. The insight flows from soul to soul on the wings of words(4).



**[page 26] Where is the difference? The first teacher is very smart and ingenious, infinitely clever. So the thought arises that a truly intelligent person would not consider the chrysalis and butterfly to be a valid image; we can get away with this only because the child is foolish. One invents a clever image for a silly child; we have a clever teacher and a foolish child, and one who invents a picture for a foolish child will not be understood. You can depend on it; the teacher will not be understood.**

**Now another teacher believes in this picture. Here a different thought arises — that the divine goodness of the world has itself placed this image into nature so that we may better understand immortality. It is not something we have to invent; rather, we discover the image. The creative spirit of nature makes this image for us so that we may see immortality in its image. God himself painted this picture in nature. If one believes in this image, then a child will believe in it.**

The attitude of the teacher is essential to educating the children. Being smart and acting as if one has to pour one's learning into the empty mind of a foolish child will not instill a love of education, but will instill a revulsion for education, such as so many children today leave school with. Instead of "learning to learn" they learn to avoid learning at all; they learn to turn their back on anyone who endeavors to "educate" them again. One does best to approach teaching with this attitude, "Thus a Teacher, So Also a Learner(5)", even with elementary school students. *Especially* with small children.

**[page 26] The child gets all that is needed, simply because one is not thinking, I am clever, the child is foolish. Rather, one thinks of the child as having brought intelligent spirit into the world through birth. The child is intelligent. The child's spirit is not yet awake, and if we are unable to awaken it, it is we who are foolish, not the child. Once the thought arises in us that children possess hidden intelligence and that we have manifested foolishness, and once we realize that it is our duty to become intelligent by learning from children, then we can make a real impression with our instruction.**

We had quoted earlier Steiner saying, "Mind is the passive image of spirit." On page 29, he says, "It is simply a fact that spirit becomes perceptible when physical activity is suppressed." When the body is forced into passivity, the spirit can be perceived. He again directs our attention to the eye as a metaphor. Our eye must be transparent to light; it must not take anything from the light, i.e., our eye must become selfless if we are to perceive the light. We must do something similar to perceive the spiritual world.

**[page 29] So, if we want to see into the spiritual world, we must, as it were, make our whole organism into an eye (in a spiritual-soul sense). We must make our whole organism transparent, not physically as do the eyes, but spiritually. The body must no longer be an obstacle to our interaction with the world.**

Ancients gained knowledge of spiritual worlds by ascetic practices such as suffering and living in complete solitude, the wise man in the isolated cave in the mountain, for example. That will not work for us now. Today we must strive for clear thinking that is full of meaning.

**[page 31] Today people easily meet the requirement to think clearly. This is not intended to belittle clear thinking, but in an age that comes several centuries after Copernicus and Galileo, clear thinking is almost natural. The real pity is that it is not yet natural among the majority. Indeed, it is easy to be clear at the expense of thinking fully; empty thoughts easily become clear. But the foundation of our future development must be clear thinking that is full of meaning.**

Does a teacher today need spiritual cognition to be an effective teacher? No, but the teacher must be able to recognize that a child is witness to spiritual worlds. Before the age of earliest conscious memory, about 3 years old, a child can view spiritual worlds. A baby arrives with knowledge of its previous incarnation, but loses this knowledge on its way to developing its everyday perception and cognition. One example

from my own experience, I remember seeing fairies and elves at a very early age, something which came back to me when I read Grimm's fairy tales about age 7 or 8. My memories of seeing fairies took on a certain verisimilitude that I could not explain from other experiences which occurred while reading books. We can assume that children have various kinds of such memories which bleed through into consciousness(6).

**[page 33] The child's body itself is a living witness to spiritual worlds, and this is where our higher knowledge can begin. Thus teachers who have right instinct can grow naturally toward treating children in a spiritual way. . . . I might tell a child something that must be taken on trust, since I am the mediator between the divine spiritual world and the child. The child believes me and accepts what I say, but does not yet understand it. We do not understand much of what we receive unconsciously in childhood. If we could accept only what we understood as children, we would receive little of value for later life. And the German poet and thinker Jean Paul [1763-1825] would never have said that more is learned in the first three years of life than in three years at a university.**

My dad got *Parts Pups* magazines from an auto dealer he worked for about the time I was about 8. He kept them in a drawer by his bed, and I would sneak in, read one, and put it back in place. It contained adult jokes, which often made no sense to me. (I couldn't ask my dad and there was no Google back then.) I remember the girly photo which was called an "Iphiler" and had no idea what the name meant. In a recurring column each month, a guy called some woman his "Shirt Sharpener" and I got an image of a pencil sharper which somehow worked on shirts. Only at age 35 or so, I realized that the first letter of Iphiler was pronounced like "eye" and the girl was thus called an "eye-filler". At the same time, I realized the guy's wife ironed her husband's shirts, making them look sharp again, thus could be called his Shirt Sharpener.

One other example was a hardback book about a cartoon named Spiro which I wanted to check out of the public library. The librarian, Mrs. Edith Lawson(7), looked through the book and back at me several times before reluctantly letting the 8-year-old me take the book out on loan. I enjoyed Spiro's fantastic voyage through the human body, drilling his way in through the skin with his corkscrew tail, swimming happily through the blood stream, and even coming out by the human eye at one point. I returned the book and never knew what it was about until several decades later, when I realized Spiro was a syphilis or *Treponema pallidum* bacterium. What I thought was a playful cartoon character was actually a deleterious disease agent. Without knowing it, I had learned at age 8 how syphilis enters the human body, how it can travel through the blood stream, and how it can cause serious eye problems. How lucky I was to have a librarian who trusted me with an adult level book.

Steiner asks us each to recall such events from our past.

