

an emphasis on the aesthetic links between cultures and shared human concerns. His approach avoided stereotypical abstractions and advocated a small-scale approach. As he said, "Unity did not mean uniformity" (1961, p. 247). This places a strong emphasis on human respect and creative ways to bring various individuals into contact with one another in a hospitable and civil environment. Cooperation, mutual understanding, and "education for sympathy" (1917, p. 116) are championed over hostility and confrontation. What becomes important in Tagore's educational vision for educators today are the ways in which cultures and communities have furthered the human race through their creative and constructive visions of a shared humanity.



Artful Curriculum, Evaluation, and Instruction: Lessons Learned from Rudolf Steiner's Spiritually Based Waldorf Education

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AN EMPHASIS ON the arts, the child's changing consciousness, and academics epitomize Waldorf education. But where did this perspective come from and why did it gain popularity? What are the details of its application to education today and the consequences of these principles and practices? In this chapter, I will elucidate the philosophy of education of the founder of Waldorf education, Rudolf Steiner, by discussing how he and those who have promoted the Waldorf approach aspire to create a better world through a distinctive fusion of traditional and nontraditional ways of educating. In particular, I highlight two core ideas in the Waldorf philosophy: the role of stories and storytelling, and the art of evaluation.¹ As we explore these ideas, Steiner's alternative views will be proposed as a path to refresh, revitalize, and reconceptualize our educational imagination. Were our world moving easily toward peace, justice, global prosperity, and environmental sensitivity, we might not bother to look beyond present-day philosophies of education. But given the many troubling trends in the modern world, alternative ideas such as those at the foundation of Waldorf education may offer new opportunities.

THE GENESIS OF STEINER'S WORLDVIEW

Rudolf Steiner was born in 1861 to Austrian parents in the small town of Kraljevec, Austria (now in Croatia). His father worked for the railroad and

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before Rudolf was 8 the family had moved several times. Steiner's school experiences were mixed—some stimulating and some quite dull. At the start, when he reached school age he was taught by an “old man for whom teaching was a burdensome business,” says Steiner. “However, it was also a burdensome business for me to be taught by him” (1928/1977, p. 21). After an incident in which Steiner was wrongly accused of messing up the school room with ink, his father decided to educate Rudolf himself: “Henceforth I sat by the hour next to him in his office and had to write and read while he attended to his duties” (p. 22). At age 11, he had a history teacher “who appeared to lecture to us when he taught, but he was, in fact, reading from a book” (p. 43). The young boy decided, “I could just as well read what was in the book. From the teacher's ‘lecture’ I got nothing. I took in nothing by listening to him read. So I separated the sections of Kant's . . . book [*Critique of Pure Reason*] and fastened them inside the history book which I had in front of me during the lesson, and now I read Kant while from the rostrum history was being ‘taught’” (p. 43). In addition to philosophy, geometry caught the young Steiner's attention.

Although academically precocious, as a result of his working-class origins and his father's desire that he become an engineer, Steiner attended the *Realschule*, or trade school, instead of the *Gymnasium*, which provided an academic curriculum. Later, from 1879 to 1883, he was enrolled in the Vienna Polytechnic, a technical college, instead of a university. Nevertheless, Steiner taught himself the more academic curriculum that he missed. Feeling the loss of having to study the classics from German translations, Steiner taught himself both Greek and Latin, which were part of a *Gymnasium* education. Next, at the polytechnic in Vienna, Steiner tutored a *Gymnasium* student, and eventually taught himself the subjects he would have studied had he attended a *Gymnasium*. By attending a school for working-class students and teaching himself the academic curriculum, Steiner attained an understanding of two worlds—the academic and the vocational—which later helped him fashion the Waldorf school. And indeed, Waldorf schools emphasize both hand and mind. Foreign languages are taught, as are woodworking and handcrafts.

Complementary to Steiner's synthesis of academic and vocational education was the undercurrent of his spiritual experience. When Steiner was quite young an apparition of a woman appeared to him and asked him for assistance. Although taken aback, Steiner was certain of what he saw but not sure how to help. The following day he learned that the woman who had come to him, one of his cousins, had committed suicide. This experience, and others like it, pointed to what he would later refer to as an “undeniable truth,” leading him to write, “That the spiritual world is a reality was as certain to me as the reality of the physical. But I needed some kind of justification for this assumption” (1928/1977, p. 29).

