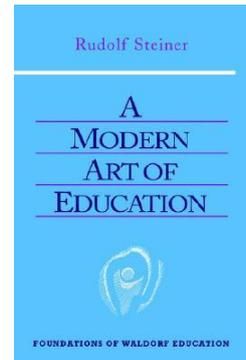


Education for the 21st Century

Personal reflections on the lectures given by Rudolf Steiner at
Ilkey, UK . August 1923

Sean Burke Jan. 2012



Preliminary

- My background
- Earthside Education
- Three reasons for this lecture (The school, myself, and this particular book)
- Introductory verse: *Against Fear* -Bittleston

Page numbers in these notes refer to the following edition of the lectures;

Steiner, R. (1923, 2004) *A Modern Art of Education*. Great Barrington, MA. Anthroposophic Press.

The importance of the lectures given to teachers;

...Although each Waldorf school is independent, and although there is a healthy oral tradition going back to the first Waldorf teachers and to Steiner himself, as well as a growing body of secondary literature, the true foundations of the Waldorf method and spirit remain the many lectures that Rudolf Steiner gave on the subject... (endnote; page 225)

-which needs to be read in the light of Steiner's advice;

..Waldorf education fully recognises all that is great and noteworthy in the great achievements of educators everywhere... (p.18)

The scheme of the book

Steiner gave one lecture per day for thirteen days from 5-17 August 1923. The Sunday lecture was not on education per se, but on religion. I have omitted it as it does not fall within the scheme of the lecture series.

It is a series of connected lectures. The titles given in the various editions are often not helpful in my opinion, I have given some alternatives below.

The lectures begin with a discussion of the separation of various aspects of soul life and how only connectedness gives rise to active imaginal thinking.

There are then a few lectures that set the scene historically, placing us within the modern context.

In lecture 5, Steiner pinpoints the crucial aspect of the series, the need to free volition. The education toward freedom which we aspire to presupposes a fully engaged will.

Steiner then looks at various connections between human development, especially in the primary ages but also earlier and later, and matters of appropriate content and approach.

He sums up on the definition of modern education; being the uniting of thought and volition through artistic teaching.

Chapter Heads

It is unclear to me how the lecture titles were chosen. I have tried to find better titles which more properly reflect the more important aspects of each.

Ch.	titles in A Modern Art..	My suggested revisions
1	Science, Art, Religion, Morality	True Connection gives rise to Active Imaginal Thinking
2	The Principles of Greek Education	The legacy and ongoing development of 'Greek education'
3	Greek Education and the Middle Ages	How to educate Free Human Beings
4	Spirit's Relationship to the Body	Spirit's Relationship to the Body: Teacher as Midwife
5	Freeing Volition in the Human Organism	Freeing Volition in the Human Organism
6	Walking, Speaking, Thinking	The Young Child as an Organ of Sensory Perception
7	Rhythm, Sleep, Imitation	Observation and Teaching
8	Reading, Writing, Nature Study	Finding Connections
9	Arithmetic, Geometry, History	The Etheric and Soul Bodies in Teaching
10	Physics, Chemistry, Handwork, Language, Religion	Teaching to the age
11	Memory, Temperaments, Physical Education, Art	Memory and Health
12	Education Towards Inner Freedom	Education Towards Inner Freedom

Lecture by lecture with personal reflections and exercises

Here, instead of trying to cover everything, I have chosen one aspect of the lecture that I find particularly useful or interesting and focus upon it.

1. True Connection gives rise to Active Imaginal Thinking

...an inner, plastic force that transforms abstract thought into pictures must come into play. Then, after the necessary efforts have been made, we reach the stage I have called in my book, the beginning of meditation. At this point we not only begin to lead mere cleverness over into art, but thought is raised into Imagination. We stand in a world of Imagination, knowing that it is not a creation of our own fancy, but an actual, objective world...Active picture-thinking may be called Imagination. (pp.10-11)

<i>*roots in previous activities * carry into winter * connection not separation (knowledge, art religion, morality [two cultures cpsnow])</i>
--

<i>*birthday verses *plays [roots lie in prev.activities] *ex for lecture 8 *vert integration</i>