**[page 34] Just consider what it means when, say, in your thirty-fifth year, some event causes you to feel that something is swimming up into your mind, something heard from a teacher long ago. Perhaps you were only nine or ten at the time and did not understand it at all, and now it comes back. And, in the light of your own life, it now makes sense, and you can appreciate it. If, during later life, you can take something from the depths of your memory and, for the first time, understand it, you have within yourself a wellspring of life; a refreshing stream of power continually flows within you(8). When something arises in the soul that was once accepted on trust and is only now understood, we can see that to teach properly we must not consider only the immediate moment but the whole of life. In all that we teach children, this must be kept in view.**

Suggesting a child hold an unanswered question can be much more educational than simply giving them some pat answer.

One day at age 13, a dramatic event happened to me. I was walking on Avenue C or D a few blocks from my home when a childhood friend, Mike, approached me and said, "Bobby, take a look at this!" He held out a comic book to me. I was an expert on comic books because my Uncle Frank Musso used buy a lot of comic books and when he had read them, placed them in a cardboard box in my Grandma Babin's kitchen closet. I would spend the entire day under her shady pecan trees reading comic books whenever a new box showed up. But *never* a comic book like the one Mike handed me on this day. It was the first ever *Mad* comic book! I quickly read through it to discover what led to its being special, and I discovered something I didn't think my parents knew about, something I had no words to describe, and only years later in college would learn to call it "satire". The *Mad* comic books made fun of what adults did! And teenage boys on the streets of Westwego loved to read stories which ridiculed the behavior of parents. Yes, parents may have thought they were shaping our early childhood judgments, but what we learned on the street from our friends were equally important. *Mad* comic books were mad at the world which repressed our freedom and we loved it! Within a year, *Mad* was so popular it had several dozen knock-offs like *Cracked*, etal, and soon *Mad* rose above its comic book origins to become *Mad Magazine* by the time I was in college. The morning after the Kennedy-Nixon down-to-the-wire election in 1960, its cover was filled with the face of John F. Kennedy and the words, "Congratulations! We Were With You All the Way!" I was puzzled as to how they could have got this on the news stands overnight, but as I turned over the book, there an image of Richard M. Nixon with the same words! Two covers, covering both outcomes of the close election, how *Mad* is that?

Steiner explains that the images we give children do not have to be exactly correct, like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis as a metaphor for immortality, but it can still be effective. If it sits in a child's mind over a decade or so, it can grow into a correct idea of immortality. He tells us on page 35 that spiritual truths are not ready when logic is, even for his own 1919 founding of the Waldorf system, founded as it was on ideas that had come to him some decades earlier.

**[page 35] It is the nature of spiritual truths that they must be carried with us on our way through life — we must live with them before they can develop fully. I would never have dared to tell others certain truths about human nature as they came to me more than thirty-five years ago.**

You never know until you find out how some idea will gestate and form in its own water (as [Calvin](#) famously said of volcanos).

What is the most essential nature of humankind? Hold this as an unanswered question in your mind as you read on. Steiner says that knowledge of the human being is easy to study in natural science which explains how the simplest organism has evolved up to the human being. But do we arrive that way with the essential nature of humankind? What happens if we leave out the spiritual origins of humankind?

**[page 36, 37] It is relatively easy to realize the nature of the final member of organic evolution. We begin with the simplest organism and see how it has evolved up to the human being, who stands at the summit of evolution, the final member of organic development. We do not see directly into the very being of humankind. Natural science has attained a certain perfection, which we greatly admire and do not intend to disparage; but once we have mastered natural science, we know the human being as the highest animal, but not the most essentials nature of humankind. Yet our life is dominated by this natural science. To educate, we need a practical human science that applies to every individual child, for which we need a general human science.**

As much as Steiner respects our materialistic natural science, he finds a fatal flaw in its connecting the whole human soul with its thoughts, feeling, and volition to the human nervous system.

**[page 38] This is what I recognized as an error thirty-five years ago. The only part of our soul life as adults — I emphasize *adults*, since we cannot consider the child until we**



**understand the adult — the only part of our soul life that is connected with the nervous system is our thinking, or power of ideation.**

If we understand that natural science is based solely on thinking, this error should not seem strange at all. The most intelligent psychology deems our soul connected only to the nervous system, our system of thinking! *Star Trek — The Next Generation* (TNG) had an android named Data that was exactly that kind of ersatz human being, and what woman would want to be married to this unfeeling humanoid? This Data guy had no feeling and no willing functions. He did what he was told and offered no complaints.

What is human feeling? Steiner gives us a simple answer. Let us check his answer against what Data possessed as a humanoid.

**[page 39] Human feeling is not related directly to the nervous system, but to what we might call the "rhythmic" system. It involves the marvelous interrelationship between breathing and the blood's circulation. Their ratio is only approximate, since it naturally varies from person to person. In general, however, every adult has four times as many pulse beats as breaths. This internal interplay of pulsing and breathing rhythms is in turn related to the more extended rhythms of human life and constitutes our rhythmic nature — a second nature, in contrast to the head, or nerve, nature. Our life is not built only on the life of the nervous system; it is based also on the rhythmic life. Just as thinking and the forces of thought are related to the nervous system, the power of feeling is directly related to our rhythmic system.**

Okay, ask yourself this question: Did TNG's Data have any breathing or blood circulation? Well, no. So therefore Data could have no feeling function. In several episodes, Data expressed a desire to have emotions, but was unable to acquire any, so far as I know. I watched only a small percentage of the TNG episodes.

In addition to thinking and feeling, humans have volition, a life of will. We can make decisions.

**[page 40] Volition does not depend directly on the nervous system but relates directly to human metabolism and movement; metabolism is very intimately connected with movement. You can regard all human metabolism, in addition to movement itself to be the limb system. I consider the third member of the human organism to be the movement and metabolic system, and volition is immediately related to this. Every human will impulse is accompanied by a form of metabolic process, whose mode of operation is different from that of the nerve processes that accompany thinking.**

The TNG humanoid Data is lacking in a metabolic system and therefore has no willing function. It is a stilted, one-track, thinking-function humanoid, one with computational ability and analysis, but it can only offer the results of its calculations, not make a decision alone and act on it.

