



HAND WORK

INDICATIONS

BY

RUDOLF STEINER

HANDWORK and HANDICRAFTS

FROM INDICATIONS BY RUDOLF STEINER

PREFACE

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– David Mitchell
Research Institute for Waldorf Education
Boulder, CO
August 2008

HANDWORK AND HANDICRAFTS

by

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from indications by

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INTRODUCTION

Our age is a technological one, and grows ever more so as the years go by. Machines now perform the work that was until recently done by the human being himself; he is obliged to serve the machine, although, in many cases, he is quite ignorant of its construction and of the force by which it is driven. He can take little or no interest in an occupation of this kind, and weakness and emptiness in his soul-life are the inevitable results.

Technology enters into all departments of life, and attempts are made on all sides to extend its influence. It even invades the world of art, and introduces mechanism where there was once a living intercourse between the soul of the human being and the work created by his hands. This inner connection between the human being and his work is undermined. Factories now produce things that once went out into the world as a result of the feeling and striving of a human personality. Consequently the objects we use and have around us take on an increasingly inhuman appearance. This is especially noticeable in the sphere of modern crafts, which, borrowing their forms from the new “functional” style in architecture, give much that they produce an air of emptiness and abstraction.

The existence of the crafts is also threatened on a purely economic level by the universal invasion of technology. The case might be mentioned of the head of the Crafts Department of the Stuttgart Museum of Home Industries, who found himself obliged to publish a lengthy newspaper article defending the rights of his own department in the face of demands made by the technical departments for more space to be allotted to them at the expense of the crafts. He said in the article: “To fulfill these demands would mean total collapse, not merely the transfer of two rooms from the Crafts Department to the Technical Department. Once the process of decay sets in, complete collapse is inevitable. A good museum of handicrafts must endeavor to collect the best possible samples, and all ages and all peoples should be represented. This means that it should not confine itself to the products of the land to which it belongs. Once this Museum becomes merely a record of our national industries, or even a kind of business concern, and no longer fulfills its function as a source of constant and valuable stimulus, it cannot claim to be a museum of really high standards.”

No more is needed to illustrate the position in which the crafts find themselves today. The artistic sense of mankind is in danger of being lost through the forces of economics and technology. Appreciation of the importance in the life of the nation as a whole of a piece of handwork artistically made will disappear altogether if no attempt is made to arrest this process. It is important, therefore, not only to enliven the artistic sense in those who receive the finished work of art, but to awaken the faculty of artistic activity itself, and to rekindle it wherever it is in danger of complete extinction.

The means whereby the creative faculties of the human being can be awakened have been revealed to us by Rudolf Steiner in his anthroposophy. The aim of this book is

to reproduce some of the indications about handwork given by Steiner in his lectures on education, and to show how they were applied while he was directing the Waldorf School in Stuttgart towards the end of his life.

He showed the teachers how handwork provides the balancing element which the more intellectual activities require if the development of the child is to be a harmonious one. Classes in handwork, as well as in crafts, are compulsory for both girls and boys. Children are guided in the Waldorf schools so that they are able to develop not only an open mind for the things of practical life but also a deep understanding for art as a whole, quite apart from those abilities that are founded more upon the intellect. Creative powers are awakened which can find fruitful application in the most varied fields in later life.

Steiner considered it desirable that handwork in the Waldorf schools should lead over into the crafts, and on his visits to the classrooms and in lectures and meetings, he gave examples showing how this can be achieved. Much of this has already been made available. Our primary aim here is to reproduce what has not yet been published. But we have also endeavored to make a kind of compendium of statements that are scattered throughout a large number of his books and lectures.

The spoken remarks made by Steiner at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, which have lived on in the memory of a number of teachers, and which we now wish to make accessible to a wider public, have been quoted as faithfully as possible—in spite of the fact that some things may strike the reader as obvious or as too elementary to deserve inclusion in the book. But it was a feature of all Steiner's indications that, through the loving attention with which he took them into consideration, even the apparently most insignificant things proved later to be living seeds from which quite new points of view could be grown, and which supplied the basis for an extension or even a complete revision of our methods.

CHAPTER I

INDICATIONS CONCERNING COLOR AND PAINTING

One of the most important elements in handwork is color. Let us therefore quote something of what Steiner had to say about the introduction and handling of color in the art lesson. In an educational lecture given in Oxford he said:

You will observe that the aim is to build up the handwork and needlework lessons in connection with what is learned in the painting lessons. In the painting lessons the children are not taught to draw (with a brush) or make patterns (*sticken*), but learn to deal freely and spontaneously with the element of color itself. Thus it is immensely important that the children should have come to a right experience of color ... they must not paint from a palette or block, but from a jar or mug with liquid color in it, color dissolved in water. Then the child will come to feel how one color goes with another, he will feel the inner harmony of colors, he will experience them inwardly.¹

Steiner has shown in another lecture what a lively experience it can be for children if colors are introduced to them in this way:

The main point is that the children should develop a feeling for the building up of color values and have an experience of the life of the color world in fairy tales. As soon as you allow fantasy to play its part, forms will come of themselves. The forms must grow out of color.²

Think how stimulating it could be to give them an understanding of the following: Here is this coquettish lilac color and directly on top of it sits a cheeky piece of red and all this stands against a devotional blue. You must make the colors behave like objects and do things, for this has a soul-building quality. There are many different methods we can adopt to make color active so that a child is helped to live in color. For instance, let the red look through the blue—this must be done by the child itself. Much more life must flow into the teaching, for you have to help children to lose their sluggishness. They must have fire! It is important that our feeling for color, which we have lost more than our feeling for music, is reawakened in us. This will then have a stimulating effect on music too.³

Steiner spoke of what will come about if we fail to develop a full experience of the world of color in our children:

If a real experience of color is not cultivated in our time, and if mechanistic theories of the nature of color persist, then children will be born who no longer possess any organ for the perception of color. Life reveals itself through

color, but human beings will not be able to see colors, just as they can now no longer see the elemental spirits. The world will then become grey.⁴

These words, spoken in 1914, are now well on the way to fulfillment, as can be seen from the following report from Russia where our Western theories are being put into practice. In the summer of 1931 the United Press gave the following frightening picture of Moscow:

Six of the biggest streets are being turned into "Model Streets," which are to set the pattern in a campaign for beauty in town planning. The leading architects had special difficulty regarding the coloring of the buildings, and, after much discussion, the color grey found the most supporters. As a result several hundred houses have already been painted grey, in many cases a dull brownish grey, which stands in complete contrast to the lively pastel shades of old Russian art.⁵

A life-killing uniformity is at work, leading to the destruction of the human soul. People in the Soviet state have been robbed of that inner freedom through which they could bring love and beauty into their lives.

Evidence of color-blindness itself is shown in a report issued by medical experts in England, who found that of the four million people in the country who are color-blind, a third were unable to distinguish between red and green. The tests also revealed that color-blindness occurred in men four times as often as in women. A committee of medical experts conducting tests among personnel of the British Navy said that color-blindness "is still not very well understood scientifically, and can be the source of many unforeseen dangers. ... Doctors do not even know if it is hereditary, and as for the possibility of curing the condition, science is still groping in the dark."

As we have quoted above, Steiner had spoken of color-blindness in the most serious way as early as 1914, and had pointed out what it is that can lead to this condition. But if humanity were prepared to listen to him, a further increase in color-blindness might still be prevented. Adequate pedagogical methods could bring about a healthy development of the child, both in body and soul and, by exerting a healing influence on future generations, might save them from this unfortunate condition.

ENDNOTES

1. *Spiritual Ground of Education*, Oxford, August 1922, lecture 7.
2. When he saw a child's illustration for Goethe's *Zauberlehrling* done in pencil and crayon with outlines, Steiner waved it aside with the remark that it was "antiquated and inartistic."
3. Teachers' Conference, Stuttgart, November 15, 1920.
4. *Erinnerungsbilder aus arbeitsreicher Zeit* by M. Woloschina.
5. Steiner characterized the color grey by using an expression from the world of sound. He said: "Grey is not a color, is not a tone, it is a noise."

CHAPTER II

DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATION IN GENERAL AND FOR FINDING THE RIGHT FORMS IN TECHNOLOGY AND THE CRAFTS

The training a child receives even before school age must be such that his soul is allowed to grow, and is not stunted by what is false and ugly in the world around him. When speaking of the education of the child, Steiner said:

Up to the seventh year the child lives under the impression: The World Is Good. It still lives under the guidance of those moral laws in which it had its being before it was born. Everything the child receives from the grownups around him which is untrue, or in other ways a negative soul-impression, hinders its development. To set a good example is, therefore, the best education one can give between the child's first and seventh years.

From the seventh to the fourteenth year the child lives under the impression: The World Is Beautiful. Therefore one notices in children of this age that carefree, happy-go-lucky kind of behavior which worries some parents a good deal. This [behavior] is quite justified, however, and one should not yet appeal to the child's intellect but instead place pictures before the child's soul. First of all one should tell fairy stories, then myths and legends, and finally give descriptions of the characters of great people, not in a wooden and lifeless way, but dramatically, as an artist does on the stage. All teaching must take an artistic form.

From the fourteenth to the twenty-first year the student lives under the impression: The World Is True. Only now should one appeal to the intellect of the young student and require him to use his own judgment.¹

This shows that it is during the first years of school that the child wishes to experience beauty in a living way. His soul is open to all that comes to him through the teaching of handwork.

In the lecture on "Aesthetic Education," given in the course for teachers at Dornach, Christmas 1921, Steiner spoke with particular emphasis of the need for the awakening and development of the aesthetic sense in the child of this age, and gave very profound reasons for this. He said:

From Play, through Beauty, to Work: This is a golden path for education. In later life the most abstract tasks, the most difficult techniques, do not arouse antipathy if this path has been followed during childhood. Locomotives and railway stations can be built in a way that is both artistic and technically sound. Such an education would give incalculably powerful impulses for

social life—the human being would find his way back into something that is quite unknown today, the artistic in language.²

Steiner has spoken elsewhere of the building of railway stations. We quote his words on the subject because the fundamental demands made here also hold good in the sphere of handwork. He said, pointing first to the future:

We are now approaching the time when the human being will begin to create out of the Spirit, when our whole surroundings will become an expression of the spirit in humanity—though it would not be possible for this age to resemble those in which the Gothic cathedral and the Greek temple were built. But even in our technical and utilitarian age it is possible to achieve more than is done at present.

He went on to say that the style that is really new and characteristic of our time is that of our department stores. The shop is a true symbol of our materialistic, utilitarian thinking. This is expressed just as much in the department store as are the thoughts of Tauler and Eckhart in the Gothic cathedral. But even in our time it is possible to bring style to our work in other respects. Our cultural media are capable of great formative variation and have within them the capacity to work educationally upon the soul-life of the human being to a far greater extent than they do at present. We live, for example, in the age of the railway, but have as yet no style for railway stations, because human beings do not yet experience what happens when a train enters or leaves a station, they do not realize that what happens when a train moves can be expressed in the architecture of the railway station, that what has to come into the station—the locomotives arriving and departing—should come to expression in the station's hollow forms.

It is to be hoped that when air travel becomes possible on a large scale, mankind will have progressed far enough to be able to connect the thought of departure with that of the place designed for it, so that the form of the latter will express the fact that it is used for the departure of aircraft.³

We can see that Steiner wished these tasks to be approached in a way that is both living and spiritually true. The object in question should be made to fit into its surroundings so that it becomes part of them, and its purpose should be expressed in its outer form—in both its function and its relationship to the rest of the world. In fact the artistic should arise from the practical activities of life, from that which gives meaning to the object itself. Following Steiner's indications, just as the often animalistic, demonic nature of machines and tools can be expressed in their outer form, so a style can be given to handwork which is in keeping with the use to which an article is to be put.

Imitations of old styles and traditions from former ages have now no more than historical value.⁴ They no longer have the strength or the capacity to do justice artistically

to the needs and demands of the modern age. Not through some sort of “Renaissance,” but through the recognition of the origin, the being, and the destiny of the human being, has the new style of architecture arisen through Steiner in the Goetheanum at Dornach. This wonderful monument has grown out of anthroposophy itself and brings to expression in its whole outer form that lofty spirituality which can also speak to the present-day human being through the great dramatic works of Steiner which are performed there. The Goetheanum is intended to exert an influence upon an age in which forces are at work that would hinder spiritualization, forces that would mechanize and place everything in the service of industry. They no longer inspire us to treat an object made by hand as a work of art, but merely supply patterns which are then reproduced in vast numbers by machines.

Through Steiner’s artistic creations and spiritual-scientific research, mankind is now being freed from those powers of which some would fetter him to tradition, while others would bring his creative activity to a standstill through mechanization. Steiner’s work is available to us in all spheres of life, and, for the healing of mankind, should be taken up and developed further. Were this to happen, technology would soon lose its often inhuman and unnatural character. This would surely bring a warmer relationship between the human being and the world around him, and between one human being and another.

Considering the social element, there is good reason why handwork lessons should be compulsory for boys as well as for girls.

In the Waldorf schools boys and girls always do handwork together. All sorts of things are made in the handwork classes. The boys and girls work together quite contentedly. Even if you look at the finer details you will not find it easy to guess whether an object has been made by a girl or by a boy. The only thing that stands out in this respect is that the boys do not like spinning; they prefer to help the girls.⁵

Children who learn while they are young to make practical things by hand in an artistic way, and for the benefit of others as well as for themselves, will not be strangers to life or to other people when they are older. They will be able to form their lives and their relationships in social and artistic ways, so that their lives are thereby enriched. Out of their ranks can come technicians and artists who will know how to solve the problems and tasks set us by life.

ENDNOTES

1. *Study of Man*, lecture 9. (This text differs from the original version.)
2. These words were missing from the official notes and will therefore not be found in the available text. But I was present at this talk and have personal notes made at the time. [H.H.]
3. Munich, June 14, 1908.
4. Dornach, October 23, 1921.
5. *Spiritual Ground of Education*, lecture 6, Oxford, 1922.

CHAPTER III

HANDWORK IN THE KINDERGARTEN AND IN THE FIRST SCHOOL YEARS

Through a review of the Waldorf school curriculum,¹ we shall discuss the handwork done in the various classes, starting with the lowest, and will quote a number of indications given by Steiner on this subject. By way of introduction, here is an indication given concerning the education of children in the nursery class, that is, before school age, for this can throw light on the way in which this education can be continued throughout the school years. In the pedagogical course for Swiss teachers Steiner spoke as follows:

The nineteenth century, having become great through natural science, tried to introduce mechanical instead of organic methods even into the kindergarten. Starting from intellectual, preconceived ideas, people invented toys which were more suitable for grownup people, who spin out all kinds of abstract thoughts. Children were made to cut out sheets of paper through which red, blue, and green strips were inserted. They were taught to arrange little strips, and so forth. But it is just these mechanical activities which hinder the child when he is trying to grow into active life. The young soul becomes thin and pinched. But simple needlework, on the other hand, in imitation of what grownup people do, prepares both hand and heart for later life.