Steiner sought justifications for his beliefs in philosophy and science, but in his view, these fields were moving toward existential and materialist orientations, that is, a godless and skeptical approach toward anything that does not have a material basis. For the most part, Steiner had to examine his spiritual experiences on his own. As he put it:

And it was always the same in regard to my experiences of the spiritual world. No one was interested to hear about them. At most, from this or that quarter people would bring forward something spiritualistic. Then it was I who did not wish to listen. . . . But then it happened. (1928/1977, p. 60)

On his trips by train to Vienna during his college years, Steiner frequently traveled with an herbalist, “a simple man of the people” (1928/1977, p. 60), with whom he was able to speak about his spiritual experiences: “When with him, one could enter deeply into nature's secrets. On his back he carried the bundle of healing herbs; in his heart he carried the results of what he had won from nature's spirituality while gathering them” (p. 61). From this friendship, Steiner indicates he was able to attain glimpses into a spiritual world unbounded by organized religion.

Thus, Steiner's interest in mystical knowledge began with the apparition when he was a young boy, developed in 1879 as he came to know the herbalist, and came into focus in 1888 when he encountered theosophy. Appealing to the intelligentsia throughout Europe, theosophy combined a study of world religions, ancient mysteries, philosophy, science, and psychic investigation. In 1912, when theosophists declared the 14-year-old Krishnamurti (1895–1986) their new Christ, Steiner broke with the group. A year later, in 1913, the Anthroposophical Society, based on the writings and lectures of Steiner himself, was formed in Berlin.

Anthroposophy

Much like theosophy, anthroposophy provides an intellectual rationale and meditative practices for spiritual investigation. Unlike theosophy, which sought greater spiritual grounding in Eastern religious practices, anthroposophy was decidedly anchored in Western practices—particularly Christianity. For Steiner, what he refers to as the “Christ event” represents an evolutionary advancement in human consciousness. In other words, an acceptance of Christ within was understood by Steiner as the key to opening up one's powers of perception to be able to perceive directly the spiritual world (see McDermott, 1984, pp. 212–226).

The word *anthroposophy* is derived from *anthropos* (man) and *sophia* (wisdom). It may be thought of as a spiritual path of self-development. Steiner

perceives three key elements in it. First, intertwined with the visible world is a spiritual one. Steiner was arguing not only that a spiritual world exists, but that the spiritual world interpenetrates the sensory world. All attempts to deny the existence of the spiritual world or to solve problems on a solely material level were doomed to fail. Second, human beings have the potential to perceive and enter into the spiritual world. According to Steiner, within us are latent organs of perception that can penetrate the spiritual world. Third, when spiritual investigators achieve the intuitive stage of apprehension they consciously enter into an objective spirit, whose findings can, to some degree, be articulated and tested. As a result of his spiritual research, Steiner offered comprehensive, complex, and spiritually based views of a wide variety of practical topics. These included biodynamic farming, medicine, architecture, and beekeeping. Steiner believed that anyone could achieve the same results if they used the same meditative techniques.

Steiner's Conception of the Human Being

Steiner was well aware of the direction in which modern science was headed in its analysis of the human being, but taking his lead from his own inner visions and from Western mystical traditions, he used an analysis and a language very different from modern science. For instance, Steiner talked about the human being in terms of four aspects: the physical, etheric, astral, and ego bodies. Like the mineral world, the human being has a physical body, material and corporeal until it becomes enlivened with an etheric (energy) body. Humans—like the plant world—have an etheric body that forms and preserves the physical body. It animates our physical selves. Next, like animals, humans have an astral body, our world of emotions. But whereas animals only have physical, etheric, and astral bodies, humans—unlike everything from the mineral, plant, and animal worlds—have an ego, the sense of an individual “I”. Developmentally speaking, these forces grow at different stages. Said Steiner: “It is on these four members of the human being that the educator works. . . . It must not be imagined that they develop uniformly in the human being, so that at any given point in his life . . . they are all equally far developed” (1909/1965, p. 12).

The terms *astral*, *ego*, and *etheric bodies* sound strange in discourse outside religious studies; but it should be pointed out that throughout the course of history, the human being has been conceived of in various ways by various cultures. Aristotle, for example, believed in a hierarchy of souls (Hergenhahn, 1986, p. 39); yoga speaks of seven bodies, as does ancient Indian medicine (the seven chakras) (Berman, 1989, p. 140). Steiner points out that his observations of the various bodies were also discerned by Saint Augustine (Steiner, 1986). Indeed, the notion of bodies as composed solely of mind and matter is a recent scientific account.