Here is a quick summary of the threefold human structure of *thinking*, *feeling*, and *willing* constructed from the material on pages 38 to 41:

<p><b>Activity of nervous system in one's soul results in <i>thinking</i>.</b></p> <p><b>(Fatigue possible)</b></p>	<p><b>Activity of the rhythmic system comes from interaction of respiration and circulation, results in <i>feeling</i> in our soul.</b></p> <p><b>(No Fatigue)</b></p>	<p><b>Activity of the limb system comes from metabolic process which accompanies <i>willing</i> and volition.</b></p> <p><b>(Fatigue possible)</b></p>
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Here is some more detail about the interaction of the thinking, feeling, and volition as they manifest in the human soul.

**[page 41] When we think and develop ideas about our own volition, metabolic activity is thus projected into the nervous system. Volition works only indirectly in the nervous system. Events in the nervous system that are related to volition are the faculty of apprehending our own will activity. Thus, when we penetrate the human being with vision, we discover the relationships between human soul and physical nature. The activity of thought in the soul manifests physically as nervous activity. Feeling nature in the soul manifests physically as the rhythms of breathing and blood circulation. It does this directly not indirectly through the nervous system. Active volition manifests in physical human nature as a subtle metabolism. It is essential to recognize the fine metabolic processes that accompany the exercise of volition; it is a kind of combustion in the human being.**

An expectant mother should be aware that adults only taste with their tongue, whereas her new baby will taste with its entire body for several weeks. Plus, they should be aware that mother's milk is the most delicious substance to the newborn. Other kinds of milk may be delicious, but the mutual benefits which accrue to both lactating mothers and nursing babies should be studied by all mothers-to-be. Here's Steiner's description of how a baby tastes with its whole body.

**[page 41, 42] It is particularly interesting to use scientific spiritual observation to see how a child tastes in a different way than does an adult. Adults have brought taste into the realm of consciousness; they taste something with the tongue and decide what that taste is. A baby, during the earliest weeks, tastes with the whole body, because the organ of taste is diffused throughout the organism. A baby tastes with the stomach and continues to taste as the nourishing juices are absorbed in the lymph system and transmitted throughout the organism. When babies nurse, they are completely permeated by taste. And here we see how the child is, so to speak, illuminated and transfused with taste, with something of a soul nature. Later on, we no longer have this in our body as a whole, but only in our head.**

Scientists are always seen in movies looking through their microscopes or telescopes, looking at very tiny things in the microcosm or very large things in the macrocosm. Teachers, especially of children, need a *macroscope* to observe their students through. A microscope is useless without a human to look through it at the physical world; a macroscope is the way a human looks at the spiritual realities of the physical world. The human being is the macroscope!

A macroscope has many settings which one can use to zoom in on what's happening inside the child. These three settings are very useful: thinking, feeling, and willing. When trained in using a macroscope, a teacher can tune in quickly to what is going on inside a living human child, a being on a human-size scale, by paying attention to how they express their thinking, feeling, and willing.

**[page 42] Thus we learn how to watch a tiny child and how to watch an older child, knowing that one child will blush easily for one reason or another, and another will easily turn pale; one is quick to get excited or moves the arms and legs quickly; one child walks firmly, while another walks lightly. Once we have these principles and recognize that the soul's expression of volition is seated in the metabolic system; that the expression of feeling rests in the rhythmic system; that what manifests in the soul as thought is based in the nervous system, then we will know how to observe children; we will know where to look.**

Like with using a microscope, one must *learn* how to look using a macroscope, or one will see nothing useful when observing a child. One changes the setting of the macroscope from the metabolic system of

the child to the rhythmic system to the nervous system until one becomes aware of which system is highlighted in a particular child. Do they blush, walk lightly, etc? Or they easily excited or placid? What does your macroscope tell you about the child you are dealing with? Teachers, especially those in Waldorf schools, must know how to use a macroscope in order to become intimate with a child's soul. Each child is different and the differences are visible under the macroscope to the trained teacher.

**[page 42] People see nothing of the human being until they have learned to see with the soul and spirit all that corresponds to thinking, feeling, and volition. The goal of the Waldorf school has been to develop the correct orientation of vision in the staff. Teachers must first know what goes on in children, then they can achieve the right state of mind, and the right education comes only from the right mental attitude.**

The macroscope is also useful in selecting Waldorf teachers. Consider this example, and how the macroscope can detect a person who is sorrowful.

**[page 45] When we are sad, the mouth is always a little dry. And when sadness becomes a habit and a continuous state, the sorrowful person goes about with dry mouth, a dry tongue, a bitter taste in the mouth, and even a chronic inflammation of the mucous membrane. In adults, these physical conditions are merely faint undertones of life.**

*Faint undertones*, but clearly observable by using one's macroscope. If a sad adult is interviewing to become a Waldorf teacher, what might we expect from the children entrusted into this person's care?

**[page 46] A child growing up in the company of an adult is an imitator. Children model themselves entirely on what they perceive in the appearance of the adult — for example, an adult's sad way of speaking or sad feelings. There is a subtle interplay of imponderables between children and adults. When we experience inner sadness with all its physical manifestations, a child, being an imitator, takes up these physical effects through inner gestures. Through inward mimicry, a child might assume, say, a dry tongue, or bitter taste, in the mouth, and this (as I pointed out yesterday) flows through the whole organism. Or a child absorbs the pale, sad face of an adult. Children cannot imitate the soul substance of sorrow itself, but they do imitate the physical appearance of the sorrow. Consequently, because spirit is still working into a child's organism, the whole organism will be permeated in such a way that it builds the organs according to the physical manifestations the child has taken in. Thus, the very condition of the growing organism will make a sad being of the child. In later life, this person will have a particular aptitude for perceiving anything sad or sorrowful. Such is the subtle, delicate knowledge one needs to educate properly.**

Teachers do best if they think of themselves as relatively intelligent and if they see their job as bringing out the best in their students, not making copies of themselves.