The objects used in the kindergarten should be taken from actual life; they should not be invented by an intellectual civilization. A beautiful doll with real hair and painted cheeks prevents the child from unfolding his imagination. It does not let the child's creative faculties grow. It withers the soul. A homemade rag doll, on the other hand, made from a towel, and with ink-spots for eyes, awakens the child's genius.

In the beginning the child merely plays, but he plays in earnest. There is only one difference between the play of the child and the work of the adult. It is that the adult adapts himself to the outer utility which the world demands; his work is determined *from without*. Play is determined *from within*, through the being of the child which wants to unfold.

Up to now very little has been done to introduce the child in the right way to the complicated life of today, so that he may learn to master the difficulties and intricacies of this life. It is the task of the school to lead over gradually from play to work. If once we find a practical answer to the question how we can metamorphose play into work, we shall have solved the fundamental problem of all early school education.

Our basis ought to be the fundamental fact that the child's most ardent wish is to imitate the work of grownup people, whether it is done with a spade or with a knitting needle.²

It is, therefore, not so difficult as some teachers would seem to think, to teach knitting as early as the first year of school. This has been done in the Waldorf school from the very beginning. From a pedagogical point of view, Steiner especially valued the art of knitting, one which he had practiced himself as a young boy.³ He insisted that every child should learn to knit. When one observes children in the 1st Class and sees how they use their hands more and more consciously from one lesson to the next, how fingers which were once rather clumsy become more skillful, and how pleased the child is when he manages for the first time to make some stitches—an activity which engages his entire being right down to his very toes—then one can see that this activity which exercises both hands in a harmonious way, thus bringing skill in later life, is also one that works deeply into the organism of the child and awakens his spiritual forces.

Steiner often pointed out what an important part knitting plays in relation to other things taught in the school. In Stuttgart (1921) he said: “When we teach a child to knit or to make something—of course the things he makes must have purpose and meaning—we are then working upon the spirit of the child, and often more truly so than when we teach him subjects that are generally thought of as spiritual and intellectual.”⁴

He also said: “If you recall what I said yesterday, that it is not the head alone but the whole human being that is a logician, you will, I think, be ready to appreciate in a new way the significance of lessons that demand manual or bodily skill. For it is no mere whim that has led us to require boys as well as girls to learn knitting, and so forth. Activities of this kind performed by the hand lead to an enhancement of the faculty of judgment. This faculty is actually developed least of all by exercises in logic!”⁵

In the Curative Education Course, 1924, Steiner showed how knitting can be used therapeutically. In the case of a boy of nine who was mentally and physically retarded, it seemed important to waken in him an interest in the outer world. Steiner said:

A quality is developing in him which we must do our utmost to encourage—attentiveness to the world around. I do not mean an attentiveness merely of the intellect, but a turning with heart and feeling to the things of the world ... the feeling and the will must be engaged (in this attentiveness) ... It is not easy to rouse him to be active in any way. What he does, he does unwillingly. By January, however, he did manage to acquire some proficiency in the useful art of knitting. The value for him of such an occupation consists in the fact that on the one hand it introduces him to the world of mechanism and brings him into movement, while on the other it trains him in the power of attention. For in knitting one can easily drop a stitch!

It takes nearly two years for all the children to learn to knit well. Then one can begin with crochet. This engages the hands differently in that the right hand is used much more. After some very simple work, such as ball-nets, one can start in the third school year making caps, tea-cozies, or small jackets, which may vary in color according to the temperaments

of the children. Each child is allowed to choose his own colors, even for his first small piece of white crochet work which is finished off with a colored edge. This should encourage a personal relationship to color. After the 3rd Class, knitting and crochet, those activities in which the child's main experience is the creation of a solid object out of a single thread by the formation of loops, come to an end.

Steiner advised that at the end of every handwork lesson the children should be given a picture or imagination connected with their work—something which should also make them look forward with joy to the next lesson.⁶ In addition he gave instructions that during the last thirty minutes of a lesson lasting two hours, the children should be allowed to do smaller tasks of various kinds.⁷ He said: "They could do something nice, like crochet round the edge of a colored ribbon."

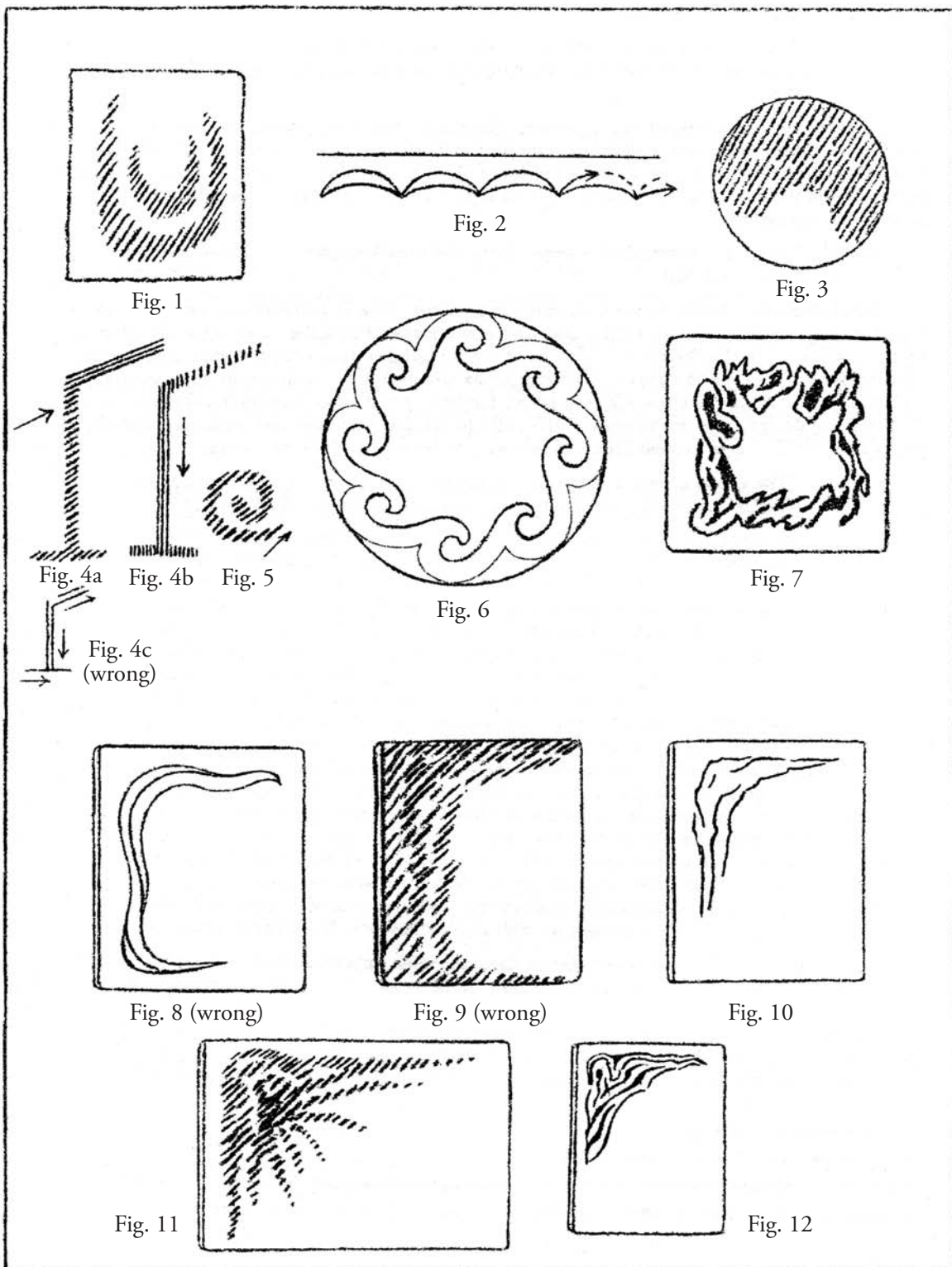
To knitting and crochet other work can be added in the lower classes, such as small drawings and paintings on paper or on the blackboard. These should partly be designs in preparation for future handwork, and partly exercises to bring about either a feeling for symmetry or harmonization of temperaments, and so forth. Steiner gave many indications for such work. We should like to mention the sketches made by him in Stuttgart,⁸ Dornach,⁹ Torquay,¹⁰ and elsewhere. In the pedagogical seminar in Stuttgart he made special reference to the four temperaments; he, or someone taking part in the course, drew or painted a motif for a sanguine child and then a modified version of this for a melancholic child.

This shows that in handwork, as well as in other subjects, the teacher should cater to each of the four temperaments, and tasks should be allotted to the children in accordance with these. It is a joy to observe how temperaments are reflected especially in smaller objects made by Classes 2 and 3, and how they reveal themselves in the color and form of notebooks, needle cases, pen-wipers, balls, rag dolls, and so forth.

In these first years the children are taught that everything they make must be not only pleasing to the eye, but perfectly adapted to its use. Steiner once commented on the appearance of a pen-wiper whose surface had been completely covered with embroidery. He said that a space should have been left free for the thumb to take hold of it (Plate 1, fig. 3).

When he gave advice on such matters Steiner entered into the smallest details and gave many new impulses. He insisted that the children should never be made to do anything that was simply an exercise of no practical use.

After all this preparation the child is now ready in the fourth school year to make something a good deal larger, such as a bag for handwork or for carrying lunch to school, and so forth. Here he can learn to sew neatly and to decorate his work in an artistic and, at the same time, practical way. When, shortly after the opening of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Steiner saw bags which did not satisfy these conditions, he said: "It is not possible to tell which is the top and which is the bottom of these bags. One should be able to see this quite clearly just by looking at them; otherwise one might pick them up the wrong way and everything would fall out!"



He then drew on the blackboard a bag (Plate 1, fig. 1) whose very appearance showed that it could hold all kinds of things. He expressed this again in the Dornach Christmas Course, 1921: "It has become fashionable recently to decorate these bags, or 'pompadours,' with a design. In many cases you cannot help asking: 'Which is the top and which is the bottom?' You should be able to see from the embroidery where the opening is and which way up the bag is supposed to be. No one seems to take such things into consideration at all."¹¹

The embroidery on the bag will enable the child to express his personality. With a little help from the teacher, some of the children will now try, using the experience gained in making the small extra things in the 2nd and 3rd Classes, to work out their own way of doing the embroidery. Others will still be completely under the guidance of the teacher, who must be sure at the same time to give each child individual attention: "Not what the child wants, nor what the teacher wants, but a third thing should emerge from working together in this way," said Steiner.

Children are very fond of cross-stitch, which can always be learned on some small piece of work. Children who are weak intellectually can be helped by it, especially if they are made to find the symmetrical counterpart to the form they are working at. Consciousness is heightened through the crossing of stitches, just as it is when the arms are crossed to make the sound "E" in eurythmy:¹² "[T]he forming of a cross (with the arms) means ... holding oneself upright."¹³

The decorating of objects such as these bags aims more at cultivating a sense of beauty in the child than at teaching him skill. Steiner insisted that the child should be taught to distinguish between the "beautiful" and the "less beautiful," this applying especially to the development of a sense of color. Through an experience of various color combinations or comparisons of each other's work, the sense for beauty and good taste is developed.¹⁴

One should try to open the eyes of the child to all that is useful and practical, and also to the beauty of the things around him. In this way he learns to "look creatively." "The sense of beauty implies a capacity to live in imaginative pictures. This is something that the teacher has first to learn for himself."¹⁵

ENDNOTES

1. *Waldorf School Curriculum*, edited by Caroline von Heydebrand.
2. The Swiss Teachers' Course, Easter 1923.
3. He had also learned bookbinding. Albert Steffan said: "Rudolf Steiner told us that he had learned to say many things in his lectures in a well ordered and 'bound' way, because destiny had brought it about that he should do bookbinding at a certain period in his life." (The Swiss Teachers' Course)
4. Supplementary Course, the Upper School, Stuttgart, 1921, lecture 4.
5. Supplementary Course, 1921, lecture 3.
6. He gave similar suggestions for all lessons with children of this age (7–14) in two educational lectures, Stuttgart, June 1922. The remark in the Supplementary Course, Upper School, June 1921, lecture 4, applies equally well to the end of the handwork lesson: "Your students will

become human beings who have lost their way in later life if their spirit, which has been loosened through bodily exercise or singing, is not afterwards brought to rest.” It is a beneficial thing, therefore, to make the children stand perfectly still for a few minutes before they leave the classroom.

7. In the Waldorf school Classes 1–4 have a lesson once a week lasting two hours; Classes 5–10 have only one hour of handwork a week. In Class 8 a second hour is added for darning, mending, ironing and mangling.
8. *Discussions with Teachers*, Stuttgart, August 4–September 6, 1919.
9. *Lectures to Teachers*, Christmas 1921. Also *Ways to a New Style of Architecture*, Dornach, 1914.
10. *Kingdom of Childhood*, Torquay, 1924.
11. *Lectures to Teachers*, Dornach, December 1921–January 1922.
12. “E” is pronounced “ay,” as in “say.”
13. *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*, Dornach, June 1924.
14. *The Younger Generation*, 13 lectures, October 1922. *The Kingdom of Childhood*, lecture 4.
15. *Lectures to Teachers*, Dornach, Christmas 1921.

CHAPTER IV

PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD IN THE EARLY SCHOOL YEARS

During the first years of school the child passes through two special and clearly marked phases of its development; one between the ninth and the tenth years, and the other between the twelfth and thirteenth. Of all that concerns these phases we shall speak here only of what relates to handwork.