Three Stages of Child Development

Not unlike that of well-known child psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980), Steiner developed a theory of human development. Steiner and Piaget both noted three distinct stages of cognitive growth in which children gain logical awareness as they grow older. Further, both believed that pushing children toward such awareness too early was harmful (see Ginsberg, 1982). Steiner, however, brings two other observations to bear. First, he takes into account his view that individuals are reincarnated beings. Thus, in addition to the issues of heredity and environment is the added dimension of a reincarnated soul. This explains why he believed that cosmic purposes should enter into the analysis of the gifted child, or the wayward child. Second, Steiner elaborates on a holistic development of the human being. He does not focus on cognitive growth alone but approaches each stage of a child's growth with concern for emotional and volitional development as well.

At birth, Steiner suggests, the infant consists largely of an undifferentiated, still-developing physical body. Gradually, an etheric (life or energy) body works down from the head as an awakening force. The reason, therefore, that Waldorf educators do not teach children to read or memorize facts before the age of 7 is their belief that the etheric body is part of the physical body and still working to develop it. When one teaches children intellectual material too early, they believe one could be causing harm to the child. During this period, children learn almost everything through imitation (Steiner, 1909/1965). The second stage occurs around the age of 7 when children lose their baby teeth. According to Steiner, the second set of teeth pushing out the first set visibly represents the etheric body breaking out of its “etheric envelope.” Steiner characterized the second stage as the time of feeling, a period that lasts until the age of 14 and that requires teaching through vivid images and rhythm. Steiner argued that “everything that one brings to a child at this age must be given in the form of fairy tales, legends, and stories in which everything is endowed with feeling” (Steiner, 1988b). Finally, the third stage, from puberty to age 21, is marked by the release of the astral body, the body of consciousness. As the vehicle of “pain and pleasure, of impulse, craving, passion, and the like” (1909/1965, p. 12) the astral body, freed from the physical body, creates yet another mind-and-body relationship. *Thinking and judgment* are the two catchwords for this phase of development. At this stage Waldorf educators resort to abstract thinking more freely.

From this brief sketch, one can begin to understand how Waldorf educators approach the teaching of varied concepts. Let us take moral education as a quick example. Waldorf educators stress the importance of having good role models around young children since they learn primarily through imitation. As students *grow older they learn moral lessons through stories*

and their feelings about these stories. Later, Waldorf educators might approach moral issues from a critical standpoint that encourages discussion and dialogue. Obviously, the Waldorf perspective on teaching something like moral education is more complicated than this overview, but the point worth noting is how Waldorf educators incorporate concepts of child development into curricular ideas.

THE BIRTH OF WALDORF EDUCATION

On April 23, 1919, Rudolf Steiner was invited by industrialist Emil Molt to lecture to the workers of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany. Molt was a progressive manager who endeavored to keep his employees productive and satisfied during difficult times. He offered, for example, adult education classes on literature, history, and geography. Molt was also a theosophist who had heard Steiner lecture and invited him to speak to his workers at a factory whose name would, in time, become associated with the schools that developed out of Steiner's philosophy.

Sitting on benches, chairs, and large bags of tobacco, the men and women who labored in the factory heard the philosopher talk about his newly published book, *The Threefold Commonwealth*, in which he elaborated on decentralizing and internationalizing what he conceived as the three spheres of social life—the spiritual-cultural, legal-political, and economic. Armistice had recently been agreed, ending World War I (1914–1918), and the assembled laborers, worn out from war, were worried about the failing economy. Threatened by social upheaval, they perhaps yearned to hear something hopeful about their lives in postwar Germany.