**[page 48] This would be quite wrong. The correct approach would be to educate this very intelligent individual to grow and become far more intelligent than we could ever be. This means that there is something in a person that we must not touch, something we must approach with sensitive reverence, if we are to exercise the art of education properly.**

We carry within us certain tendencies from childhood that were acquired before we had conscious memory. In the science of doyletics, we call these doyles. They are physical body states, perhaps sadness, fear, or anger, which were stored by imitating one's parent. A small girl of three is playing with a new pet and her mother comes in and screams in horror, "A ROACH!" and all those feelings of fear and horror get stored in the girl and arise every time she sees a roach in the future. She cannot explain why she hates roaches as an adult, even if she comes to understand her fear as irrational. If she learns to do a Speed Trace(9), she can eliminate the unwanted bodily states of fear and loathing from her subsequent life. She

will no longer experience a difficulty from the sudden appearance of a roach.

**[page 48] Often, in early life, we know very well what we should do, but we cannot carry it out; we feel inadequate. The obstacle that prevents us from doing what we should is usually very obscure, but it is always a condition of the physical organism. For example, it may be a disposition toward sadness acquired through imitation, such as I spoke of. The organism incorporated this tendency, and it has become a habit. Now we want to do something that does not suit an organism inclined toward sadness. Within us, we have the effects of the dry tongue and bitter taste from childhood, and now we want to do something different and we experience difficulty.**

Teachers who encounter various unwanted bodily states in their students can quickly do a *talking* Speed Trace to help the children change the bodily state into a cognitive memory. Children in school are only a few years older than the Memory Transition Age of five years old, the age below which we retain few if any declarative or cognitive memories (conscious recollections). A few simple statements like these: "You're 7 and experiencing this (fear, sadness, dryness in your mouth, etc). When you were 5, you experienced this, right? When you were 4, did you experience this? 3? 2? 1?" will usually be enough to remove the bodily state. The teacher simply watches the child's face for signs that the bodily state has gone, indicated by a relief or relaxation, a smile, perhaps. This can take about a minute at most. These bodily states called doyles are acquired from one's parents and caregivers during a time before five when one has no fully functioning hippocampus to transmit a declarative memory to the cortex. When a Speed Trace is done by a person with an operational hippocampus, the bodily state is immediately converted into a declarative memory and the next time a stimulus arrives to trigger the bodily state, the new memory appears in the brain *absent* the negative effects of the bodily state. After a talking Speed Trace the teacher will have freed the child's will from the onerous bodily state from then on.

**[page 48, 49] If we realize the full significance of this, we might tell ourselves that a teacher's primary task is to nurture the body to be as healthy as possible. This means that we use every spiritual measure to ensure that in later life a person's body will be the least possible hindrance to the will of one's spirit. If we make this our purpose in school, we can develop the forces that lead to an education for freedom.**

If a child under five is exposed to a lot of grief and sadness, their digestive organs will be affected, e. g., they may grow up with malformed kidneys.

**[page 49] Take a particular instance. The English doctor Sir Clifford Allbutt (1836-1925) made a very significant statement about how human grief and sadness affect the development of the digestive organs, the kidneys in particular. After awhile, people who experience a great many problems and grief in life show signs of malformed kidneys. This has been very finely demonstrated by Dr. Allbutt and is a discovery of natural science.**

The science of doyletics is a natural science which discovered how to quickly and simply remove various unwanted bodily states such as grief and sadness so as to prevent problems with one's digestive organs at some future time.

**[page 56] In a Waldorf school, *who* the teachers are is far more important than any technical ability they may have acquired intellectually. It is important that teachers not only love the children, but also love the whole procedure they use. It is not enough for teachers to love the children; they must also love teaching, and love it with objectivity. This constitutes the spiritual foundation of spiritual, moral, and physical education. If we can acquire this love for teaching, we will be able to develop children up to the age of puberty so that, when that time arrives, we will be able to hand them over to the freedom and the use of their own intelligence.**

In Waldorf schools, the teachers must be imbued with Three Golden Rules which Steiner gives as: Reverence, Gratitude, and Respect and explains here:

**[page 57] The golden rules that must be embraced by a teacher's whole being, not as theory, are these: first, reverent gratitude toward the world for the child we contemplate every day, for every child presents a problem given us by divine worlds; second, gratitude to the universe and love for what we have to do with a child; and third, respect for the child's freedom, which we must not endanger, since it is this freedom to which we must direct our teaching efforts, so that the child may one day stand at our side in freedom in the world.**

In his lecture "The Art of Educating Older Boys and Girls" Steiner offers some important advice which is often ignored in our modern society. Begin teaching children seven and under to do writing first, but not the abstract signs we call the "alphabet", instead lead them into movements, gestures, and expressions of volition, all of which they love to do. Then segue into showing them how such movements, say, of a fish, can lead us to producing the script letter "f" which resembles a fish and forms the first letter of the word *fish*. The first word babies learn to say is "mama" and by allowing children to feel the vibration from saying "mmm", you can lead them into drawing the script letter "m" which forms the first and middle letters of "mama". (Page 60)

**[page 60, 61] Parents may worry that their children are eight or nine years old and still do not write properly. And we must always let them know that when children learn more slowly at any given age, the material is absorbed in a more certain and healthy way by the organism that if it is forced into them.**

If teachers ask a child to do a simple task like coloring a flowering plant with a stem and a bloom, this constitutes a deleterious forcing upon the child of an unreal event, rightly understood. Steiner explains that a rock can be carried from place to place and not change, but a plant cannot: it is attached to its roots. Its roots are usually about as large as the plant, a mirror-image of the plant below the ground, intimately connected to the Earth. This intimate connection of plants to the Earth should be shared with small children so they may early on perceive the true nature of the plant world as hair covers their head. Like the hair needs a head to grow on, a plant cannot exist without its connection to the Earth or an earth-substitute.