Between the ninth and tenth years (third to fourth years at school) the self-awareness, which means the ego-consciousness of the child, is strengthened. He begins to place himself more consciously and intelligently into his environment, of which before his ninth year he had been no more than a part himself.¹ In handwork one can see how the child seems to have more understanding for his work and to take a deeper and more lively interest in it. In this connection Steiner has said the following:

At this age, round about the ninth year, we should watch the child and observe how he begins to have an inner experience of wonder. He wonders about everything, and enters into a quite new relationship to his surroundings. In the case of a normal child, this happens between the ninth and tenth year ... It is just in these years that one can best implant in him a sense of beauty. What happens if one does not do this? The child wonders—yes—but the real strength of this wonder has been killed ... If we encourage the child to look at the world with wonder and amazement, we are preparing him for the moment of puberty. If we are able to make this sense of beauty a conscious experience in him, then we are preparing the child for this experience of puberty in such a way that he can learn to love the world, can develop the power of love in the right way. For there is not only the love of one sex for the other; that is only one of many loves. Love is something that should penetrate all our actions. We should only do what we love doing. Duty and love should grow together. We should love what we have to do ... This is why during these early years at school, we must be careful to develop the sense of beauty in the right way. Because you see, my friends, while the sense of truth is innate in the child, the sense of beauty we must develop in him.²

In his *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller demanded such an education of the human being through beauty. In the twenty-third letter he wrote: "In a word: There is no other way of making a rational being out of a sensual individual than by first making him aesthetic."

How often Steiner expressed his regret that these letters have had so little influence on pedagogy.³ In the seventh lecture of the "Practical Course for Teachers," he said that

besides these letters of Schiller's, *Levana* by Jean Paul also contains numerous practical hints for teachers.

In the Waldorf school the artistic element is not only brought to the child through the teaching of particular subjects, but permeates and enlivens the entire curriculum from the first year onwards. "All teaching in the school must be done artistically," said Steiner. Together with drawing, painting, modeling and work in music and speech, it is eurythmy in particular which strengthens the sense for form and color in the child.

Steiner attached great importance to the development of an aesthetic sense for the sublime and beautiful in Nature. One should guide children so that they experience the beauty and splendor of a sunrise and a sunset, the beauty of flowers and the magnificence of a thunderstorm. This is how one develops the aesthetic sense. And this sense of beauty, this aesthetic encounter with the world, is that element which will hold the experience of puberty within appropriate limits.⁴

At the age of twelve the child enters a new phase of existence. His powers of spirit and soul now become strengthened. Whereas before the twelfth year history could be brought to the child only by means of storytelling,⁵ an understanding for historical relationships now awakens in him. In the same way the child is now ready to be taught physics. At this time the soul-spirit nature of the child is uniting more firmly with the mechanics of the bony system; consequently no harm is done. One should even introduce into the teaching everything which follows mechanical laws—in life itself as well as in the sciences.⁶

Teaching should now lead into the practical spheres of life. There are many people in the world who have no idea how much healthy logic and clear thinking can be developed through learning to knit. All the boys in the Waldorf schools knit a face-flannel and darn their own socks, just as the girls do. Whoever wants to be a good philosopher ought to know how to mend his shoes too. In some classes the child is also taught how to weave and spin and learns how paper is made.

When it comes to spinning the fact emerges that, whereas girls enjoy doing it, the boys prefer to help with all the preparations—the fetching and carrying that have to be done. The psychological reasons for this should be investigated. This handwork teaching, which is valued very highly in our schools, leads over later on to bookbinding. Bookbinding and box-making are learned. The importance of this lies far less in the actual binding of books than in the fact that the procedures connected with bookbinding are carried out at a certain age in the life of the child. This is of great importance for later life.⁷

Steiner once expressed the wish that, besides bookbinding, other handwork should be continued in the upper classes. On the other hand he considered it important that during handwork lessons a certain amount of bookbinding in the form of small books, folders, and

so forth, should be done in a very simple way by sewing and gluing. Once when something of this kind was shown to him, he said with approval: "Yes, such things should be done much more." The use of color in this connection serves as a preparation for the real craft later on. Through such work the children are introduced to practical tasks of the kind they may meet later on in life (Plate 1, figs. 10–12 and Plates 5, 6, 7, 8).

Within the sixth school year the real teaching of crafts begins, and lessons in gardening are also given. Through crafts, as well as through handwork, a feeling is awakened for how usefulness and beauty should be united in the designing of an object.⁸ The following words of Steiner tell how, in the education of a child, the sense of beauty should be developed before any attempt is made to come to grips with the technical side of life:

One should never introduce boys to the inner workings of a locomotive, a tram or a telephone before they have acquired an understanding for the beauty of a picture or of a plastic form. The children carry with them into puberty, and thence into later life, a certain sense for the aesthetic, if this has been cultivated in early years.⁹

Later Steiner spoke also of the fact that utility must not be lacking in beauty, and explained how the child must learn, from the age of twelve onwards, to combine these two elements, "The child must now in his sixth school year be given an idea of how utility and beauty can come together; how, for example, a chair can fulfill its function perfectly and at the same time have a beautiful shape. This combining of utility and beauty ought to become a real, practical habit."¹⁰

This should penetrate right into the system of the child. It is not enough that he should experience the beauty in his own work through the eye alone. This fully human artistic feeling is something that should flow by way of the limbs into the work itself. In a discussion on handwork, Steiner said:

It is true to say that the child is immediately at home in the world of form, and here the teacher has endless possibilities. Your efforts will only be fruitful, however, if instead of appealing merely to the eye, you call up feeling in the child. You must see to it that it becomes a matter of feeling for the child that, for example, he should want his drawing to open out at the bottom: Something is pressing down from above, something is striving from above downwards. It must be transformed into a feeling; whatever is to be performed with the hand must become part of the hand's natural movements. Actually, the whole human being is engaged; he thinks with his whole body. One must therefore try to bring it about that he also feels, experiences, things. The feeling of the child must be worked upon in a handwork lesson. If, for example, he wants to embroider a corner, he should be able to feel that it must be done in such a way that if he approaches the embroidered piece from the other side he cannot get through. If, however, he can get through, there must be something inherent in the design which tells him: This is the way through.

When the children make cozies for tea or coffee pots they must serve. If I open an object from below, then what I do with my hands must continue into the design. I must be able to see from the design where the opening is. But it often happens that a child makes a design like this (Plate 9, fig. 18). Yes, this is wrong; the design must show where there is an opening and where there is not one.¹¹ If a handwork teacher works in the way just described,¹² he can well say: "I do this because my special concern is the spiritual activity of the child."¹³

Continuing our considerations of the phases of development of the child, we shall now direct our attention more to the way in which the teacher should bring the ever-changing content of teaching to the child during these phases. Before the age of seven, the child is still in the imitative phase. During this period the teacher can achieve much by demonstrating things to the child himself.

Between the seventh and fourteenth years (first to eighth years at school), a feeling for the authority of the teacher has to be cultivated in the child. How this can be done Steiner has indicated in the following way:

In emphasizing in anthroposophical lectures, the point that between seven and fourteen years of age the feeling for authority should be cultivated, it is not meant that a training is required to produce this feeling for authority. What is necessary can flow from the very method of instruction itself. Its influence is present like an undertone; when the child listens, he says: "Aha, he calls that nine; he calls that twenty-four," and so forth. He obeys voluntarily, at once. Through listening in this way to the person who uses this method, the child is inoculated by what expresses itself as sensitivity to authority. This is the secret. Any artificial training of the feeling for authority must be excluded by the method or technique itself.¹⁴

Towards the fourteenth year the child enters the period of puberty. Up to now he has breathed in the beauty of the world; now he demands that truth also should be found in it. In order to arrive at his own judgment concerning this, the child has to outgrow his feeling for authority. Steiner said:

When a child attains puberty, he should at the same time undergo a change through the fact that he is now about to dispense with authority; he has outgrown it. But if we have not in the earlier years accustomed him to the acceptance of authority, this important change will be missed. He must first experience a dependence on authority; then at puberty he can outgrow this feeling of dependence and begin to judge for himself.

And this will mean that the time has come for us teachers to enter into a new relationship with the children, a relationship that is well-expressed in the familiar saying: "Each one of us chooses his own hero in whose footsteps he will follow on the path to Olympus." Of course this change in

relationship can often bring us into troublesome situations with the children. We are no longer able to be their ideal as a matter of course. We have to keep ourselves up to it!¹⁵

This attitude of the teacher will lead gradually to the point where the feeling for authority, which the children should have had up to now but which they can have no longer, gives way to that interest which arises from the faculty of judgment and comes to meet all that is given to them by the teacher. We can observe how this faculty of judgment turns into an attitude that poses puzzling questions, and it is clear that we must be awake to this.¹⁶

When you lead the children onwards from the 9th to the 10th Class, you must present them with an entirely new situation. The child must feel: "Good heavens! What has happened to my teacher? We always thought of him as a great light, as someone who could tell us many things, but now it seems as though there is not just one human being speaking to us; the whole world seems to speak through him."¹⁷

There should be a real change in the way the teacher conducts his lessons whenever he is starting out on a new class with his children. It is important for the teacher of handwork to observe these rather subtle changes very carefully. If he does so, he will succeed again and again in arousing in the children a joy and an interest in everything he undertakes with them.

Real enthusiasm must be shown by a teacher whose students are 14–15 and 20–21 years old, enthusiasm which addresses itself above all to the imagination. For although the children bring forth from within themselves a tendency to form judgments, it is precisely judgment which, from our point of view, is born out of the imaginative faculty. The children expect to be met by this power of imagination, and it has to be brought to them with an enthusiasm in which they can believe.¹⁸

It can be seen from the above remarks that, in everything the teacher has to do, it depends entirely upon his finding the right way of giving the child every opportunity of development, upon his freeing the way for the child so that his true being can unfold. This is why handwork must be judged, not aesthetically, but purely pedagogically. Only the education of each individual child is of importance, not the realization of brilliant achievements. It can often happen that a piece of rather dull but painstaking work speaks more of the inner progress made by a child than does a piece of work that is more pleasing to the eye.

ENDNOTES

1. *Practical Course for Teachers*, lecture 7.
2. Supplementary Course, lecture 8 (not a verbatim report). [*translator's note*: See also the translation by Mary Adams.]
3. *Education and Art, Education and the Moral Life, Schiller and Our Times*, March 1905.

4. Supplementary Course, Stuttgart, 1921 (shortened rendering). [*translator's note*: See the corresponding passage in Mary Adams' translation (lecture 5).]
5. See beginning of chapter II.
6. *Waldorf School Curriculum*, September 6, 1919.
7. This is a slightly abridged version of notes taken by Hedwig Hauck of the Swiss Teachers' Course (April 1923).
8. *Waldorf School Curriculum*, lecture 2.
9. Taken from Hedwig Hauck's notes of "Lectures to Teachers," Dornach, Christmas 1921.
10. *Waldorf School Curriculum*, Stuttgart, September 1919.
11. See Plate 5, fig. 7, and explanations; chapter IX, Folders and books which one cannot open; chapter VII, Uncomfortable cushions.
12. What is said here applies, of course, to all handwork lessons.
13. Supplementary Course, Stuttgart, 1921, lecture 4. The above is not a verbatim translation. [*translator's note*: See Mary Adams' translation (verbatim).]
14. *Practical Course for Teachers*, Stuttgart, 1919, lecture 1.
15. Supplementary Course, Stuttgart, 1921, lecture 8.
16. Two educational lectures, June 1922 (not given word for word).
17. Two educational lectures, June 1922.
18. Two educational lectures, June 1922.

CHAPTER V

THE LINE IN PAINTING AND HANDWORK

Steiner also gave important indications in regard to the use of lines. Whenever he spoke of the line in painting, he would say something like this: “The line in painting is an artistic lie, because there are really only colored surfaces bordering one upon the other.”¹ When he spoke of handwork and the crafts, on the other hand, he recognized the line as having a quite substantial value and an existence of its own. When asked at a teachers’ conference whether drawing should be developed as well as painting, he said: “No linear drawing, except in the teaching of geometry. But the other kind is important—the working out of light and darkness.” When asked if Class 10 should also take painting lessons, he said:

It must be given in the lessons which they already have. It is quite clear that more artistic work should be done. I am anxious that the handwork lessons should have an artistic character. They are often lacking in taste. I should like them to be really artistic. The line may be used in handwork, but drawn on paper, it is somewhat unreal.²

With regard to linear perspective, Dr. Steiner said:

If the child learns the perspective of lines before he has experienced the perspective of color much harm is done, for the first makes the soul rigid while the latter makes it rich and flexible. A child who has arrived at perspective through the experience of color will learn to read at the right pace. Thus the utilitarian question: “Why teach painting?” is answered.³

The answer to the question whether the linear or the painting element should be cultivated most in handwork will depend upon the task in hand and the gifts of the individual child. When Steiner was asked to look at two pieces of work done in the early years of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, of which one was more rhythmical-linear in character and the other freer in a “painter’s” use of colored surfaces, he praised the first, but then pointed to the second and said: “More of this should be done” (Plate 1, figs. 6 and 7).

Drawing and painting on blackboard or paper are often very useful as a preparation for handwork. In embroidery many children like to stick to their sketches, but if they do so, they should try to give a new form to the motif as they transfer it to the material. Others work quite freely, without relying on any preconsidered design. Although the children are allowed to create their own forms and choose their own colors, it is understood that the teacher should discuss with them what they are about to do, though he may also wait until the child’s work itself shows him how it should be continued. The Waldorf school has no

patterns or samples for copying. Steiner warned against making the child copy things from his/her surroundings. He said: “Awaken the feeling for form, before the wish to copy nature begins to stir in the child.”⁴ In other words, the experience of pure form, regardless of content, must be aroused before we allow an object from the outside world to be copied. He also said: “In the Waldorf schools we attempt not to paint ‘something,’ but to paint out of the experience of color itself. The painting of ‘something’ can come later on. If it is begun too soon, the sense for what is living is lost, and its place is taken by a sense for what is dead.”⁵

Steiner rejected everything stereotyped, everything that would tend to bind hand or eye. He wished for the child to engage his hand and eye in creative activity without the aid of technical devices. When once he saw a child using a stencil to draw the scallops round the opening of a garment, he took the pencils and showed how it should be done by drawing them freehand on the material (Plate 1, fig. 2).

One day Dr. Steiner saw children sewing without thimbles. He took the teacher to task quite severely for this. He made the absolute necessity of the thimble understandable to the children by saying: “Not using a thimble is just like a hunter going out hunting without a gun!”

ENDNOTES

1. *Practical Course for Teachers*, lecture 3.
2. Teachers' Conference, Stuttgart, November 15, 1922.
3. Course for Swiss Teachers, Dornach, April 1921.
4. *Waldorf School Curriculum*, lecture 1, Stuttgart, September 8, 1919.
5. *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, lecture 7, Oxford, 1922.