2. The legacy and development of 'Greek education'

The Greek ideal of education was the gymnast. Gymnasts were those who had completely harmonised their bodily nature with...the qualities of soul and spirit...(p.19)

The essential nature of Greek education...continues to develop even today..(p.24)

<i>*gymnast/orator/doctor/holistic *not Greek but of a type * even today(breath/volition skill and force *proper phys ed and memory</i>
--

<i>Beauty in the Greek athletic tradition. *Ixogenes in PSPp327 *stretching *eurythmy *movement verses</i>
--

3. How to Educate Free Human Beings

How to educate free human beings is a question that has never confronted humankind before (p.47)

<i>*Preservation of forces of EC dep on slaves/women at home/innate connection to spirit. All incomp with individuality</i>

<i>*p48 give 7-14s memorable experiences *7-14 loved 14- look back and find justified</i>

<i>Red rivers run PSPp</i>

4. Spirit's Relationship to the Body: Teacher as Midwife

When a thought is communicated to us, that thought is the seed of a feeling and an impulse of volition; it becomes complete. (p.56)

<i>*in education, the physical cannot be separate or an extra *the teeth didn't fall, they were pushed. The same force pushed thought. *gradual release of speech from the body</i>

<i>*teachers bring soul and spirit to birth</i>

<i>Ideas are rarely born of individuals (Goddard Blyth, 2004p.vii) *Tulsi</i>

5. Freeing Volition in the Human Organism

(In Greece).. there was a tingling, or urge, in a person to allow volition to reveal itself through the limbs, with every syllable, word or phrase, with the rhythm and measure of that speech. (p.81)

<i>Teach thoroughly *start again from the beginning *quality content choices support the development of will /staying power and likely to return *perfecting the pause</i>
--

<i>Aspects of language as powerful: wishing to be spoken (bring what is near the surface to the surface) The dreamy child.</i>
--

<i>Sacred naming, Poetry as performance art.</i>
--

6. The Young Child as an Organ of Sensory Perception

(the first three years, as well as those before seven) Because children are very subtle organs of sensory perception, they are receptive not only to surrounding physical influences, but also to moral influences, particularly those of thoughts. As odd as this may seem to materialistic thinking today, children perceive what we think when we are around them. As parents or teachers, when we are around young children it is important not only to avoid acting in ways we should not in front of children, but we should also be inwardly true and moral in our thinking and feeling, which children can sense. Children form their being not just according to our words and actions, but also according to our attitudes, thoughts and feelings. During this first period of childhood, before the age of seven, the most important thing for education is the child's environment.(p.92)

<i>*Taste into the limbs *imitate whole environment (senses; Aristotle)**</i>

<i>*the inartistic is harmful to the soul and later physical health</i>

<i>Interior design of classrooms; esp.Echildhood, design of schools, space, time(rhythms), people in vicinity, objects, bodily state of child. Drinking verse, feeling it in the limbs.</i>

****** Aristotle is happy to speak of an affected thing as receiving the form of the agent which affects it and of the change consisting in the affected thing's "becoming like" the agent (*De Anima* ii 5, 418a3–6; ii 12, 424a17–21) from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-psychology/>

7. Observation and Teaching

Even in a purely mental activity, the will is active and flowing into the limbs. If you sit at a desk and decide what tasks others will do, volitional impulses also flow into your limbs.(p.110)

<i>*bodies carried as burdens *we need to be able to think without letting go of the body *Art creates hunger for right movement *artistic teaching the best thing for a child's body</i>
<i>*visualisation in athletics and healing : current science</i>
<i>*handshake LLFp.37 *observe the children in movement /Eurythmy</i>

8. Finding Connections

Real meaning is found only in connections.(p.127)

<i>*activity before concept *writing before reading *then the conceptual is familiar *ideas must develop; don't give dead ideas</i>
<i>*p129 the tree trunk is the earth *plant and earth (thinking) *animal and human (volition)</i>
<i>Paul Kelly, Lighting the Literacy Fire(end), Relational education, **Who is hiding today?***</i>