**[page 67] Therefore, when teaching botany, we must not begin with the plant or plant family but with landscape and geography. We must begin with an understanding of what the earth is like in a particular place. The nature of plants must be treated in relation to the whole earth.**

**When we speak of the earth we generally speak as physicists or, at most, as geologists. We assume that the earth is a self-enclosed totality of physical, mineral forces, and that its existence would be no different if there were no plants, animals, or people at all. But this is an abstraction. The earth as viewed by the physicist or geologist is an abstraction. There is, in fact, no such thing. In reality there is simply the earth covered with plants. We must be aware that, when our description is purely geological, it is only for the convenience of our intellect, and that we are describing a non-existent abstraction. We must not start by giving our children an idea of this non-existent abstraction; rather, we must give them a realization of the earth as a living organism, beginning, of course, with the area that the children know. If children know nothing of an animal, we would not show them just a hair; we would show them an animal with hair growing on it. Similarly we must begin by giving children a vivid realization of the earth as a living organism, and then show them how plants live and grow on the earth.**

We do best to proceed to introduce children to the animal kingdom by showing them how animals have key features which we find in humans, for example, the broad chest of the lion, the digestive system of the



cow, the white corpuscles of our blood resembling tiny primitive animals, and so on.

**[page 69] The whole animal kingdom together is a synthesis of the human being, not symptomatically, but synthetically woven and interwoven. . . . The human being is a synthesis of lion, eagle, ape, camel, cow, and all the rest. We can view the whole animal kingdom as human nature divided up and spread out.**

We teach them, lead them to understand how the living parts of their world are all interconnected to each other.

**[page 69] So this is the other side that children get during their eleventh or twelfth year. After they have learned to separate themselves from the plant world — to experience objectivity and a connection with an objective earth — they can then learn of the close connection between animals and human beings — the subjective side. Thus the universe is again connected with the human being through feelings. In this way, we educate children through contact with life in the world.**

Learning to count, to add, and to multiply, all these processes do best to start from a unity and head to its parts. A pile of beans, e.g., we ask a child to divide it so that she and a friend share develops the concept of "two". Apples are shared among three children by subtracting a quantity. Then the apples are placed back together to form the concept of a sum or adding. Similarly, the process of division is taught before multiplication. This makes division seem simpler than multiplication. The way I was taught division in public school made it seem much more complex than multiplication. Everyone hated *long division*, as many of you will recall. Undoubtedly this was a result of learning division after multiplication instead of before.

The approach that teachers take to education of children below the age of eleven can have a deleterious effect on the children's health, as Steiner points out below. Just because something is logical, it shouldn't be taught to young children who still see the world artistically.

**[page 77] Now, a philosopher might say "Well, if something is to be known it must be logical." This is true, but this must be the logic of a work of art, which may be an inner representation of the world we see. We must accept an inner artistic idea and not dogmatically believe that the world has to be conceived logically(10). The ideas and feelings of teachers must be flexible. Teachers must realize that, if they present ideas of dynamics and mechanics to children before they reach eleven, they congest the brain and make it inflexible, so that as they grow it develops migraine and, later still, hardens. On the other hand, if we give children isolated historical images or stories before the eleventh year; if we present pictures of the plant kingdom that show plants in connection with the countryside where they grow, such ideas go into the brain, but they go there by way of the rest of the nervous system into the whole body. They unite with the soft muscular system and the whole body. We lovingly build what is working within the children.**

As a child in grade school I made straight A's but was bored a lot of the time, so I kept my mind busy by doodling at my desk out of sight of the teacher, unless she gave me something that excited me.

**[page 77] Thus, teachers see into children. Those who know only anatomy and physiology see children as opaque coal, but here [RJM: in Waldorf schools] they become transparent, and teachers see everything. They see what goes on in the individual children at their desks. Teachers do not need to cogitate and resort to some didactic rule; the children themselves show them what needs to be done. Children lean back in their chairs and no longer pay attention when something is done that is unsuitable for them. When you do the right thing for children, they become lively.**

The temperaments of children form another setting of the macroscope of Waldorf teachers: they learn to recognize the melancholic, phlegmatic, sanguine, and choleric characteristics of their pupils. Long-term exposure to each child certainly helps in doing this. It is a very important training which allows a teacher to look through their macroscope and detect which temperament is predominant in a given child.

**[page 79] MELANCHOLIC Let us begin by looking at melancholic children, a particular human type. What are they like? Externally, they seem quiet and withdrawn, but these outer characteristics do not help us much. We begin to comprehend children with a melancholic disposition only when we realize that they are affected most powerfully by their purely physical nature, and when we understand that melancholia is the result of an intense deposit of salt in the organism. This causes melancholic children to feel weighed down in the physical organism. It is a very different experience for a melancholic child to raise an arm or leg than it is for other children; there are impediments to raising an arm or leg. A feeling of weight opposes the soul's intention. Consequently, melancholic children gradually turn inward and do not enter the outer world with any pleasure, because the body is of such concern and intrudes on their attention. We can approach melancholic children correctly only when we realize how their soul and spirit would soar if they were not burdened by the bodily deposits continuously secreted by glands, which permeate other bodily movements and encumber the body. We can help them only when we correctly understand this encroaching physical heaviness that imprisons their attention.**

Melancholic children are easy to spot because they are quiet and rarely move unnecessarily. Many unknowing teachers attempt to cheer these temperaments up by saying amusing things, but Steiner says we cannot reach them this way. Instead, when a teacher spots one in their macroscope, they do best to approach them with a similar melancholic mood, not with a light, cheerful demeanor, but with serious ideas like their own. It is the best method of rapport when one reflects the way the other presents themself.