CHAPTER VI

HANDWORK FOR CHILDREN FROM THE FIFTH TO THE EIGHTH YEARS AT SCHOOL

From the fifth school year onwards the children learn to make the various items of their own clothing. They begin by knitting knee- or ankle-socks. Then, in the sixth year they make slippers and shoes for gymnastics and eurythmy, and in the seventh and eighth years both girls and boys learn to sew by hand either a blouse or a shirt for themselves. The boys like to choose colorful sportswear, and the girls put embroidery on their work. Regarding the neckline of the blouse, the same indications apply as are given later (chapter X) for the dress (Plate 9, figs. 13–16). “The boys should learn to make their own trousers,” said Dr. Steiner; so this is often done as a second item, for which, to their great pride and satisfaction, they are allowed to use the sewing machine. The children are also told something about textiles, and they learn to darn, mend, iron and use a mangle. Dr. Steiner valued these practical domestic activities very highly indeed,¹ but he dismissed the idea of weaving on a small table loom in a handwork lesson with the words: “That’s just a childish game!” He wanted the children in Classes 10 and 11 to learn something of the technicalities of weaving on a big loom in their Technology class. He felt they should also practice spinning until they are able to make a proper thread.

Steiner pointed out repeatedly that our clothes, in the way they are shaped, must be related as closely as possible to the human being. Some girls had once made themselves very beautiful shoes and had even managed to express the asymmetry of the feet in the embroidered design. But Steiner was still not satisfied. He said: “One should be able to see from the shoe as a whole that it encloses a foot.” He then drew attention to the position of the toes, to the sinews, the muscles and the bone structure of the foot. Next he drew a sole in order to demonstrate the asymmetry of the foot (Plate 9, fig. 19), and repeated what he had pointed out with respect to the whole foot and to what must be taken into account in embroidery. The way in which one conveys this to the children must, of course, be artistic and, at the same time, suited to the age-group in question.²

Toys are added to these useful articles from the fifth school year onwards. The children love making dolls and animals. Having become familiar with the physical structure of the human being and animals in lessons in natural science,³ they bring to the work with dolls and animals in the handwork lesson a new and much deeper interest and understanding than would have been possible before. The child is now able to construct an animal in a much more conscious and living way, while in the first years at school he had been connected with the animal more through his feelings and had been able to make only somewhat childish attempts where dolls and animals were concerned.

As a detailed account of such work is given in the later chapter on “The Pedagogical Value of Making Animals in Soft Handwork,” we can now pass on to the doll in particular and to various kinds of toys. In *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy*, Steiner has given far-reaching indications on the subject.

You can make a doll for a child by folding up an old napkin, making two corners into legs, and the other two corners into arms, a knot for the head, and marking in eyes, nose, mouth with blots of ink. Or else you can buy the child what they call a “pretty” doll with real hair and painted cheeks. We need not dwell upon the fact that the “pretty” doll is of course hideous and quite capable of spoiling the healthy aesthetic sense for a lifetime.

The main educational question is a different one. If the child has before him the folded napkin, he has to fill in from his own imagination all that is needed to make it real and human. The work of the imagination molds and builds the forms of the brain. The brain unfolds just as the muscles of the hand unfold when they do the work for which they are fitted. Give the child the so-called “pretty” doll, and the brain has nothing more to do. Instead of unfolding, it becomes stunted and dried up.

If people could look into the brain as the spiritual investigator can, and see how it builds its forms, they would assuredly give their children only such toys as are fitted to stimulate and vivify its formative activity. Toys with dead mathematical forms alone have a desolating and killing effect upon the formative forces of the child. On the other hand everything that kindles the imagination of living things works in the right way.

Our materialistic age produces few good toys. What a healthy toy it is, for example, which represents by movable wooden figures two smiths facing each other and hammering an anvil! Such toys can still be bought in country districts. Excellent also are the picture books in which figures can be set in motion by threads pulled from below, so that the child himself can transform the dead picture into a representation of living action. All this brings about a living mobility of the organs, and it is through such mobility that the right forms of the organs are built up.⁴

Steiner also gave important hints about doll-making during a conference at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart. He said:⁵

When the children make dolls, artistic ability, style, sense for color—all these—can be developed. If every possible effort were made to overcome naturalism in doll-making, so that something living could take its place—laughing dolls, formed artistically—one’s work would really have a beneficial influence in the world.⁶

Similar demands could be made concerning the making of dolls’ houses, an activity which Steiner considered to be of pedagogical value. But he objected to a circus with performing elephants which the children asked if they might make, and said: “It would be

better to make a herd of charging elephants.” This was done with great enthusiasm by the children. There happened to be an animal show in Stuttgart at that time; the children were allowed to ride on the elephants in the open air, and were able to acquire a much more intimate feeling for the living animals.

How is such a herd made? First, the animals are drawn on the blackboard. Then each child draws an elephant in profile on a piece of firm wrapping paper and cuts it out. This silhouette is traced on to a double piece of muslin and then cut out, allowing for seams all round. The two parts—with the exception of legs and feet—are now sewn together. A third piece of material is added, supplying the half required for rounding off the legs and also the underside of the elephant’s body.

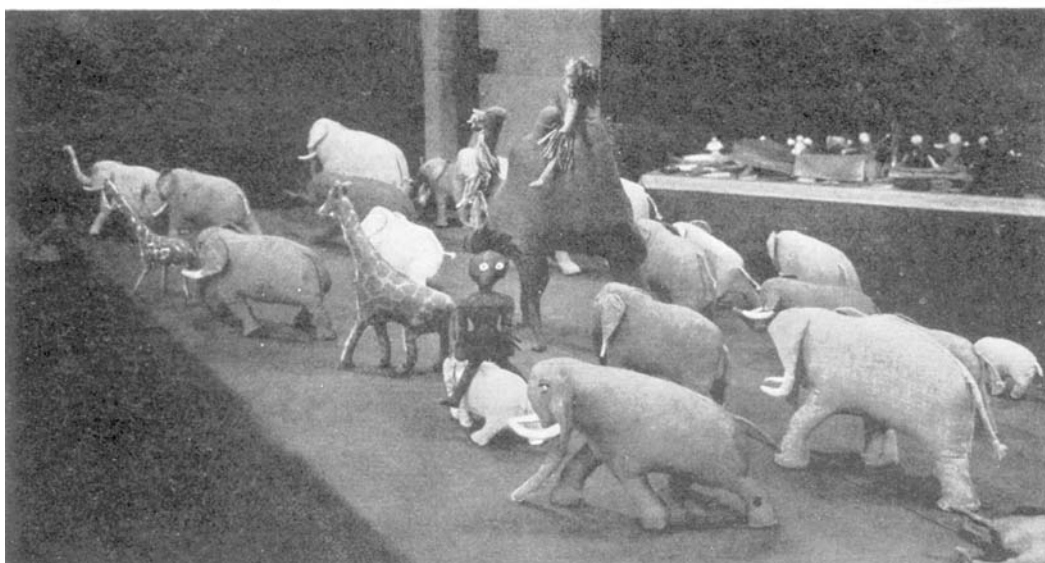
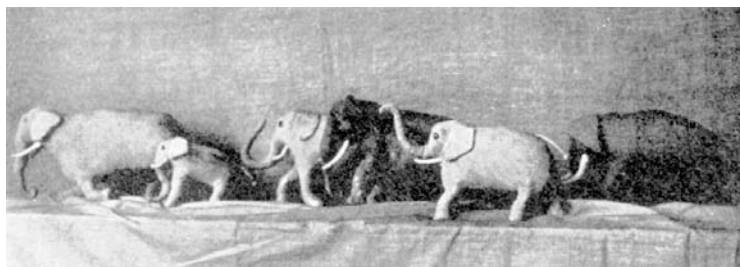
In Berlin in 1916 Steiner gave suggestions for a puppet theatre, which was then constructed by members of the Anthroposophical Society for children whose fathers were on active service in the War. He said that the dolls should be manipulated from above by means of strings or wires. In addition he said that one should aim at developing the puppet show artistically to the point that the dolls could do eurythmy. In 1916 *Snow White* was performed. Steiner said that the dwarfs should sit at a round table, and that they should be moved in such a way that they are always fidgeting. “Dwarfs must be thorough fidgets,” he said. The next year *Sleeping Beauty* was performed. One should not think of making such a theatre in school before the children are twelve to thirteen years old (see chapter IV).

In the eleventh lecture of the “Practical Course for Teachers,” Dr. Steiner spoke of how, in connection with the teaching of geography from the twelfth to the fifteenth year, the child should be shown the relation between agriculture and human life and receive a vivid conception of the plough, the harrow, and so forth:

Try especially to get the child to imitate the shapes of some of these simple implements, if only in the form of a toy or a piece of handwork. It will make the child skillful, and will help him to place himself properly into life when he is older.

ENDNOTES

1. See beginning of chapter II.
2. See chapters II–IV.
3. *Practical Course for Teachers*, lectures 7, 8, 10.
4. Cologne, December 1, 1906. The numerous indications and suggestions it contains make this booklet indispensable to both parents and teachers.
5. See reference to dolls in chapter VII.
6. Teachers’ Conference, November 15, 1920.



From the Handwork Class
(Classes 6 & 7)

CHAPTER VII

AFTER THE LOWER SCHOOL

When the children leave the Lower School, they enter a new phase of development. They wish now to grasp the truth-content of the world. From now on critical thinking and independent judgment have a part to play in the way they prepare and carry out their handwork. What in this activity was formerly done more out of a feeling- and will-experience, and was still, though perhaps not always consciously, dominated by a sensitivity to the authority of the teacher, must now become conscious in the child and be brought into harmony with thinking. Inner conflicts are bound to arise, but in most cases these problems are resolved through the work itself. Once the young person has attained a certain balance of his soul-forces, his gifts and artistic capacities can begin to unfold.

After puberty the young human being begins to take notice of actions as such. The love for work awakens in him. Now that an understanding for the work of mankind is born in him, the play of the child leads over to the work of the adult.¹

In these years, therefore, much freedom should be allowed in the choice of work. The resulting variety of work done in a class favors the progress of each individual child. New crafts are added. Basket-making, raffia or leatherwork, the knotting of hammocks—a job which the boys enjoy especially—can be done too. Tasks involving painting are also included. Steiner suggested the painting of posters. Book covers, lampshades and other things are painted with watercolor from the pot. Steiner did not want colored chalks to be used in the schools—though oil crayons, because they do not make dust, may be used for sketching. With regard to posters Steiner said:

Children can be taught to write out a bill of exchange, so I do not see why they should not be taught to recognize the beauty of a beautiful poster. One should also be able to recognize an ugly, impossible poster. But people look at such things without getting infuriated. Artistic taste needs to be educated. The feeling for style needs to be developed ... What I mean is the ability inwardly to experience these things ... One must be able to experience a triangle, experience a rectangle—not be able to merely imitate it. But nowadays when someone makes a doll, he does it by imitating rather than by experiencing it inwardly. One must be able to experience from within how a doll laughs or cries. This should enter even into the way its clothes are made. The girls can make a doll and the boys a harlequin. Such a capacity to experience inwardly is fundamental to a right use of color in painting. A

bridge can be built from handwork to the crafts. There are countless small objects that can be painted. In the household there are things that should be made by hand and then painted.²

Steiner pointed out the new directions for painting itself. Although what he created in the smaller cupola of the first Goetheanum in Dornach was destroyed by fire, the posters he himself made for the performances at the Goetheanum, executed in part by the painter Henny Geek following the indications and practical suggestions of Steiner, have been saved for us. Steiner advised: "Study the posters we are making together in Dornach." In Dornach itself he said, with regard to these posters and programs:

If you look at what has been striven after in the simple attempts we have made in the designing of programs, you will see that, though it is only a beginning, a beginning has been made in the release of colors from weight, in the experiencing of color as an element in its own right, in making colors speak.

If it succeeds, then, as against the inartistic world-philosophy which would lead to the extinction of all art, an art will be created out of the free elements of color and of sound, an art freed again from the influence of weight.³

Once when he was asked at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart how the children should move their brush when painting in watercolors, he said that it is best always to keep to one direction. He illustrated this by painting a signpost (Plate 1, figs. 4a, 4b), and showed also how it should not be done (fig. 4c). He said that in embroidery too one should always keep to one direction with the single stitches, whatever form is being made (fig. 5).

On another occasion he explained that in carving and modeling one should always take into account the nature of the material in which one is working. Wood must be shaped differently from stone or iron, for example. When he was asked if this applied also to the use of colored materials for embroidery, he said: "No, here its purpose has to be considered."

In the Waldorf school much attention is given to the ways in which painting and embroidery can be connected. In such work there is scope for free artistic activity. There is, however, the danger that such work might begin to be done for its own sake and become mere "studio work," a term used by Steiner in criticism of all work which serves no real purpose. This danger can be avoided if the children are given concrete tasks to carry out. If a tablecloth was being embroidered, Steiner wished it to express in its design the purpose it was intended to serve. Its future surroundings also had to be taken into account. Steiner once showed how a tablecloth, for example, can be brought into harmonious relation with the objects on or under it, when, on one occasion he pointed to two finished tablecloths and said: "This one should lie on a white marble table, and on the other there should stand a tall vase of flowers with long stems." In this way he showed how the children's taste can be educated in preparation for the time when they have homes of their own.

Steiner also set such tasks as the following. He made sketches for tablecloths which were, in one case, for a table with three legs, and in another, for a table with four legs (Plate 4, figs. 27 and 28). In the Waldorf school he suggested that a tablecloth should be made for a particular number of people. The embroidery on it was to leave space for the cutlery and plates, which would be enclosed in a kind of frame, whose design should also take into consideration the people sitting at the table. Those who wished to arrange exhibitions of handwork were unsure whether such specially designed articles could be exhibited away from the surroundings to which they belonged. Steiner was of the opinion, however, that it was possible, provided labels were attached to the objects explaining how they should be used. He pointed to a tablecloth which had been discussed earlier and said: "Write for this one—'This is a tablecloth for use on a round table in a reception room in which guests assemble to drink tea.'"