Steiner's speech was about constitutional states limiting themselves to the enactment and enforcement of laws to protect their citizens and allowing economic and cultural affairs to transcend national boundaries. Initially his talk failed to rouse much enthusiasm in the workers (Oberman, 1997), but one of his points did connect with his audience:

All of you, as you sit here, from the sixteen-year-old girl apprentice to the workers in their sixties, suffer from the fact that your real personality has been buried because from a certain moment there was only the hard school of life for you, but no longer any real education. (quoted in Carlgren, 1981, p. 15)

According to Ida Oberman, a historian of Waldorf education, Steiner captivated his audience with a vision of comprehensive human growth:

In his later memoirs the factory owner Molt referred to this day as Waldorf's birthday. And indeed, the factory floor was the cradle and Steiner's tobacco speech marked the birth of "Waldorf" education. (1997, p. 2)

Several days after the speech, Steiner met with Molt and two others to discuss the formation of a school. It was agreed that the school should be open to all children regardless of religious, social, or economic background, and it should offer a 12-year curriculum (Barnes, 1980, p. 2). The Waldorf School opened in Stuttgart in the fall of 1919 with 253 children. By Steiner's death in 1925, enrollment had reached 800 (Oberman, 1997, p. 5).

Steiner lived to see the opening of four Waldorf schools: two in Germany and one each in the Netherlands and Great Britain. The first Waldorf school in the United States opened in 1928 in New York City through the efforts of Irene Brown, who had heard Steiner lecture in Oxford. There were four American Waldorf schools by 1947. Today, there are about 150 Waldorf schools in North America. Excluded from this number are some Waldorf charter schools and programs operating in public schools. There are also about 870 Waldorf schools in 60 countries worldwide.

SUSTAINING WALDORF EDUCATION

Generally, Waldorf schools are founded through parent initiatives. That is, a group of parents decide to start a school for their children and often the school begins as a preschool and expands. Although the first Waldorf school was for working-class youth, most Waldorf schools today are independent and, therefore, cater to affluent people—though each school usually reserves some money to help families of need. It should be noted that one of the reasons that Waldorf education is "independent" is its spiritual orientation grounded in a generally Christian perspective. Christian festivals are celebrated and some Christian psalms are read in class, but courses in religion are not part of the Waldorf curriculum.

While anthroposophy is not taught in Waldorf schools, it is the spiritual basis for most Waldorf educators. The Anthroposophical Society is housed in Dornach, Switzerland, in a magnificent structure designed by Steiner called the Goetheanum. The society is composed of numerous "sections" for different areas of study: medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and pedagogy, among others. While the pedagogic section does not issue directives, generally, at least one teacher at a Waldorf school is a member of this section.

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), formed in 1979, assists growing schools by providing guidance, suggestions, and a support network. AWSNA also ensures that its members "are committed to work out of the spiritual impulse of anthroposophy" (Uhrmacher 1991b, p. 68). New Waldorf initiatives (often a preschool or kindergarten class) in which parents may not know too much about the undergirding of Waldorf education

are referred to as "federated schools" and may request

introductory assistance from AWSNA. Sponsored schools are those that have classes up to third grade and are under the guidance of a sponsorship committee, often individuals from a nearby Waldorf school. Finally, full-member schools may take part in delegates' meetings, where common concerns are discussed.

Each individual Waldorf school is run by a board of directors (or trustees), a "college of teachers," and an administrative committee. The real power in the school is held by the college of teachers, those individuals (mostly but not exclusively teachers) who have made a "special commitment to the care and growth of the school" (Uhrmacher, 1991b, p. 75). These dedicated anthroposophists meet for 4 to 5 hours weekly to discuss, among other matters, academic standards, teacher evaluation, dress code, discipline, and hiring and firing of teachers. There are also weekly faculty meetings for all teachers. The administrative committee, made up of either paid staff or teachers who teach part time, implements the policies made by the college of teachers. The board of directors, consisting of parents, is responsible for handling financial and legal issues. Perhaps most significant about this arrangement is the fact that teachers are at the center of the school—not paid administrators, board members, or even parents.

Waldorf education has its own teacher-training institutions. The two most prominent in the United States are Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York, and the Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, California. Teacher training is usually a 2-year program, but in order to meet the demand for new teachers, both colleges offer extension programs where prospective teachers can attain a certificate by working at a school and attending the college over several summers. Since the demand for Waldorf teachers far exceeds the number of graduates each year, Waldorf schools often hire non-Waldorf-trained teachers.

What takes place in a Waldorf school or classroom will vary somewhat, but by and large one might expect the following attributes: From first through eighth grade, students learn reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography (among other subjects), largely through artistic activities that include drawing, painting, clay modeling, poetry, and drama. For example, children might draw a lion after hearing the popular story of the mouse and the lion. In addition, all students have the opportunity to learn two foreign languages, singing, recorders and string instruments, eurythmy, form drawing, handwork, and woodworking.² While many of these subjects are taught by specialized teachers, to enhance the stability of the curriculum, the same classroom teacher often remains with the same group of students from first through eighth grade.