**[page 80, 81] PHLEGMATIC When we consider children of a more phlegmatic temperament, we must realize that they live less in the physical body and more in what I call the ether body; this is a more volatile body. It may seem odd to say that phlegmatic children live in their ether body, but this is how it is. The ether body prevents the human processes of digestion and growth from entering the head. It is not in the power of phlegmatic children to conceive of what is going on in the body; the head becomes inactive. The body becomes increasingly active because of the volatile element that tends to scatter their activities into the world. Phlegmatic children are entirely surrendered to and absorbed into the world. They live very little within themselves, so they respond with a certain indifference toward what we do with them. We cannot reach them, because immediate access must go through the senses. The principle senses are in the head, but phlegmatic children make little use of the head. The rest of the organism functions through interplay with the outer world.**

To reach rapport with phlegmatic children a teacher must become phlegmatic. After awhile, the phlegmatic child will get bored by the phlegmatic teacher, but if the teacher waits and watches, the child will eventually show a glimmer of understanding.

**[page 81] SANGUINE Sanguine children are especially difficult. The activity of the rhythmic system very much dominates in them. The rhythmic system, which is dominant between the change of teeth and puberty, dominates sanguine children too much. Sanguine children, therefore, always want to move rapidly from one impression to another, and their blood circulation becomes hampered if impressions do not change quickly enough. They feel inwardly restricted if impressions do not pass quickly and give way to others. So we can say that sanguine children feel an inner constriction if they have to stay with any one thing too long, and they turn away to very different thoughts. It is**

**hard to hold them.**

Clearly this is the type of child who is labeled "Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder" (ADHD) as if the child has some kind of sickness, while, rightly understood, it is the school system which is sick. The medical profession chooses to treat ADHD by administering an amphetamine-like stimulant which somehow calms down the child. I recall Richard Bandler (c1980) recommending that instead of giving Ritalin to hyper-active kids, the teachers should take the drug themselves so they could keep up with the kids! In essence this is the type of matching with the sanguine child's behavior which Steiner recommends, not by giving drugs to teachers, but by careful guidance in how to maintain rapport with each of their charges.

**[page 81] Meet the sanguine nature by changing impressions vigorously, making sure they have to take in impression after impression in rapid succession. Again, a response will be called into play, and this will certainly take the form of antipathy toward the fast pace of impressions, because the circulatory system dominates entirely. The result will be that the sanguine child slows down.**

A public school teacher might reject such an approach, but a Waldorf school teacher takes it as a challenging aspect of their job.

**[page 82, 83] CHOLERIC Choleric children must be treated in yet another way. Choleric children are typically a step behind normal in development. This may seem strange, but let us take an illustration. Any normal children of eight or nine move their limbs quickly or slowly in response to outer impressions. But compare eight-or nine-year-old children with those of three or four, who still trip and dance through life and have far less control of their movements. They still retain something of the baby in them. Babies do not control their movements at all, but kick around because the mental forces are not yet developed. But if tiny babies had a vigorous mental development, you would find them to be choleric. Kicking babies — and the healthier they are, the more they kick — are all choleric. Choleric children come from a body made restless by choler. Choleric retain something of the romping and raging of a tiny baby. Thus, the baby lives on in choleric boys and girls of eight or nine. This is why a child is choleric, and we must treat the child by trying gradually to subdue the baby within.**

Any woman who has been pregnant with a boy can likely testify about the kicking he did in her womb. All boys are not choleric, but the livelier they are, the more likely they are to have a choleric temperament. It's easy for a teacher to spot a choleric child, but how to deal with one? Steiner recommends activating the "kicking baby" in the child, meeting it with some humor and movement.

**[page 82] In [dealing with a choleric], humor is essential. When we confront a true choleric of eight to ten or even older, we will accomplish nothing through admonition. But if I get this child to recount a story I have told previously — a story that requires a display of great choler and much pantomime — the child will sense the baby within, and this will have the effect gradually calming the "tiny baby." Children will adapt it to the stage of their own mind. When I act choleric toward a choleric child — naturally, with humor and complete self-control — the child will grow calmer. When teachers begin to dance, [for instance], the raging child nearby gradually subsides.**

Obviously in a classroom of students, the teacher cannot assume all four temperaments at the same time, but it is possible to group the children by like temperaments and notice a dramatic improvement in the groups.

**[page 83] When we approach the temperaments in this way, it also helps us to keep even a very large class in order. Waldorf teachers study the temperaments of those children entrusted to them. They know that they have children who are melancholic, phlegmatic,**

**sanguine, and choleric. They place the melancholies together, unobtrusively and without it being noticed, of course. They know they have these children in this corner. The one places the choleric together and knows they are in another corner, and so on with the sanguines and phlegmatics. Using this social treatment, those of like temperament rub one another's corners off, so to speak. For example, a melancholic becomes cheerful when sitting among other melancholics. As for the choleric, they heal each other thoroughly, since it is best to let choleric work off their cholera on one another. If bruises are exchanged, it has a very sobering effect. Through the right social treatment the underlying interrelationships can be brought into a healthy resolution.**

The title of this Lecture is "Teachers as Artists in Education" and one can see that the palette of a good teacher has the four colors of the temperaments and the way the teacher blends them together to produce a harmony of color distinguishes the *artiste* from the dabbler in the educational system.

In the next lecture, Steiner covers "The Organization of the Waldorf School". Its most dramatically different approach to education is the teaching of one subject every morning for a month or so, until it is completed, and then moving on to the next subject. Perhaps you have heard of this unique organization of classes in a Waldorf school where one subject, perhaps arithmetic, is taught until it is learned, and then another subject, perhaps language, is taught. This allows the teacher and student maximum continuity during the course of lessons in one subject. Each subject is recapitulated at the end of the year to refresh the student's knowledge before moving on to the next year of studies.