All handwork should be brought into relation with life and with the human being. Steiner dismissed merely ornamental tablecloths as "studio work." "Far too many ornamental cloths are made," he said. "Let the children make cushions." Thus he set the 9th Class a quite concrete task. The importance of this very question—how to embroider a cushion—had been discussed by Steiner on various occasions. "For," he said, "it can happen when you lie on a modern cushion that you wake up and find the embroidered pattern imprinted on your cheek." In the "Christmas" lectures given at the Goetheanum in 1921, he made sketches on the blackboard and said:

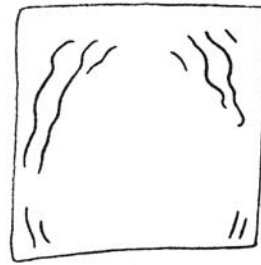
It isn't possible to lay your head on this cushion (fig. 20), because the thing in the middle will scratch you! It does not express the real function of a cushion at all. This is how it should be done (fig. 21) ... and now you can only lie with your face to the right. If it is to be done really artistically, the same design must be put facing left on the back of the cushion (Plate 3, fig. 22).⁴

All kinds of queries and reflections arose amongst the listeners as to how else a cushion could be artistically designed. It was thought, for example, that it would be fully in harmony with the function of the cushion if it were embroidered only along its four edges, for Steiner had said (in Dornach on another occasion) that in the middle of the cushion is the human being—nothing is there—but around him are his dreams.

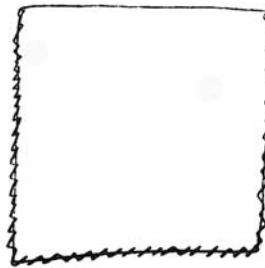
When he was shown a cushion embroidered in this way along its four edges (Plate 3, fig. 26), he laid it flat on his open hand and, turning it in all four directions, tried to lay his head on it, until he gave up the attempt and said: "But how can I get into it? Here it is closed—there it is closed—it is closed on all sides. One cannot get in at all." Then he took a pencil, drew a sketch of a cushion (Plate 3, fig. 23), and said: "It must be embroidered in such a way that one can see where the head and the neck should be. The design must open out towards the bottom so that the human body can get in, and in the middle at the top, the design opens out again."

After he had sketched the pattern for embroidery for the cushion, he drew a number of short firm strokes along the bottom seam and said: “The lower edge must be strongly emphasized; it must be clearly defined. The side edges must be too, but less so as you approach the top. The lower edge must be especially strong (there is no seam along the top). Then on the back of the pillow (Plate 3, fig. 24), you can embroider something in all four corners, or you can embroider in the middle, to show that one cannot lie there” (Plate 3, fig. 25).

The following observations can emerge from these indications from Steiner concerning the cushion, if one considers separately the embroidery on the cushion on the one hand and the accentuation of the three edges on the other. Looked at in this way, the decorative and the constructive (the accentuation of the edges where the parts are joined together) elements of the cushion are shown separately from one another (figs. 23a & 23b). The cushion is only complete through the bringing together of these two principles, which are here characterized as straight line and curve.



23a



23b

Steiner once drew the attention of a visitor to the first Goetheanum to the interplay of curve and straight line in the forms of the building. He said something like the following: “Look how everywhere the curves pass over into the straight lines or have some relation to them. It is through the harmonious interplay of the two that the true meaning of the building comes about. When the eye follows this play of lines and forms, when the human being experiences the straight and curved lines, only then does the building become a work of art in the human soul.”

Curves and straight lines, decorative and constructive, point, like light and shade, to polar forces in the world. When these establish a harmonious or rhythmic relation to one another, the work in question neither succumbs to the hardening forces of the earth, nor, through becoming nebulous and illusory, loses its connection with the conditions of earthly life.

It is certainly not without significance that Steiner recommended for teachers of handwork the study of mathematical laws. “Study Dr. von Baravalle’s book *The Pedagogy of Physics and Mathematics*,” he said. “This book can be of great value for handwork too.”

Plate 3

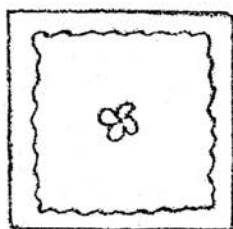


Fig. 20 (wrong)



Fig. 21



Fig. 22

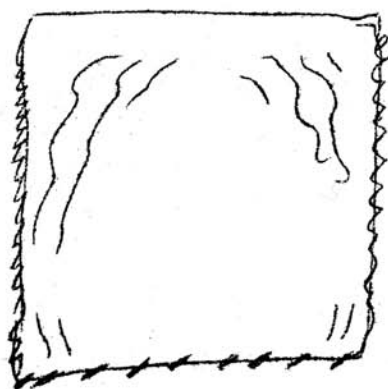


Fig. 23 Front

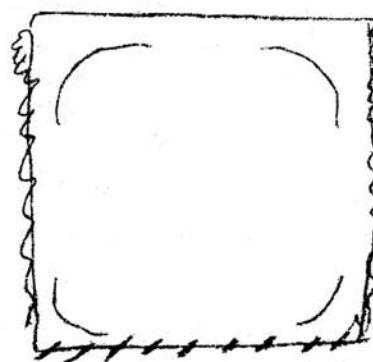


Fig. 24 Back

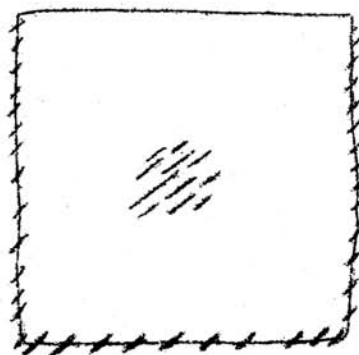


Fig. 25 Front

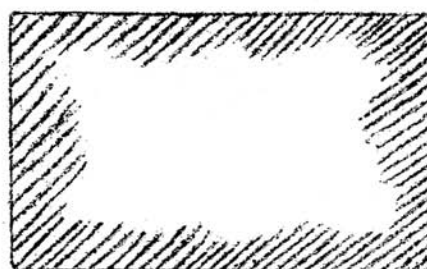


Fig. 26 Front (wrong)

Cushions

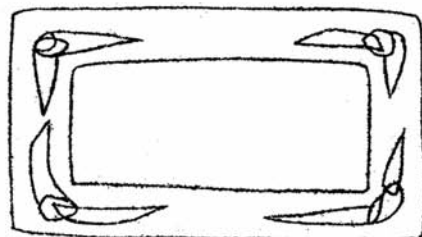


Fig. 27
Tablecloth for a four-legged table

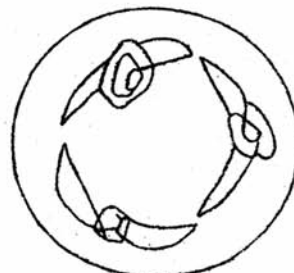


Fig. 28
Tablecloth for a three-legged table

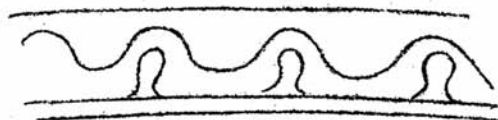
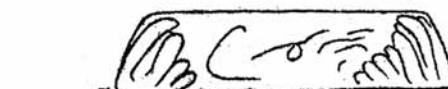


Fig. 29

Edge of tablecloth hanging down from table



red, orange, yellow

Fig. 30



Fig. 31
Wall hanging for clothes

The intention was to indicate a plant motif with rootlike forms in the earth, rising up into stemlike forms which then go over into leaves and blossom.

— L. v. Bl.

Sketches by Rudolf Steiner

Drawn in July 1922 for the Dornach School

Reproduced by Louise van Blommestein

The working together of art and science, the harmony resulting from the interplay of decoration and construction—those two elements which the artist tries more or less visibly, though often only in a hidden way, to unite in a higher synthesis in his work—from this there arises an art which is truly Christian. Such was the work of art which found its place on the earth, like a gift from heaven, in the form of the Goetheanum, built by Steiner in Dornach during World War I.

But on New Year's Eve of 1922–1923, this sublime work of art, through which Steiner had brought a divine spiritual world to manifestation, fell victim to the flames put in it by criminal hands. This first Goetheanum, which has found an undying memorial in the hearts of all those who were able to experience it, once looked out over the surrounding countryside, proclaiming as it were through its forms: “May the human being bring about within his soul the redemption of the polar opposites in the world, through harmonizing them within himself and striving to raise them, transformed, to a higher spirituality.”

On the site of the destroyed building a new Goetheanum arose, and seems solemnly to repeat the same demands. It acts, at the same time, as a mighty bulwark against the evil destructive forces storming in on all sides. It is a source of strength, giving courage to the human being, enabling him to bring fulfillment to the task which the powers guiding world evolution have given him.

ENDNOTES

1. Swiss Teachers' Course, Dornach, Easter 1923.
2. Teachers' Conference, Stuttgart, November 15, 1920. (This quotation is taken from Hedwig Hauck's own notes.)
3. *Color*, part II.
4. This is not the official version of Dr. Steiner's remarks. [H.H.]

CHAPTER VIII

RUDOLF STEINER, THE TEACHER OF ARTISTS

Dornach is the place where, in the midst of a general decline and dissolution of all our old cultural values, an entirely new Art was given to the world. It was in the hard years of war from 1914 onwards, while the earth of Europe was shaken by the rumble of guns, that Steiner created, in a peaceful corner of Switzerland, the Goetheanum, of which we have spoken earlier. He was assisted by members of the nations that were at war with one another. He was the teacher of the architects and the woodcarvers who worked on the pedestals, capitals and architraves of the pillars supporting the cupola inside the building. They also made the outer walls, which consisted of many tightly-packed layers of solid wood, and which in their living, mobile form were themselves an ornament. Steiner also taught the painters who helped to execute the sketches he had made for both cupolas, representing the epochs in the evolution of the earth and mankind.

Steiner stood in the midst of all these artists, not as an onlooker but always active himself wherever help was needed. For instance, he took a brush and painted most of the smaller cupola himself in a short time, to the amazement of all the painters present.

Besides this he sculpted an enormous figure in wood, nine meters high. Called *The Representative of Humanity*, this woodcarving was all that escaped destruction in the fire of 1922–1923. It was to have occupied the central position in the building, and was spared because it had not been quite finished and so had been left outside the building. Thus it came about that works of a kind never seen in the world before in architecture, sculpture and painting were created in Dornach in those few years.

When the nine colored windows were finally put in and the light flooded through them in many colors into the plastically-formed interior, uniting with the colors of the cupola paintings, it seemed that all earthly gravity had vanished in this sea of colored light and that the human being, beholding this, could unite his higher self with the width of the cosmos and feel the presence of the spiritual world itself.¹

Steiner brought forth creations of world importance in other places also. In Munich his Mystery Dramas were performed, first under his direction in 1910, and then onwards. In Stuttgart he poured his genius into the Free Waldorf School, founded by Emil Molt, and inaugurated an entirely new pedagogy which was born of anthroposophy, his life-creation. Another of the many gifts from Steiner was eurythmy, a completely new art of movement.

In addition to this there were his many spiritual-scientific lectures—and he also found time to pour a wealth of new ideas and impulses into all spheres of human life. Not only artists, but technicians, poets, musicians, theologians, doctors, farmers and others too were able to benefit from the insight of Steiner.

He made sketches of costumes and scenery for his Mystery Dramas, as well as for other great dramatic works, e.g. Goethe's *Faust* and the dramas of Edouard Schuré. He also gave important indications concerning human clothing. He quite untiringly produced new sketches and paintings for the artists who consulted him on all branches of the arts and crafts.

There arose the plans for the Goetheanum itself, and sketches for the great windows, for whose construction Steiner had devised a new technique of engraving;² sketches for the making of jewelry, which was then taken up by Frau Meyer-Jakobs; and sketches for posters and tickets of admission to anthroposophical meetings, book covers, folders, and so forth. Whenever necessary he would ensure the success of a task undertaken by doing some of the work himself or by showing how it should be done. He was always ready to help and his single concern was the creation of new possibilities for the higher development of the human soul. He was like a star through whose light a divine world revealed itself to mankind, and through whose warmth individuals were led in freedom to those tasks on earth which the spiritual world requires us to fulfill.

ENDNOTES

1. For the study of the art in the Goetheneaum, we recommend lectures given by Rudolf Steiner: *Ways to a New Style of Architecture* and *The Architectural Conception of the Goetheanum*.
2. See *The Goetheanum Windows* by A. Turgenieff.

CHAPTER IX

BOOKBINDING AND FOLDERS

Steiner led his students with unparalleled patience. He did this with love, but also with severity. He was a sharp critic and was quite able to express his displeasure when he saw that his advice had been followed either incompletely or not at all—or when the essential point of his sketches had not been grasped but had merely been imitated. On a visit to the Stuttgart Waldorf School in 1924, he was very annoyed to see two folders (Plate 1, figs. 8 and 9) on which the decorative design led across from left to right not only at the top but at the bottom too. He pointed to it and reprimanded:

What are these curves doing down here? One cannot open these folders because the decoration requires one to leave them shut. It is just bearable on this one (fig. 9), where the colors are faint, but on the embroidered one (fig. 8), the curve below is quite impossible.

When the reply was given that they had tried to follow the indications given in his sketches, he answered angrily: “Have you ever seen anything like that in my sketches? If a copy is wanted, it should at least be done accurately and well” (Plate 1, figs. 10, 11 and 12; Plates 5, 6 and 7).

Steiner had spoken in several places about the designing of book covers some years before 1924. In the “Lectures to Teachers,” Dornach, Christmas 1921, he said the following, which is taken from the notes of Albert Steffen:

Cushions whose embroidery is felt against the face when one puts one’s head on them, handbags giving no indication of which is the front and which is the back, books bound in such a way that the cover does not tell one that it is supposed to be opened, all these are sins in the world of appearance, which is the domain of art.

The following remark appears in shorthand notes of the same lecture: “Nowadays one seldom sees a book designed in such a way that one can see that the leaves are meant to be cut. Books usually bear some design which actually requires one to leave them shut, not to open them at all.”

Decorations on the covers of books and folders should show quite clearly which is the top and the bottom, the front and back. Regarding the format of books and folders, Steiner said that an upright oblong should be used for anything written or printed, whilst a lengthwise oblong should be used for drawings or pictures. He said that the insides of folders, and of other things too, should always be lighter than the outsides. In Dornach he further

remarked: "The place where we touch or take hold of an object should always be made lighter than the rest of it. It will then be as though the human being were radiating light."

In conclusion we should like to quote two interesting paragraphs about bookbinding:

If one can bring about a feeling for color harmony in children, by first letting them paint so that their experiences really arise out of color, then one will bring it about that the children will make things later on which serve well in life. Nothing is drawn first. The child learns to live in color, and then to give form to something that is meant to be the cover of a book. The main object is to awaken a real life experience in the child. It is just through form and color that such an experience can best be awakened ...

One must know when designing a book cover that there is a difference between above and below when one is looking at or opening the book. The child must be allowed to grow into a feeling for space and form. It is something that will penetrate right down into his limbs.¹

ENDNOTE

1. *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, Oxford, 1922.