One constant across grade levels is the Main Lesson, a 2-hour block of time set aside each morning, in which a particular subject is taught over 3 to 4 weeks. Sometimes the subject is discipline based (e.g., arithmetic) and some-

times it is thematic ("Man and Animal"). Through the use of this extended block of time, Waldorf educators try to avoid the fragmentation of curriculum plaguing many schools. Indeed, Steiner's innovative approach to curricula is one of the hallmarks of a Waldorf education.

Steiner provided "indications" for Waldorf educators and their curricula. He did not want to create a rigid structure for either. Over time, however, Steiner's indications, which can be found in books such as *Practical Advice to Teachers*, have achieved great status, and many Waldorf teachers aspire to emulate his advice. Other Waldorf practices, such as the use of artistic warm-ups (e.g., flute playing) to wake up a class or to settle the children down, seems to have emerged from Waldorf teacher-training programs. Therefore, while teachers are free to conduct classes in ways they see fit, limited only to following a spirit of anthroposophy, one finds that Waldorf educators tend to run classes in a similar style.

One additional point about the Waldorf organization is noteworthy. Through the efforts of enterprising individuals at the teacher-training institutions, Waldorf education has gained entrance into two new arenas. There are today Waldorf-inspired practices in public schools. Although it remains controversial both inside and outside Waldorf communities, because of the spiritual impulse behind Waldorf education, there are classrooms and charter schools using the methods Steiner espoused in public education around the country (see McDermott, Byers, Dillard, Easton, Henry, & Uhrmacher, 1996).³ Second, the Waldorf teacher-training programs also provide ideas and resources for home schoolers, a growing population in the United States.

THE WALDORF EXPERIENCE: MISS ROGERS'S FOURTH-GRADE CLASSROOM

As Waldorf schooling is different from most methods of traditional education, it is useful to examine how it operates in the classroom. To illuminate Steiner's philosophy of education, I turn in this section to the classroom of a Waldorf teacher, Miss Rogers, in Sunnyville, California.⁴ Below we examine several aspects of Miss Rogers's fourth-grade classroom. What we will see here is typical of what we might find in other classrooms. First, we have a teacher who began at the school as a parent. Kathy Rogers graduated from the Rudolf Steiner College in 1984. Prior to taking the teacher-training program, Miss Rogers took part in the founding of the Sunnyville Waldorf School, which her daughter attended from kindergarten to eighth grade.

Miss Rogers aims to provide students with the potential to gain "power over their own souls." She will accomplish her aim by offering stories, pictures, rituals, and ceremonies punctuated with symbolic meaning. Second

as we will see in the example below, Miss Rogers and other Waldorf educators employ novel forms of evaluation.

Miss Rogers begins her school day at 8:30 A.M. and stands just inside her classroom door, greeting the students with a pleasant "Good morning" while shaking each student's hand. Students and teacher talk briefly during this period. Then Miss Rogers plays her flute while students hang up their jackets and proceed to their desks. When students settle in their seats, Miss Rogers says, "Good morning, fourth grade," and the students in turn reply, "Good morning, Miss Rogers." Next, without much prompting, students stand beside their desks and recite a variety of verses (poems and psalms). At about 9:15 Miss Rogers begins her Main Lesson. Currently, students are studying a unit called "Man and Animal."⁵ In a letter introducing the topic to the students' parents, Miss Rogers wrote:

Dear Fourth-Grade Parents:

... Today we began one of the most significant blocks in the curriculum, that block called Man & Animal. It is the first "science" block, and is brought to them at that time when their consciousness is again beginning to focus on things in the world in a new way. ... We begin with a look at MAN and try to awaken in the children a feeling that Man represents a synthesis, a bringing together of the three kingdoms of nature. (in Uhrmacher, 1991b, p. 177)

As mentioned earlier, Steiner did not write curricula, but through his lectures to educators he gave numerous indications of the types of ideas and content that could be offered. In regard to this particular unit of the Main Lesson, Steiner provided two major ideas. First, he noted, "The aim is not so much that the pupils should accumulate a great deal of knowledge, but that we prepare the ground for them to acquire the right feeling for the world" (1986, pp. 177-178). Second, he emphasized the importance of students' receiving a fundamental understanding of their place in the world of nature:

The child grows with all the kingdoms of the earth. He no longer merely stands on the dead ground of the earth, but he stands on the living ground, for he feels the earth as something living. He gradually comes to think of himself standing on the earth as though he were standing on some great living creature, like a whale. This is the right feeling. (1988a, p. 65)

Thus "Man and Animal," which will last approximately four weeks, teaches students, among other things, to perceive their relationship to the animal kingdom. The hope is that by encouraging students to feel connected to animals a moral responsibility will follow, that is, they will care about and care for them.