**[page 95] The schedule in the Waldorf school places the main lesson in the morning. In winter it begins at 8 or 8:15, in summer a little earlier. The special feature of the main lesson is that it eliminates the usual schedule. We have no schedule in the usual sense; instead, a single subject is taught throughout the first two-hour period in the morning, with a break for younger children. The subject is carried on for four to six weeks and taken to a certain level. After that, another subject takes its place.**

The language lessons have a unique approach in that no one is taught the way I was when I took German. I was taught to speak via a 3-hour lab where I repeated the words I heard in my earphones and saw on the paper, however, I learned the name in German for English words. In Waldorf schools, they learn the name of the object in the new language.

**[page 96] The language lesson is, for us, a conversation lesson. We begin teaching languages, as far as possible — English and French — in the youngest classes of the school, and children learn to speak these languages from the very beginning. As much as possible, the children also learn the language without the meaning being translated into their own language. Thus, the word in the foreign language is connected with the object, not with the word in German. In this way, children learn "table" afresh in a foreign language; they do not learn the foreign word as a translation of *Tisch*.**

Frankly, there is nothing I detest more than being given a list of words in one language with its translation in another language. That is such an artificial way of learning a language and it is boring, boring, boring. Give me the word in a sentence and if I can't figure it out from context, I will look it up and remember it. These language lessons last usually from ten to twelve in the morning, after the earlier subject of the main lesson. The afternoon is then devoted to singing, music, and eurythmy lessons, all of which involve movement and engage the whole body while the mind can be refreshed after the morning studies. Steiner talks in detail about the types of artistic activity which involve sculpting and building simple toys and structures. This leads him to stating his views about giving dolls to children, namely his aversion to giving beautifully detailed dolls to children.

**[page 98] May I say something heretical? People are very fond of giving dolls to children, especially pretty dolls. They fail to see that children really don't want this.**

**They wave it away, but it is forced on them — pretty dolls, all painted. It is far better to give children a handkerchief, or, if you can't spare that, a piece of cloth. You tie it together, make the head here, paint the nose, two eyes, and so on. [Steiner demonstrates with his own handkerchief. Healthy children much prefer to play with these than with the pretty dolls, because something is left to the imagination. The most magnificent doll with red cheeks and such leaves nothing the imagination to do. The doll brings an inner emptiness to a child.**

This explains something which puzzled me for many years. Raising four small children, three of them girls, I noted often that some doll had lost all her clothes and was still kept around by my kids. I observed this among friends' kids also. In my twenty-something mentality, I thought these kids were being destructive of their toys and now I discover that they were simply rearranging the dolls to inspire their imagination again.

When painting classes are held, the children are taught to use water colors so they can "get a feeling for how one color goes with another and feel the harmony of colors through inner experience" (Page 101).

**[page 102] Representational painting comes much later. If they paint objects too early, something of their sense of living reality is lost and replaced by a sense for what is dead.**

This gave me a chuckle because the only kind of painting at an early age for me was crayons and later paint-by-number. Talk about boring! Both use colors that are isolated and never mixed into each other and they have the excitement of watching grass grow. At least the grass is living!

Even though Waldorf schools encourage the study of natural science along with language, history, and the arts, some people take offense even today to the spiritual roots of Rudolf Steiner's philosophy and teaching. In this next passage, Steiner explains how his spiritual science embraces all of natural science, helping to explain its spiritual roots while natural science strives to debunk spiritual science without doing the work to understand it.

**[page 123] You see, when people hear that spiritual views or values are confirmed, they are likely to say, "Those oddball cranks dismiss everything earthly and material." And then a natural scientist comes along and cites the marvelous advances of purely material science in recent centuries. And so people believe that anyone who advocates something so alien as spiritual science is unconcerned with material things or practical life. And I am not saying that anthroposophy is alien to the world, but that the world is alien to anthroposophy. But it is precisely spiritual science that takes up the latest discoveries of the natural sciences with immense love and saturates them with knowledge from the spiritual world. Consequently, it is precisely among those who support spiritual philosophy that there is a true appreciation of materialism. A spiritualist can afford to be a materialist, but a pure materialist lacks knowledge of matter by having lost the spirit; only the outer appearance of matter can be observed. It is the materialist who lacks real insight into material processes. I point this out, because it seems very significant to me.**

Education, in order to draw out the best from our children, must draw out the best from our teachers who must be always ready to deal effectively with the changes that occur in each individual child, to keep them healthy, focused, alert, and open to the newness and freshness of life. This is Steiner's expressed goal for Waldorf teachers and the world-wide expansion of these schools in recent decades proves that parents agree that this goal is being carried out to the benefit of their children.

**[page 125] Now, to use a somewhat extreme notion to express my meaning, Waldorf teachers must be prepared for tomorrow whether the sun rises or not. Unless our view of human nature is as fresh as this, without preconceptions from the past, we cannot comprehend human growth and development. We may rest assured that changes out in the cosmos will be somewhat conservative, but when it comes to transitions in human**



**nature, from early childhood to the teens, then, ladies and gentlemen, the sun that rose before may not come up again. In this human microcosm, the *anthropos*, such a great change occurs that we face an entirely new situation. Its as though nature one day confronts us with a world of darkness in which our eyes have become useless.**

**We need open minds, ready to receive new wisdom each day, and a disposition that can transform accumulated knowledge into a sense of potential that leaves the mind clear for the new. This keeps people healthy, fresh, and active. A heart that is open to changes in life — its unexpected and continuous freshness — must be a Waldorf teacher's basic mood and nature.**

We have teachers in public and private schools who can see deeply into the academic subjects of science, language, arts, history, etc., but to raise our children, we need teachers who can also see deeply into human nature, the full human in body, soul, and spirit. Where can a parent find a school with such teachers but in a Waldorf school? In a world beset with excess intellectualism since Bacon's time, we have lost contact with our most precious resource, our children, to whom intellectualism in all forms is a big turn-off. Where can we find teachers who can reach our children and draw the best out of their young spirits? Where but in a Waldorf school?