9. The Etheric and Soul Bodies in Teaching

All impressions given to children that have an imaginative of pictorial quality tend to be perfected during sleep..(etheric body)..because of its inherent vibrational forces, it always tends to perfect anything brought to it...(pp.140-141)

..there is nothing more fruitful than to allow the results of the lessons during one period to rest in the soul and continue to work in a person without interference..(p.149)

<i>*defn of sleep is the parting of the bodies *arithmetic, geom., writing through artistic means *whole to part *rest to allow genius of etheric</i>
<i>Soul connection in history Space becomes time</i>
<i>Assymetric symmetry; Kudram's story, Achilles' verse, curriculum planning, no homework on the holidays *sleep and forgetting; 3 princes PSP p.267</i>

Kekulé spoke of the creation of the theory. He said that he had discovered the ring shape of the benzene molecule after having a reverie or day-dream of a snake seizing its own tail (this is a common symbol in many ancient cultures known as the Ouroboros or Endless knot). This vision, he said, came to him after years of studying the nature of carbon-carbon bonds.

10. Teaching to the age

..we must use pure imagery, with no reference to the logic of cause and effect, which should not be introduced until they reach eleven or twelve. The less we say about causality before then, the stronger and more vital and more inward will the soul become; if, on the other hand, we introduce causality to younger children, dead concepts and even dead feelings enter the soul and have a withering effect.(p.157)

<i>*school from 2nd teeth *fantasy until 9 *start language in imaginative time *grammar from 9th year.</i>
--

<i>Responding to queries; I wonder, wait and see...guessing. Content choices; be willing to leave it 'til later :Alberto and the mind of the 7 year old.</i>
--

11. Memory and Health

Imagine a child for whom it is difficult to associate ideas mentally. We can accomplish much by giving physical exercises through which, out of the child's inner being, the whole organic system becomes more coordinated. (p.178)

<i>*train memory after teeth *memory dep on physical body * p.173 3 golden rules</i>
--

<i>*p172 counting (30 please) *Juggling *LBL</i>
--

<i>Vert midline manifestations, extra lesson teacher observations MAE p 173 Pallour Stretched child LLF p 84. Spelling as an exercise of the will. *Circle verses</i>

12. Education Towards Inner Freedom

Our culture is calculated to make us know everything with our heads. Facts rest in the head as though sitting on a couch; they rest in the head as though in bed; they are asleep, "meaning" only one thing or another. We carry them around, stored up in so many little compartments, which we otherwise prefer to leave alone. In the Waldorf school, the children do not merely "have an idea" in their heads; they feel the idea, since it flows into their whole life of feeling. Their souls live in the sense of the idea, which is not merely a concept but becomes a shaped form. The whole complex of ideas becomes the human form and finally passes into their volition. Children learn to transform what they think into action.(p.188)

<i>*connect the head and the will *delight in goodness and loathe evil *dogma produces sceptics</i>

<i>*Tv/Video *directions of space</i>

<i>*college meetings; development of the staff *parent meetings</i>

Time for a renaming of the text?

Whether a text has a long or short title is a matter of public taste and changes from time to time. The original title of this collection appears to have been merely, **Education**. Later, it became **Education and Modern Spiritual Life; The New Art of Education**, and now **A Modern Art of Education**. In German, *Gegenwaertiges Geistesleben und Erziehung* (Current intellectual life and education).

These days we quite often see extensive subtitles on books or articles that act as a short abstract, telling the reader what the book is about. Perhaps we are too lazy or time poor to be bothered actually picking up the book now? Nevertheless, that is the fashion. Here is my suggestion;

Education for the 21st Century:

Connecting thinking and volition through artistic, age-appropriate teaching in order to develop free, healthy, effective adults .

Rudolf Steiner

Comments of the nature of teaching and the responsibility of teachers.

Throughout the lectures, Steiner makes comments about the role of the teacher. Some of these are extracted below;

Page 84

Teachers must become whole human beings if they are to educate whole human beings

Page 117

Then as teachers we have a certain quality that is perceptible to the child as a natural authority in which he places spontaneous trust. Instead of resorting to the cane or using any form of inner punishment such as I mentioned yesterday we should arm ourselves with a true knowledge of man, with the faculty of true observation. This will grow into an inner moral sense, into a profound reverence for God's creation. We then have a true position in the

school and we realize how absolutely essential it is in all education to watch for those moments when the child's nature undergoes certain changes.