Over the course of the next 2 weeks in which I observed the class, the Main Lesson consisted of the following:

1. As preparation for a story, teacher and students recite a verse of poetry or a psalm. Then Miss Rogers helps a student light a candle, which is used to create a quiet mood.
2. Students recapitulate the previous day's story or lesson ("Who remembers yesterday's story?"). After students tell part of the story, she might ask, "Then what happened?"
3. Miss Rogers tells the students an imaginative or a factual story (lasting from 5 to 15 minutes); she tells the story without use of a text. Waldorf teachers have numerous Waldorf resources from which to choose a story.
4. Miss Rogers presents the day's academic content, or begins the creative activity (e.g., sculpting); after telling a story, she might present some academic content (e.g., about wolves or penguins or another animal). In the "Man and Animal" unit, she relates the content to humans. She then has students do something with the content. For example, she had students sculpt the human body out of clay. She would ask students if the animal they had talked about was more headlike, trunklike, or limblike.
5. Students write and draw in their Main Lesson books. What they write and draw is teacher directed. Both are to relate to the previously told story. Miss Rogers offers tips on how to mix colors, though she may let students choose their own visual content. She often has a paragraph on the blackboard that students are to copy. For example:

Man has been created three in one. We are head, trunk, and limbs. With our head we want to take the whole world into ourselves. ... All that we take in through our head is digested in our trunk, where it becomes something now. It becomes what I am! With my limbs I am able to give back to the world all I have become by "eating" it, but now in a new form.

Interpreting the Main Lesson

When I asked Miss Rogers about the purpose of stories in the main lesson, she replied:

One way of thinking about it is to divide it into thinking, feeling, and willing. The thinking aspect is the content, what I say. But you also want to get those feelings engaged; so often

the stories will do that for you. And then the will activity is when they do something with the content. That can be a play or writing.⁶

While Miss Rogers relays some facts about animals and humans, she is not overly concerned about having students memorize these details. More important for her is having students gain a deeper understanding of the interrelationships among humans and animals. Miss Rogers's overall approach is influenced by Steiner and by the Russian naturalist Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), who wrote *Mutual Aid* to demonstrate cooperative activities in animal and human communities. According to Miss Rogers, "There are theories that mankind or animal life evolved more out of mutual aid than out of cutthroat dog eat dog thing. . . . that is the picture we try to give the children."⁷ Cognitively, Miss Rogers aims to give a "picture" or "image" of person-animal relationships, but she does not force her message. She offers it to her class and allows students to receive what they will.

Affectively, Miss Rogers tries to convey the feeling that humans are morphologically similar to animals. If she is successful, her use of stories will structure the kinds of feelings students have for animals, so that when they get older, the students will continue to feel a connection to the animal world. If students feel a kinship toward animals, then these feelings will orient them toward acting responsibly. Miss Rogers tries to achieve this aim through imaginative stories about anthropomorphized animals in particular. One story, for example, was about a red hen that keeps calling the crocodile that is about to eat her "brother." The crocodile is puzzled by this statement and ultimately refrains from eating the red hen.

The Role of Stories and Storytelling

Steiner urged his teachers to teach through stories, and he demanded that they tell the stories from memory rather than read the children books. Indeed, we saw in Miss Rogers's classroom that she did just that. It is useful to interpret these practices from the point of view of modern educational ideas. Today, some educators point out that stories serve transformative, transfigurative, and moral functions. According to the educational scholar Philip Jackson, "The hope is that the message will not simply be heard and understood but will be taken to heart" (1995, p. 9). In this way, stories transform us. In addition, Jackson points out that stories help us recognize who we are. He refers to this aspect as a transfigurative function. Stated differently, by "identifying ourselves with characters in texts (and perhaps with more than just the characters, perhaps with the constellation of meanings embodied in the text as a whole) we somehow become ourselves" (McEwan

& Egan, 1995, p. 12). Miss Rogers would concur with these important functions of stories.