**[page 127] During the past four or five hundred years of western civilization, we have entered deeply into intellectualism; this however is unnoticed by the majority of people. Intellectualism, however, is naturally suited only to older people, whereas children are naturally averse to this mind-set. Nevertheless, all modern thinking is tinged with intellectualism. Thus far, the only people who have not yet become intellectual are those over in Asia and in Russia, as far as Moscow. West of Moscow and as far as America, intellectualism is universal. We remain unaware of this, but to the degree that we belong to the so-called cultured classes, we think in a kind of mental language that children cannot understand. This accounts for today's chasm between adults and children. This chasm must be filled by teachers such as we have in a Waldorf school. This can be done only when we are able to see deeply into human nature.**

How does intellectualism show up in our school systems? When we give children fixed rules, they accept a morality based on the canned ideas of our intellectual past. Children did not reincarnate into this new lifetime to learn about the past, but to participate in the future, to form their own moral principles as they grow into adults. To force feed children canned spinach will produce adults with a distaste for spinach. To force feed them canned morals will have a similar result: they will have a distaste for morality.

**[page 129] If we give children definite precepts as concepts, we cause them to approach morality in terms of ideas, and thus antipathy arises. The inner human organism rebels against and fights abstract moral precepts or commandments. On the other hand, I can encourage children to form their own moral feelings directly from life and from example, and this leads them to the catabolic stage. We get them to formulate moral principles as free, autonomous human beings. In this way, I help children toward an activity that benefits their entire being. If I merely give children moral precepts, I make morality distasteful to them, and this plays an important role in modern society. Its difficult to imagine the degree of disgust people feel toward some of the most beautiful and noblest of human moral impulses, simply because they were given in the form of precepts and intellectual ideas.**

Where can we find teachers who understand how to assist our children in becoming autonomous human beings with a real taste for life and a respect for a morality which our children form for themselves? One does best to look into Waldorf schools and meet their teachers and administrators.

**[page 129, 130] Waldorf teachers learn these things through spiritual science. Indeed, it is this that gives them insight into such material processes. Let me say it again;**

**materialism assumes the appropriate place in life only when we view it from the standpoint of spirit. This provides an understanding of what really takes place in the human being. Only by adopting a spiritual standpoint can we become truly practical educators in the physical world. But this is possible only when teachers themselves have a philosophy of life — when their view of the world causes them to feel the deep meaning of the question of the universe and human destiny.**

Each of us coming into this world faces the mystery of the universe: who are we? What is a person like me doing in a place like this? We are each like Oedipus, facing a Sphinx who poses us a question we must answer, and there is nothing which better fosters growth and understanding than an unanswered question. What walks on four legs, then on two legs, and then on three legs? Answer this question in your own way and you will discover the secret to the universe. The answer which came down to us from Oedipus is "It is I." He told the Sphinx, "I walked on all fours as a baby, then on two legs as an adult, and as an old man I will walk using a cane, on three legs."

We can say, "Cute," and then, "So what? What's the big deal?" If we do so, we miss the important point: the *human being is the answer to the mystery of the universe*, the answer to all the unanswered questions about the universe can be found in the human being.

**[page 131] So what is the real answer to these myriad questions? It is really the human being. The world is full of mysteries, and people confront them. Human beings are a synthesis and a summary, and the answer to the mystery of the universe comes from the human being.**

By "comes from", Steiner does not mean that the human being *tells* us the answer to the mystery, but that the human being *contains* the mystery of the origin and evolution of the universe inside its essence, inside its body, soul, and spirit. *We* are the answer to the mystery of the universe. *It is I*. And anthroposophy is the study of how this is so. Waldorf teachers educate children, *not in anthroposophy*, but instead they draw out of the children their essential human nature as body, soul, and spirit so that these children may grow into adults, forming a staunch morality inside of themselves, filling themselves with fresh insights into the world evolving along with them.

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----- *Footnotes* -----

**Footnote 1.**

See [The Genius of Language](#) where Steiner discusses his ideas on language.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

**Footnote 2.**

*op. cit.* [The Genius of Language](#).

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

**Footnote 3.**

See "The Live Lecturer" in my post-graduate Final Paper at the University of New Orleans, [Teaching and Learning in the College Classroom](#).

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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**Footnote 4.**

This poem of mine expresses the essence of true teaching and communication, "On the Wings of Words" — see my review of Steiner's [Towards Imagination](#).

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**Footnote 5.**

This is one of my basic rules, [MR#29](#): it says in any interaction, teaching and learning goes on in both parties, both in teacher and in student. In Waldorf education, understanding and applying this is a requirement for teachers.

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**Footnote 6.**

See my Essay the "Childhood of Humanity" here: <http://www.doyletics.com/childofh.htm>

[Return to text directly before Footnote 6.](#)

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**Footnote 7.**

Some sixty years later, I was delighted to find that the new Westwego Library built only a half-block from where I lived for fifteen years was named after Edith Lawson, my all-time favorite librarian.

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**Footnote 8.**

This is an example of [the power of an unanswered question](#). Held inside of oneself, it can grow and bloom into meaning at some later time in life.

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**Footnote 9.**

A simple memory technique which converts bodily states into declarative memory, so no more fear states arise only the memory of her mother yelling at her. See: <http://www.doyletics.com/introduc.shtml>.

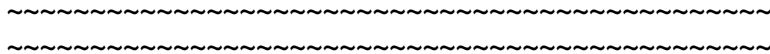
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**Footnote 10.**

The more I studied the process of scientific breakthroughs and practical inventions the more I realized that the whole process was backwards to the way I had been taught! These amazing innovations appear as a whole piece in the innovator's mind and only later are they analyzed, broken into pieces, and explained logically. No problem with doing that, but a teacher must not give their students the impression that the innovators logically built up their concepts or inventions. Kekule, e.g., saw a snake biting its tail and used that as a way of describing benzene and created the foundation of all organic chemistry. There are many examples; this endemic in all scientific discoveries and invention: the process works from whole to parts and logic is added later.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 10.](#)



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