TITLE DRAWINGS BY STEINER
 ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS
Explanations of Plates 5, 6 and 7

Figure 1: Dreigliederung des Sozialen Organismus, a weekly journal published in Stuttgart, as it appeared from July 1919 to April 1920. The corner design, drawn by Dr. Steiner, can be considered the prototype of all his book designs. This form first appeared on his book *Die Kernpunkte der Sozialen Frage* [The Threefold Commonwealth] (Plate 6, fig. 18). The lettering and the design below it are not Dr. Steiner's.

Figure 2: The above journal as it appeared from May 1920 to January 1921. The corner design was drawn by Dr. Steiner.

Figure 3: Folder for the Dreigliederung journals, which appeared after the first year of publication. The corner design, a variation of fig. 2, was not drawn by Dr. Steiner.

Figure 4: Anthroposophie, Wochenschrift für freies Geistesleben, published in Stuttgart from July 1922 to October 1931. The design was drawn by Dr. Steiner.

Figure 5: Dreigliederung des Sozialen Organismus as it appeared from February 1921 to June 1922. The design was drawn by Dr. Steiner.

Figures 6 and 7: Drawn by Dr. Steiner for the cartons of medicines made by the Clinical Therapeutical Institute "Der Kommende Tag" in Stuttgart. The medicines were manufactured in Schwab. Gmünd. The design (fig. 6) is light blue and red on a dark ivory ground. Note the two red designs at the top and bottom of the box (left side of fig. 7) indicating on which side the box is to be opened (Plate 9, fig. 18).

The box is cut out of a single piece of cardboard and then folded and glued. Only two sides are shown here. The other two are the same as the right side in fig. 7, which is shown enlarged in fig. 6.

Figure 8: Designed in 1920 by Dr. Steiner for the articles, drawn up by him for the founding of a business undertaking.

Figures 9 and 10: Drawn in 1920 by Dr. Steiner for the Klinisch-Therapeutisches Institut in Stuttgart. Figure 9 was used as a trademark.

Figure 11: Drawn in 1920 for the Klinisch-Therapeutisches Institut in Arlesheim-Dornach.

Figure 12: Publisher's sign drawn by Dr. Steiner for the publishing house (founded 1919) of "Der Kommende Tag," Stuttgart, a company for the promotion of economic and spiritual values.

Figure 13: *Soziale Zukunft*, a four- to six-weekly journal first published in July 1919 by the Swiss association for the promotion of the Threefold Social Organism. The design (fig. 13) is inside, on the first page of the journal, for which it was drawn by Dr. Steiner. He did not draw the design on the front of the journal.

Figure 14: "Das Goetheanum," an international weekly for *Anthroposophy and the Threefold Social Organism*, published in Dornach since August 1921. The design and the lettering below were drawn by Dr. Steiner.

Figure 15: Drawn by Dr. Steiner in 1921 for the Anthroposophischer Hochschulbund.

Figure 16: *Die Drei*, a monthly journal for Anthroposophy, the Threefold State, and Goetheanism, as published in Stuttgart from February 1921 to March 1931. The design, and probably the lettering also, were drawn by Dr. Steiner. The print is blue on an ivory ground.

Figure 17: This design was drawn by Dr. Steiner for the second edition of his book *Die Kernpunkte der Sozialen Frage* [The Threefold Commonwealth]. The print is black on a brown ground, the same as in fig. 21.

Figure 18: The design and lettering were drawn by Dr. Steiner in 1919 for the first edition of his book *Die Kernpunkte der Sozialen Frage*. The print is black on a green ground. This was the first design given by Dr. Steiner. Its form underlies all later designs done by him and other artists (Plate 5, fig.1).

Figure 19: Dr. Steiner drew this design in 1921 for "Ritter Wahn," a mystery poem by Julius Mosen. It was one of the last designs drawn by him for the publishing house of "Der Kommende Tag" in Stuttgart.

Figure 20: This was drawn by Dr. Steiner in 1920 as a trademark for "Der Kommende Tag" in Stuttgart. It is now used in Dornach.

Figure 21: The design drawn by Dr. Steiner for the second edition of his book *Die Kernpunkte der Sozialen Frage* (fig. 17).

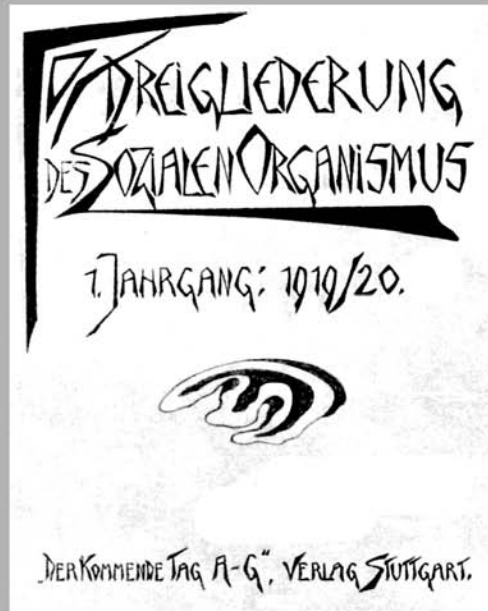
Figure 22: This design was drawn by Dr. Steiner for two books by Count Polzer-Hoditz, *Politische Betrachtungen* and *Der Kampf gegen den Geist und das Testament Peters des Grossen*. It appeared shortly after the design in fig. 21. The print is dark red on an ivory ground.



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Sketches of Title Pages by Rudolf Steiner

Figure 23: “Anthroposophie, Oesterreichischer Bote von Menschengest zu Menschengest,” published by the Bund für Freies Geistesleben in Austria. The journal appeared twice monthly from November 1922. The design was drawn by Dr. Steiner.

Figure 24: The same design as that drawn by Dr. Steiner shown in fig. 20. It was given by him in 1920 for the “Verein des Goetheanum,” together with the lettering in it, which was copied as faithfully as possible for printing. Since then the design has been used at the Goetheanum in Dornach.

Figure 25: This design was drawn by Dr. Steiner in 1921 or 1922 for Bulwer Lytton’s novel *Zanoni*, *The Coming Race*.

Figure 26: This was drawn by Dr. Steiner. Nothing more is known about this design than that it was probably originally intended for writing paper. The motif, the same as in fig. 33, is drawn in the first case for upright format, and in the second for transverse format.

Figure 27: Dr. Steiner drew this design before 1924 for the book *Theosophie*, and Frau Pyle-Waller then executed it for printing.

Figure 28: A later use of the design shown in fig. 25. Note that the word “Vril,” belonging to the composition in fig. 25, is here omitted.

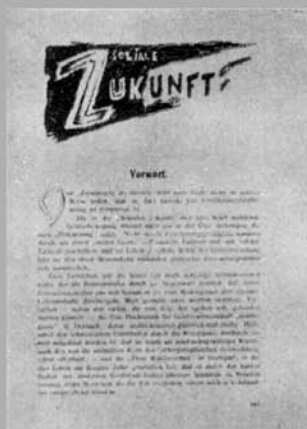
Figure 29: This design was drawn by Dr. Steiner for the secretary’s office at the Goetheanum. The motif is the same as in fig. 31, where the form is adapted to a transverse format.

Figure 30: A later use of the design shown in fig. 27.

Figure 31: A design for members’ cards, for use within the Anthroposophical Society. Dr. Steiner probably drew it in 1923, as the cards were first used early in 1924. The cards are for transverse format. The print is old gold on a light blue ground of even tone. The motif is the same as in fig. 29, where it is drawn for upright format.

Figure 32: An attendance card for the “Second International Congress of the Anthroposophical Movement for the Resolution of the Problem East versus West,” Vienna, June 1922. Dr. Steiner drew the design. The print is blue-violet (West) and red (East) on a pink ground.

Figure 33: Dr. Steiner’s design for membership cards of the Anthroposophical Society, drawn probably in 1923, as they came into use early in 1924. The cards are transverse format. The print is olive green on a strong pink ground. The motif is the same as in fig. 26.



13



14



15



16



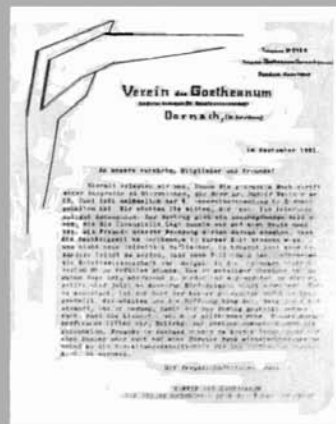
17



18



19



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22



23



24

Figure 34: Folder (cloth) for the weekly publication “Was in der Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft vorgeht,” drawn by Dr. Steiner in 1924. Gold print on a dark blue ground with dark violet surround. Color-tone is similar for ground and frame.

Figure 35: Drawn by Dr. Steiner in 1924 for *Anthroposophischer Seelenkalender* [Calendar of the Soul]. Gold on sky-blue ground.

Figure 36: Folder (cloth) for the periodical “Das Goetheanum.” Design drawn by Dr. Steiner in 1924. Gold on dark violet ground.

These last three designs were drawn not by Dr. Steiner, but, at his request by Frau Erna Palmer, who worked in the years 1921–1922 for “Der Kommende Tag” (under the direction of Dr. Steiner). She wrote the following indications regarding these designs:

Figure 37: “The design on the Solviev cover is my own. The only change made by Dr. Steiner to the original was in the lowest part of the design, which in this particular case had to come from the infinite distances and thus be allowed to fade out towards the bottom, not be sharply defined as I had it first. Dr. Steiner was very insistent that everything should have a meaning and contribute to the forming of an organic whole. No part, however small, was allowed to contradict any other.”

Figure 38: “I also did the design for Karl Julius Schroer’s *Goethe und die Liebe*.”

Figure 39: “Dr. Steiner most liked my designs for the book *Goethe im Recht gegen Newton* by Gravell. I had allowed a conflict to take place between light and darkness, between a light and a dark triangle. Something was really happening there—the very thing, in fact, that was happening in the book. It won his approval especially because the design corresponded exactly to the contents of the book. The purpose of such a design in the top left-hand corner of a book is to direct the reader’s eye to a symbol of the contents, and thus to lead it, as it were, through the book cover to the contents themselves. The bottom right-hand corner of the book is used for turning over the pages, and therefore has no design.”

The importance laid by Dr. Steiner on the designing of motifs for book covers in such a way that they enable the reader to see straight away where the book opens, has been discussed in detail in chapter IX. But how little sense is sometimes shown in this connection is illustrated by an example given by Dr. Steiner at a Teachers’ Conference in Stuttgart, November 15, 1920. “We had the most trying experiences here a short time ago. You will all know the graphic design for threefoldness on *Die Kernpunkte der Sozialen Frage* [The Threefold Commonwealth] (Plate 6, figure 18). We wanted to change it. It was meant to be made more up-to-date, so what did the artist do? He drew his motif in such a way that the old design for the book was given its own mirror-reflection in the top right-hand corner. So that what was on the left was put on the right too—only the other way round, pointing towards the left. He made a Gothic window of it. Such things do happen!”



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Sketches of Title Pages by Rudolf Steiner

END-VIGNETTES

DRAWN BY RUDOLF STEINER

Plate 8

Steiner not only gave decorative motifs for book covers, folders and journals, but in 1919 and 1920 he also pointed out new ways in the designing of end-vignettes. He put such a design at the end of each of four articles published in *Soziale Zukunft* [*Social Future*]; they are worthy of preservation and are included in this book (facing page).

These designs, like the ones on book covers, folders, and so forth, are most intimately connected with the spiritual content of the writings in question. On the cover of the book the design serves to prepare the reader for the content, while the purpose of the end-vignette is to bring the content to a conclusion in the form of a picture, or perhaps to sum up the content of the book by representing its central mood in such a form.

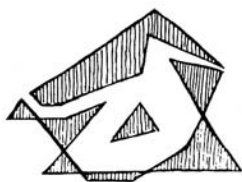
A quite different relation to the contents of the book, to himself, or to the world is brought about in the reader through the vignettes at the ends of the above-mentioned articles. One of them, for example, is enclosed within itself; it is as though its form grew out of the leading thoughts in the article; it seems to call upon the reader to collect his thoughts and to reflect once again on what he has read. In another vignette the lines leading in from, or out into, the infinite spaces seem to indicate a wish to bring about in the reader, through the establishment of a certain inner equilibrium, a connection with the wider aspects of life and of the world around. In this vignette too the content of the foregoing article is felt to reverberate. It is always the case that the design given by Steiner to such vignettes is determined by the spiritual content of his writings. It is out of this that the picture finally shapes itself.

END-VIGNETTES BY RUDOLF STEINER

Soziale Zukunft [Social Future] ... From an article by Dr. Steiner, “International Economic Life and the Threefold Social Organism.” The idea of the threefoldness of the social organism will have persuasive force in the direction indicated. The prospects opened up by it for a social future will be a stimulus to activity. To put forward the idea in such a way that it can be received with understanding, and that the doubts standing in the way of its realization can be laid aside, is an essential part of the task set in the present day for a solution of the social problem.



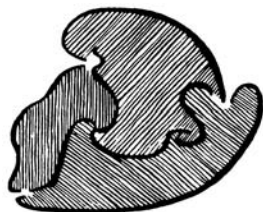
Soziale Zukunft, Nos. 5–7 ... Article by Dr. Steiner, “The Pedagogic Aims of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart.” The Waldorf School in Stuttgart is not a “progressive school,” founded, like so many others, in the belief that one knows the reason for the shortcomings of this or that kind of education. It has originated in the thought that the finest principles and goodwill in this sphere can be effective only if the teacher has an understanding of the nature of the human being. This one cannot have if one does not develop a lively interest in the whole social life of mankind. If one is open to the being of mankind, all human joy and suffering is experienced as though it were one’s own. Through a teacher who has this knowledge of the soul and of the human being, the generation that is growing into life is brought into contact with social life as a whole. From his school people will emerge who can place themselves into life with strength and purpose.



Soziale Zukunft, No. 4 ... Article by Dr. Steiner, “Threefoldness and Trust in Social Life,” (Capital and Credit). ... This decision can be reached only through arrangements which enable the value of single possessions to be assessed from within the context of the social organism as a whole. Anyone who doubts that such arrangements need to be striven for has no eye for the fact that, where no more than the law of supply and demand is acknowledged, certain human needs are neglected whose satisfaction would enhance the civilization of the social organism. Such a person has no understanding for a striving that wishes to include the satisfaction of these needs amongst the goals of the social organism. To create a balance between human needs and the value of human work—this is what the striving for a Threefold Social Organism means.