There is also, according to education professor Carol Witherell, a moral dimension to stories:

A good story engages and enlarges the moral imagination, illuminating possibilities for human thought, feeling and action in ways that can bridge the gulf between different times, places, cultures, and beliefs. (Witherell, 1995, p. 40)

Though Steiner and Miss Rogers would not use this terminology to talk about stories, both would agree with all that has been said. Moreover, Steiner noted that good storytelling moves us. In numerous lectures he asked what children were to make of teachers who relied too much on textbooks. Responding to this, Steiner noted, "Even if your effort is far inferior to published stories . . . it will work more directly upon the child because the process of your creating will communicate itself to him" (Steiner, 1981, p. 70). Through storytelling, the teacher reveals that the embodied information and all that goes with it are part of the teacher.

Waldorf educators seek to conserve the ancient arts of creating and telling stories, which have been central to every culture on the planet. Today, with movies, television, and the Internet, educators may choose to find stories through technology and have them told by professional actors. But when we make such choices, we must ask, What is being lost with the discontinuation of face-to-face communication? Waldorf education stands in modern societies as a reminder that such communication is essential to who we are as human beings and that stories serve an educational function.

Evaluation in Waldorf Education

From the opening of the first school, Waldorf educators have delayed the giving of letter grades until the middle or high school years. In Sunnyville, California, Waldorf teachers begin letter grading in eighth grade. Before this grade level, they use various strategies to assess students. Here I discuss two of the most important: poetic writing and drawing. Both are used to help students reflect on who they are as human beings.

At least once a year, Miss Rogers draws a picture and writes a verse about each student. In addition to drawing a picture of a lion, here is what she said about Zachary in the second grade:

Strongest are not walls of stone
or slowly-molded bone,
Steadfast is the lion's part,
A brave, willing, helpful heart.

And in the third grade she wrote,

He walks so tall and straight with grace
 He has a smiling handsome face.
 A heart that strives to do the good,
 Come pinches or hits or what meanness would. (both verses in Uhrmacher,
 1991b, p. 188)

The point here is not to assess Miss Rogers's poetic abilities, but to note that in this second poem, she captures positive aspects of Zachary (he is kind and helpful and handsome) and places these next to aspects that she would like from him (to stand straight, smile more, be lionlike). The poem is a type of assessment, but it does not limit Zachary to a one-dimensional being. Rather, it captures him, albeit in a simplified way, poetically and meaningfully.

What should one make of these evaluative representations? Like all systems of evaluation, they have their strengths and weaknesses. Whereas traditional grading schemes act as a sorting mechanism to track students in classes, disciplines, and even careers, Waldorf rejects this in favor of other advantages. Two disadvantages are that drawing and writing poetry are time consuming and demand a great deal of creativity from teachers. However, there are significant advantages to this system: First, the Waldorf style of assessment, especially in the student's younger years, does not allow administrative purposes to intrude on the teacher-student relationship, a danger Nel Noddings warns of when she argues that traditional grading schemes, such as numbers or letters, impinge on this relationship:

Here is a demand that both know to be an intrusion. The teacher does not grade to inform the student. She has far better, more personal ways to do this. She grades to inform others about the student's progress. (1984, pp. 193-194)

A second advantage is that the Waldorf type of evaluation actually provides valuable educational information. Such information is not limited to the cognitive alone, nor is it meant as some kind of final assessment. Miss Rogers is not saying that Zachary is failing because he is not lionlike. Rather, she uses the picture and poem as a means to encourage Zachary toward developing certain characteristics. Thus, the assessment is formative (process oriented) rather than summative, and it provides information in ways letter grades simply cannot match.

Third, it is clear that when Miss Rogers creates poems and verses for students, she is giving them personal gifts. This exchange between teacher and student is intimate and thought provoking and reflects a caring attitude that a mere letter grade cannot convey.⁸ Additionally, the Waldorf style of assessment encourages teachers to see each child holistically. Poems require that the poems be observant about their students and that they think about

them from various points of view. A good poem often gets at tensions, contradictions, paradoxes, and essences. Moreover, having children see their teacher write poems and draw pictures is a good way to encourage students to draw and write as well.