Page 132

I can only justify it here as a principle; the actual details of what is taught to a child of ten, eleven or twelve years concerning the animal world must be worked out with true artistic feeling.

Page 153

The element of art comes into play when, as I often describe it, a true economy is exercised in teaching. This economy can be exercised if the teacher has thoroughly mastered his subject-matter before he goes into the classroom; if it is no longer necessary for him to ponder over anything because if rightly prepared it is there plastically before his soul. He must be so well prepared that the only thing still to be done is the artistic moulding of his lesson. The problem of teaching is thus not merely a question of the pupil's interest and diligence, but first and foremost of the teacher's interest, diligence and sincerity.

No lesson should be given that has not previously been a matter of deep experience on the part of the teacher. Obviously, therefore, the organization of the body of teachers must be such that every teacher is given ample time to make himself completely master of the lessons he has to give.

Page 169

the teacher must come to a point where all his work is a moral deed, where he regards the lessons themselves as a kind of divine office.

Page 177

This capacity of love, devotion and unselfishness — and they are really the foundation of the art of teaching

Page 198

(-on teachers' meetings. In the text this whole passage is contained in the one paragraph. I have dissembled it into smaller portions so that it is easier to read and harder to miss each point.)

"...I have said that a school should be an organisation in which each individual feature is an integral part of the whole. The threads of all the various activities necessary to the whole life of the Waldorf school are drawn together in the frequent teachers' meetings...

They are not held merely to prepare school reports, discuss administrative details, or talk about the punishments to be used when rules are broken. These meetings are really a living

“higher education,” since the college of teachers is a kind of permanent training academy. This is because the teachers’ every practical experience in school becomes part of their own education. Teachers will always find something new for themselves and for the college of teachers if they educate themselves through their teaching, gaining a profound psychological insight into the children’s qualities, characters and temperaments. All the experiences and knowledge acquired from the teaching are pooled at these meetings.

Thus, in spirit and soul, the college of teachers becomes a whole, in which each member knows what the others are doing, what experience has taught them, and what progress they have made as a result of their work in the classroom with the children.

In effect, the college of teachers becomes a central organ from which the whole life of practical teaching flows, helping teachers to maintain their freshness and vitality. Perhaps the best effect of all is that the meetings enable teachers to maintain their inner vitality, instead of growing old in soul and spirit. It must be the teacher’s constant aim to maintain a youthful freshness of soul and spirit, but this cannot be done unless real life flows through a central organ, just as human blood flows into and out of the heart. This is concentrated as a system of soul and spirit forces in the life that teachers work for in their meetings...”

(Where is this “central organ” housed within your school?)

I would be very grateful for feedback on the content and/or style of my presentation.

Please send me an email at ~~earthside.education@westnet.com.au~~ ~~earthsider@gmail.com~~ ✓. All feedback wins free pdf copies of my books.

If you have found this presentation useful, why not recommend it to other teachers and schools?

Sean Burke

January 2012

Earthside Education www.earthsideeducation.com

Sean’s books; [Lighting the Literacy Fire](#) and [Poems, Songs and Plays for the Primary School](#) are both available in hard copy via www.Lulu.com

References

Steiner, R. (1923, 2004) *A Modern Art of Education*. Great Barrington, MA. Anthroposophic Press.

Burke, S.(2010) *Lighting the Literacy Fire*. London, U.K. littleleaves press.

Burke, S.(2010) *Poems, Songs and Plays for the Primary School*. Perth, Western Australia. littleleaves press.

Goddard Blyth, S (2004) *The Well Balanced Child: Movement and Early Learning*. Stroud, U.K. Hawthorne Press.

Bittleston, A (n.d.) Against Fear in *The Christian Community: North American Newsletter* Spring 2009 p.10 retrieved 28 Jan 2012 from <http://www.thechristiancommunity.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/10/2009-Spring.pdf>