Soziale Zukunft, No. 3 ... Article by Dr. Steiner, “Spiritual Life, Jurisdiction, Economy.” But only such a need is able to bring about the knowledge that is required if the “social problem” is to be seen in the right light. The reason why the attempts made in our day to solve this “problem” appear so unsatisfactory is that many people are still unable to see what the actual content of the problem is. One sees the question arise in the economic sphere and seeks for an answer in terms of economic adjustment. One thinks that economic transformation will provide the solution. But one fails to recognize that these transformations can be effected only with the help of forces liberated in human nature through the emergence of an independent spiritual and juridical life.



CHAPTER X

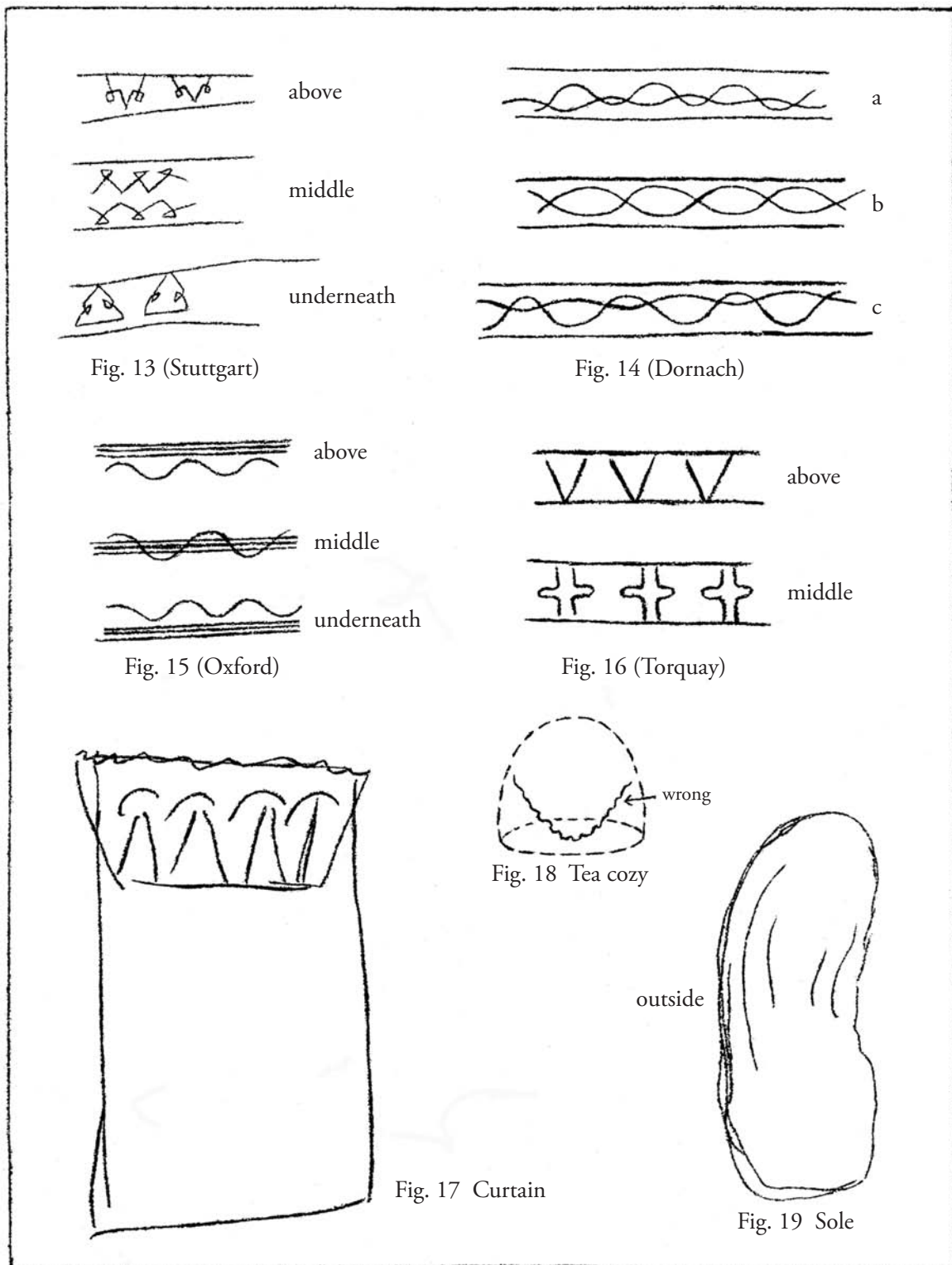
INDICATIONS CONCERNING DRESS AND ITS DECORATION

Steiner quite often gave brief indications concerning the shaping of clothes in a meaningful way, especially when he saw that such a principle had been neglected. Let us first quote a remark from “Lectures to Teachers” (Dornach, Christmas 1921), as recorded by Albert Steffen:

Dr. Steiner illustrated his point by means of quite simple examples. You see girls, he said, sitting in a needlework class sewing some kind of pattern round the neck, round the waistband, and round the hem of a dress, and one is dismayed to find that it is always the same pattern! And when you meet a young lady hooped around in this way, she looks as though she has been squeezed together by this pattern which is the same above and below. Head and feet have been completely ignored, while in fact the pattern ought to be metamorphosed in accordance with these. Dr. Steiner showed on the blackboard how the design should be developed organically (Plate 9, fig. 14).

Steiner said things similar to this in the Waldorf School in June 1924, and he sketched another pattern in several stages of metamorphosis (Plate 9, fig. 13). He put a further sketch next to it (Plate 9, fig. 17) and said: “This is a curtain.” This design should be compared to that on the lower seam of the garment shown in fig. 14.

How important it was to Dr. Steiner that the children should learn to distinguish between a design for the top of a garment and one for the bottom is shown in a task he set in the Waldorf School a year or two after its opening: “Get the children to design a collar and a waistband.” In the Oxford Course 1922,¹ he expressed thoughts similar to those given in the Supplementary Course, Stuttgart 1921:² “Now sometimes you will find a terrible thing done: A teacher will get a child to make a neckband, a waistband and a dress hem, all three having the same pattern. You can see this sometimes. Obviously, from an artistic point of view, this is the most terrible thing imaginable. The child must learn very early on that a band designed for the neck has a tendency to open downwards, it has a downward direction; that a girdle or waistband tends both upwards and downwards; and that the lower hem of a dress has an upward-striving tendency, and must have a kind of base below upon which it stands. It is a terrible thing if a child is taught merely to design a band artistically. The child should know how the band should look according to its position on the human being wearing it.”³ This was illustrated by Steiner on the blackboard (Plate 9, fig. 15).



Figures 13, 17 and 19 are from original pencil sketches by Dr. Steiner.

In Torquay he discussed the matter as follows:

Here we are trying to make the children into practical workers. When you come to the Waldorf school, you will see that the children can do very nice bookbinding, and make all kinds of boxes, and so forth; you will see how they are trained to do really artistic needlework. And the girls' needlework lessons are not given in such a way that you can see anything resembling the so-called clothes that women wear nowadays, in which no distinction is made between what is worn up here, what is worn round the waist, and what belongs round the hem. No attempt is made to ensure that what is worn around the neck shall have the character of something worn around the neck (Plate 9, fig. 16). (This is drawn only schematically.) No one is concerned to make what is worn round the waist show by its design that there is something above it and something below.⁴

Nor should one overlook the fact that the belt has to be closed. The forms to the left and right of the place where it is fastened should likewise be metamorphosed in accordance with the latter—if possible in symmetry with it.

Steiner also spoke of the metamorphoses relating to the dark and light coloring of the single parts of a whole garment. He said: “[T]he garment should be lighter towards the top and darker towards the bottom. Here it should relate to the earth, and be made heavy and dark in contrast to the upper realms of air and light.”⁵ On another occasion he said that it is beneficial to keep a garment symmetrical to the central vertical line at the front.⁶

Taking these indications from Steiner as a whole, one could perhaps say that “metamorphosis is required in the vertical direction from the top downwards, while symmetry is a principle relating more to the central line at the front of the garment,” though this should of course not be taken in any dogmatic way. If one compares, for example, the two figures Sophia and Estella in *The Portal of Initiation* by Steiner, one will see how their costumes are made to correspond to their soul-spiritual natures. But both garments—Sophia's peach-blossom stole, which becomes darker towards the bottom, and Estella's smart, asymmetrical dress of a lighter green—express a truth.

The Modeling of Hats

Steiner also made observations from time to time regarding the shape and decoration of hats, and we should like, as far as memory allows, to reproduce some of them here. It was in the years before World War I (from 1909–1912) that the Mystery Dramas were being performed in Munich. Not only was the scenery designed under his direction, but he also gave indications, down to particular details of form and color, for the garments and headgear of each individual character in his plays. He is even said to have given practical assistance when something was going wrong in the making of them.

But in quite other connections too, remarks were made by him at that time regarding women's hats in general. He said that a hat should sit firmly on the head as though held by

it, and that, if there is a brim, a gentle transition should be made from it to the part of the hat close to the head. This was not at all obvious at that time, for since the 1890s fashion had displayed all kinds of curiosities, for example, hats not sitting firmly on the head, but rather lying on top of it, and which, if they were to stay on, had to be fixed to the hair with a long pin. One could also see stiffened hat brims which had been ironed off at a sharp right angle to a similarly stiff crown. By way of decoration of the hats, there was for a time a fashion for bows pointing gaily in an upward direction, and seeming to want to make the hat fly off into the air. But Steiner expected the form and trimming of a hat to be in keeping with its function. They should express the fact that the hat is placed from above downwards on to the head: It bears a similar relation to the head as the roof to a house.

Before the 1914–1918 war the painter Frl. v. E. made herself a summer hat that was both meaningfully designed in the above sense and pleasing to the eye. Loops of ribbon were arranged rhythmically around the hat and flowed down on to a soft, wide brim.

In Berlin Steiner made a humorous criticism of a lady's enormous hat, and added that head and hat should be related according to the Golden Mean. On another occasion he suggested that we should study the way in which Spanish women arrange their headgear. An elderly lady, Miss L., had made herself a head covering having something of this character. It consisted mainly of a large piece of soft material surrounding head and forehead from above, held together behind, and allowed to fall down over the back in gentle folds. The whole thing was sewn on to a soft but firm cap corresponding to the shape of the head. The form and decoration of this hat, though designed in a completely individual way, had been inspired by a model which Frau Helene Kober had made and discussed with Dr. Steiner. It should be added that, as regards symmetry, the same principles apply as were stated with respect to a dress.

ENDNOTES

1. Lecture 7.
2. Lecture 4.
3. *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, Oxford, 1922.
4. Not quite the same as official version [H.H.]. (See *Kingdom of Childhood*, lecture 7.)
5. Shoes too, which are in contact with the ground, should be darker.
6. See chapter XII.

CHAPTER XI

COLOR IN CLOTHING AND INTERIOR DECORATION

Steiner's work has not only opened new possibilities of form in the artistic sphere; by carrying the Goethean theory of color to its highest perfection through his own research, he developed a new color teaching which gives the soul of the human being a new experience of the world of color, and new possibilities of its application in earthly existence.¹ The following examples will show how realistically and meaningfully Steiner wished to see colors applied in the world of external appearance.

We shall begin with the Mystery Dramas, which were first produced in Munich by Steiner himself in such a way that everything, down to the smallest thing on the stage, was given a living artistic form. All the colors chosen for the costumes worn in the Mystery Plays were intended to reveal the inner nature of the character concerned and his relationship to the spiritual world. This was true not only of the women's but also of the men's costumes.

In the course on Speech and Drama held a few months before his death, Steiner also gave extensive indications concerning the artistic designing of stage decor. But what he says has implications for the other arts too, and for everyday life.

Art is what the stage must now rediscover. The art of the stage has become no art—though continually sought after; for, after all, does not everyone still love to see a play? What we must learn to do is to bring art into our thinking, so that when we give our attention to any aspect whatever of the work of the stage, we do so from the standpoint of art.²

Steiner achieved this, in association with his gifted coworker Frau Marie Steiner. Formerly in Munich, and now in Dornach there is a place where the human being can be purified and strengthened through an art born of beauty and truth, and can share in the great human task begun by Steiner, be it only in the most humble way, wherever his destiny may have placed him.

From the dramatic art in Dornach life-giving streams can flow into all other arts and crafts. And much of what Steiner has given as a course of training for students of drama will be able to help students in other artistic fields to extend and develop their capacities. One might mention as an example the experiencing of the rainbow.

The student must find his way, through the heavenly miracle of the rainbow, into a deep inner soul experience of color ... I can really tell you of nothing that will help you so well to develop a sensitive feeling for stage decor as will the rainbow. Give yourselves up in reverent devotion to the rainbow, and it will develop in you a remarkably true eye for stage setting, and moreover

the inner ability to compose it. The rainbow ... I feel within me a mood of prayer: That is how the rainbow begins, in the most intense violet that goes shimmering out and out into immeasurable distances. The violet goes over into blue—the restful quiet mood of the soul. That again goes over into green. When we look up to the green arc of the rainbow, it is as though our soul were poured out over all the sprouting and blossoming of Nature's world. It is as though, in passing from violet and blue into green, we had come away from the gods to whom we were praying, and now in the green we are finding ourselves in a world that opens the door to wonder, opens the door to a sensitive sympathy and antipathy with all that is around us. If you have really drunk in the green of the rainbow, you are already on the way to understanding all the beings and things of the world. Then you pass on to yellow, and in yellow you feel firmly established in yourself, you feel you have the power to be Man in the midst of Nature—that is, to be something more than the rest of Nature around you. And when you go over to orange, then you feel your own warmth, the warmth that you carry within you; and at the same time you are made sensible of many a shortcoming in your character, and of good points too. Going on then to red, where the other edge of the rainbow passes once again into the vast distances of Nature, your soul will overflow with joy and exultation, with ardent devotion, and with love for all mankind.³

These words lead us in quite a magical way to an experience of living color. In the same lecture we hear how inner moods of soul can be experienced as colors:

You would see that the soul was living in red, in a red that positively shouts at you. When we look at the color red, we experience it from without. But were we able to glide right into the jubilant red that we see in that painting there on the wall, and feel how the painter himself must have felt whilst he was painting it, then we would see, shining there in the red, the radiantly happy soul that I described just now. A soul that is imbued more with a feeling of contentment with what has taken place, will live in a more tranquil red.