For all these reasons, educators ought to consider artistic forms of evaluation. While this is seemingly a difficult task, consider how long teachers spend creating grading rubrics and agonizing over letter grades. Admittedly, artistic forms of evaluation will not suit every teacher, but why not allow those who have an interest and predisposition toward these approaches the opportunity to try it out? Why not see what such artistic forms may yield?

THE IMPORTANCE OF STEINER'S IDEAS AND WALDORF EDUCATION

In conclusion, Waldorf education continues to thrive worldwide. Undoubtedly some readers of this essay may feel quickly drawn to Steiner's ideas, while others may feel dismay that anyone would take him seriously. Indeed, Steiner and Waldorf education have their critics. Anthroposophy itself has been referred to as a "hodgepodge of 19th century romanticism, Christianity, Eastern mysticism and various perplexing notions" (McGrath, 1977, p. 100), and some regard it as "a synthetic mixture, a surface barbarization of the Gospel by means of Indic, Gnostic, and mystery elements" (Aulthaus, 1962, p. 19). Adherents to anthroposophy, however, suggest that its credibility should be tested by its results, and indeed even the two critics mentioned above (McGrath and Aulthaus) admit that the results are impressive. Anthroposophy has produced organic and holistic approaches to medicine, agriculture, architecture, and education, all of which continued to flourish worldwide long after Steiner's death in 1925.

Critics of Waldorf education argue that it needs to do much more to make its curriculum multicultural (McDermott et al., 1996). Moreover, there are critiques of Waldorf pedagogy—it is too rigid and lacking in flexibility; it is too teacher directed and lacking in student dialogue and decision making; and there is too much rote memorization. To its credit, AWSNA has taken action to address the concerns it recognizes as valid (e.g., multicultural education) and has engaged in dialogue with critics who argue against the Waldorf perspective (e.g., Waldorf educators do not believe that schools should be student led).⁹ All school systems have their faults and shadows and Waldorf education is no exception. But as Waldorf schools work to fix their problems, let's not overlook their strengths. While many school systems today fear giving teachers too much power and rely on national testing to determine what kind of curriculum should be offered to students, Waldorf schools provide a successful example of teacher-led schools. While many schools look

to narrowing curriculum and pedagogy through state standards and state testing and, thus, risk losing the meaning and purpose of education, Waldorf educators emphasize an artistic approach that engages students in mind and body. Teaching through stories and storytelling, for example, is a pedagogical device worthy of emulation. In fact, mainstream educators have recently come to recognize the importance of stories (see McEwan & Egan, 1995). Also, using an artistic approach to evaluate students has great merit and, in my view, ought to be the topic of further research. Innovative and wonderfully creative, this idea seems to be just one of many examples of how Steiner's philosophy as it is practiced in Waldorf schools might inform mainstream education.

While many schools debate their purpose and mission, Waldorf educators have always been clear. In the words of Rudolf Steiner:

Often today, people's education lags far behind the talents and tendencies that destiny implanted in them. We must keep pace with those forces to the extent that the human beings in our care can attain all that their destinies will allow—the fullest clarity of thought, the most loving deepening of feeling, and the greatest possible energy and capacity of will. This can be done only through an art of education and teaching. (1997, p. 34)



CHAPTER TEN

Caring for Others as a Path to Teaching and Learning: Albert Schweitzer's Reverence for Life

A. G. Rud

Let your life speak.

—George Fox, in 1652

NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE (1952) Albert Schweitzer helps us think intelligently and imaginatively about the values and purposes of education in our time. Known and revered primarily for more than a half century of humanitarian work at the hospital he established in Lambaréné, Gabon, in West Africa, Schweitzer's decision to dedicate his life to medical service in Equatorial Africa came after years of study and reflection in other disciplines. As a young man, Schweitzer was a noted biblical scholar, minister, organist, and author of a number of philosophical and theological works before choosing to study medicine in 1905 at the age of 30. In ways we are just beginning to understand, all this eventually filtered into his life's goal of serving others.

To argue for Schweitzer's legacy for current educational practice, I will focus on three particular areas: education for service, education for environmental awareness, and education for hospitality and community. His work in Africa and his writings provide rich seams of thought to mine for a philosophy of education that can both inspire and empower the educational process in our schools. Schweitzer believed that teachers should "not only pass on knowledge," but also transmit "the deep realization that the heart