A soul that is deep sunk in thought lives in green, experiences green within. A soul that is wrapt in prayer lives in violet, and a soul that is brimming over with love experiences a pure and quiet red. A soul that is eaten up with egotism experiences streaks and splashes of yellow-green. And so on, and so on. Every possible experience without has its corresponding experience within.

After giving these indications Steiner described how, out of a mood arising at a certain moment, the individual characters on the stage can be experienced in color. He illustrated this by showing how the different personalities represented in Hamerling's *Danton and Robespierre*, a play he had discussed earlier in some detail, should be dressed. "You should then be seeing there before you on the stage the inner soul experiences of the various characters. Then too will the decor receive at last its style."⁴

In a similar way he indicated, after a reading by Frau Dr. Steiner of various scenes from Schiller's drama, the colors that would be required for the costumes of the two queens, Elizabeth and Mary.

Black should appear on the stage only in the rare cases where it is justified from an artistic point of view. As a matter of fact, on the stage, black obliterates itself, makes a void. Devils, or beings of such ilk, we can allow to appear in black, but we ought never to think of using black for any other purpose. Mary will have to be dressed in dark violet. Her color should be chosen first. (For the achievement of style, it is always important to know where to begin.) Then, with Mary in violet, you cannot do otherwise than choose for Elizabeth a dress of reddish-yellow color; and the colors of the other characters will be gradually shaded as taste requires.

Working in this way, you will get your picture. And you will see, your audience will understand it. Provided it has been faithfully built up on these lines the picture will make its appeal.⁵

These lectures can be of great help for the painting of landscapes for the stage, and also for "decoration" and "style."

But stage decor is not finished. It is only finished when it is illuminated by the stage lighting. And not even then; it receives its final touch when we are looking at it together with what happens on the stage. Not until the play is being enacted is the stage decor complete. This means that it will have to depend for its style, not on form and line, but on color and lighting. If you want to plan your scene so that the whole decor adds just what the actor needs, giving him the exactly right surrounding for his art, then you will have to center your attention on the play of light and color.

On the basis of these suggestions for the stage, easy access can be found to all that Steiner has said about colors and their relation to clothing, interior decoration and other things of everyday life.

The point is, we must know how to surrender our whole soul to the message of color. Then, in approaching red, we shall feel something aggressive towards ourselves, something that attacks us. Red seems to "come for" us. If all ladies went about the streets in red, anyone with a fine feeling for color might inwardly believe that they might fall upon him, on account of their red clothes. Blue, on the contrary, has something in it which goes away from us, which leaves us looking after it with a certain sadness, perhaps even with a kind of longing.⁶

We should like to take the following extract from the lecture given on February 17, 1918, on "The Sensible-Supersensible and Its Realization in Art":

I want to say this: If I should enter somebody's dining room and find people eating there from plates which had a red glaze, it would give me the impression that these were people who wanted to enjoy their food like real gourmets. But if I saw them eating from blue plates, then I would think they were not gourmets but just hungry people wanting to satisfy their appetite. Somebody else might have another impression, but that is not what matters. What matters is, that everything one meets in life seems to have an aesthetic effect on one. This forms itself into a sort of faint imagination or vision. Illusions can play into this a good deal, of course. That does not matter. Even if it is not generally true that a party of people eating from plates which are colored red must necessarily be a crowd of gourmets, from an aesthetic point of view it still holds true. In the same way one could say that if somebody receives me in a red room and stands there in front of me without saying a word, being a really dull sort of person, I feel like saying: "He really lies by receiving me in this red room, because it makes me expect somebody there who has a lot to say to me and doesn't let me talk all the time." It makes him look as if he were deceiving me—his way of living seems a lie to me.

On a visit to the Waldorf School, Steiner said, speaking about a tea cozy: "Such an object ought to have a lot of red in it, so that one can see that it is to keep something warm." More indications can be found in the "Color" lectures. We read there:

If for instance you think of green, you can easily think of green card tables. Because a game is a limited, pedantic activity, something very philistine, one can think of such an arrangement—a room with card tables covered with green. What I mean is that it would be enough to make you run away if you were invited to play cards on a mauve table. On the other hand a lilac-colored room or a room furnished throughout in mauve would lend itself very well, shall we say, to mystical conversation—in the best and in the worst sense. It is true, colors in this respect are not antimoral but amoral. Thus we note that by virtue of its own nature, color has an inner character; whereas green allows itself to be defined, lilac, peach or flesh color tends to spread into vagueness.⁷

In his remarks about the red and the lilac-colored rooms, Steiner is suggesting the mood that one can receive into oneself on entering a room which is decorated in a certain color. But he not only made various statements on the subject; he himself created colored interiors—apart from those of the stage—such as the rooms for meetings of the Anthroposophical Society, and showed in practice how the darker color blue is more conducive to a mood of inwardness or reverence than red, which is more suitable for artistic activities. In the Waldorf school Steiner indicated for the classrooms colors that would correspond to the children's ages and phases of development. For crafts he suggested orange, and for handwork a light violet in which red predominates. As bookbinding belongs to handwork, the room in which it is done should also be of this color. Where local factors

made it necessary, he would occasionally recommend for Steiner schools in other towns different colors from those in the Stuttgart school.

He also gave quite definite indications concerning the “artistic arrangement” of the rooms. But he put it forward as an ideal that the artistic arrangement should really arise out of the anthroposophical pedagogy itself. For handwork and craft rooms he made the following suggestions:

For handwork rooms, interiors should be used which give special emphasis to the soul-element. The craft room should be decorated with artistically executed motifs from everyday life and from the crafts, so that one has on the walls something that receives with a certain sympathy all that is done in these rooms. This would apply to spinning too.⁸

Steiner insisted repeatedly upon the educational value of color. The following remarks about painting illustrate the point particularly clearly. Steiner showed how, if he works artistically, the teacher can use color in an extremely beneficial way, namely by “individualizing from child to child within the world of color.” In his Oxford lecture cycle he showed how children can be educated through painting. He spoke of a child in whom

what we give him cannot escape into the rest of his organism ... If I have such a child, I shall use colors and paint with him quite differently from another ... whose ideas, far from sticking in his head, escape through his head as through a sieve; in him everything goes into the body, and the child grasps nothing because his head is really like a sieve.⁹

Steiner went on to describe in detail the painting exercises that should be used with these children.

In the field of medicine Steiner showed various doctors of the Anthroposophical Society new ways of applying color for healing. He indicated to parents and teachers that certain colors can have a beneficial and healing effect upon overactive children, and others upon those who have the opposite tendency.

A few more examples may be given. A nervous, that is to say, excitable child, should be treated differently as regards environment from one who is quiet and lethargic. Everything should come into consideration, from the color of the room and of the various objects that are generally around the child, to the color of the clothes in which he is dressed. One will often do the wrong thing if one does not take guidance from spiritual knowledge. For in many cases the materialistic idea will hit on the exact reverse of what is right. An excitable child should be surrounded and dressed in red or reddish-yellow colors, whereas for a lethargic child one should have recourse to blue or bluish-green shades of color. For the important thing is the complementary color which is created within the child. In the case of red, it is green, and in the case of blue, orange-yellow, as may easily be seen by looking for a time at a red or blue surface.

The physical organs of the child create this contrary or complementary color, and it is this which brings about the corresponding organic structures which the child needs. If an excitable child has a red color around him, he will inwardly create the opposite, the green. And this activity of creating green has a calming effect. The organs assume a tendency to calmness.¹⁰

(The above should also be considered in connection with handwork.)

There is no limit to what Steiner has revealed concerning the nature of color in his writings and lectures. The human soul comes to a new relationship to nature and to art if it so receives Steiner's color teaching that it becomes a living experience. Then we can learn to appreciate how the Old Masters, through the inner knowledge of color that they still possessed, were able to bring the supersensible to expression in the sensible in such a way that the spiritual reality of what was represented in their pictures can be experienced even today, if we look at them in the right mood of reverence.¹¹ Spiritual beings visit us on the wings of color and connect us with a divine world.

In the ritual forming part of the religious sacraments as restored through the insight of Steiner, the color of the priests' vestments and of the altar cloths changes according to the seasons and the Christian festivals, thus bringing to outer expression the inner mood prevailing at these times of the year. The language spoken by these colors could not be plainer. There emanates from them a mood of consecration, of healing and of beauty. And in beauty the human soul experiences spiritual reality in earthly form.

Steiner said of clothing in general: "The real purpose of clothing is to make the human being beautiful."¹² Thus it should also lead him to an experience of the fact that not only his soul-spiritual members but also his physical body is of divine origin. The human being should so choose his clothing that it is a worthy expression of his divine nature. Special light is thrown on this by the following remark of Steiner: "Our connection with the spirit is broken if it is not sustained through the medium of beauty. Beauty connects the 'I' to the body."¹³

ENDNOTES

1. *Color*, Parts I, II, III.
2. "Speech and Drama," lecture 14, Dornach, 1823.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., lecture 12.
6. *Color*, Part III, Dornach, July 26, 1914.
7. *Color*, Part I, lecture 2, Dornach, 1921.
8. Teachers' Conference, Stuttgart, January 31, 1923.
9. *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, lecture 6, Oxford, August 1922.
10. *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy*.
11. *Color*, Part I, end of lectures 2 and 3.
12. From a lecture in Dornach, August 27, 1915.
13. From a notebook of Rudolf Steiner, 1918 (Published in "Das Goetheanum," Vol. XII, No. 14).

CHAPTER XII

THE HISTORY OF THE ART OF CLOTHING

Steiner gave important indications concerning the origin of color and the art of clothing.¹ He described how the art of clothing, like the human being himself, has its origin in the world of the Spirit, and how primeval man brought to visible expression in his clothing memories of what he had experienced in the spiritual world before birth. In a lecture given at Dornach on June 1, 1923, he said:

[B]efore birth the human being lives in a world of light, color and sound permeated with soul and spirit. It is a world of qualities, of intensities, not of quantities, of extension ... Man comes down to the earth and feels: "I, who, as a human being, bring something down with me from the spiritual world, am not at all in harmony with that which enters my physical body from the earthly environment. Therefore I must do something to adapt myself to it." And so he brings down from the spiritual world the color of his clothing ...

Ancient forms of dress reflected the preference with regard to color and color harmony which men brought down with them from their pre-earthly life in the spiritual world. As memory of pre-earthly existence declined, the art of clothing became more and more dilettante.

If you observe how much delight in color is revealed in the clothing of really advanced primitive cultures, and how a culture very often displays a characteristic preference in its choice of colors, you will see that we have in the art of clothing a true and great art, an art through which the human being seeks to carry his pre-earthly existence into the earthly.²

In Adolf Rosenberg's comprehensive work, *Geschichte der Kostume* [The History of Costume], we learn how early man first covered himself with colored earth, then began to paint himself, rubbing paint into wounds which he had himself made so that it would be absorbed thoroughly into the skin. It was from such decoration that clothing gradually evolved. The painting of the body and tattooing now traditional amongst primitive peoples of the present day point back to these early tendencies of mankind.

In a lecture held in Dornach on August 27, 1915, Steiner referenced the Old Testament:

Consider how we are here told that until the time of the Luciferic temptation human beings went around naked. This is not to be taken to mean that, for their consciousness, they went about naked as one would go about naked now, but that previously they had seen the aura around the human being. Consequently they had not seen what one would see if a human being were

to walk around naked today; they saw him in a spiritual garment. The aura was his garment.

And when the state of innocence was taken from human beings, when they were condemned to a materialistic mode of life—when, in other words, they could no longer see the aura—they saw what they had not seen as long as the aura had been visible to them. And so they began to replace the aura with the garment. This is the origin of clothing: the replacement of the aura by a garment.³

In our materialistic age it is indeed a good thing to know that human beings first clothed themselves for no other reason than to imitate the aura in their clothing. In sacred rites this is very much the case, for here every article of clothing is an imitation of one part or another of the human aura. You will see in paintings by Raphael that the garments of such figures as Mary, Joseph and Mary Magdalene have colors which tend to recur. For example, you will often see Mary Magdalene, in paintings by those who were familiar with tradition or who still had some clairvoyance, depicted in yellow. The attempt is always made to find some correspondence to the aura of the individuality in question, for they possessed a consciousness enabling them to imitate the aura, to create an expression of the aura, in the clothing.

In this way clothing came into being whose archetypal form, the human aura, originated in a world of spirit to which the human being was able to feel his kinship through the way in which he clothed himself. It was a form of dress that stood in close relation to the true nature of the human being; one that had not lost its connection with the human being as is generally the case today. But Steiner did not only speak of the origin of clothing in relation to the single individual; he pointed also to the connections existing between the various peoples and their peculiar styles of dress.⁴

Even today you can go to areas whose inhabitants have preserved a characteristic mode of dress. There you may answer for yourselves the questions: “How have a number of souls found their way together here in the folk-community by virtue of the affinity which was theirs in pre-earthly life? How do they bring to expression in their dress what they had experienced together in the life before birth?” It was a memory of their appearance in the heavenly world that they wished to create in their clothing ...

You will often have to go back to ancient times to find forms of clothing that are really meaningful. For in those times there were not only painters, sculptors, and so forth, but true artists. The whole of human life was imbued with an artistic element. Raphael, for example, still had a living perception, or at least a living tradition, according to which the soul and spirit qualities an individual brings down from heaven to earth are expressed in his clothing.

This is what gives our dress its inner meaning. The individual of today will say: “Its purpose is to keep us warm.” This is no doubt its meaning from

a materialistic point of view, but artistic forms will never arise from such a conception. Artistic forms always arise through a relation to the spiritual. For the mysteries of life and the world merge of themselves into the element of Art.⁵

Fashion

Steiner explained to us how our clothing originates in the world of the spirit. But over the centuries the bond between the human being and his mode of dress that existed in ancient times loosened more and more until finally it dissolved altogether. If we now wish to seek for the powers which prevail in the sphere of human clothing today, we could well find them in all that goes by the name of “fashion.”

It would be of little use to attempt to give a date for the origin of what we call “fashion.” At the time of the Fall, human beings began to clothe and ornament themselves. Through the course of millennia, this was influenced by the Mysteries,⁶ under whose guidance the dress of the human being, the costumes of the various peoples, were fashioned in accordance with spiritual insight.

But with the Fall new soul qualities, such as vanity, love and hate began to appear in the human being and he now wished his own “personal” inclinations and instincts to play a part in determining his mode of dress. Thus ornament and dress gradually found their way from the sacred to the profane.

So it is at the point where mankind abandoned the old ties, where he left the Mysteries and these finally fall into oblivion, where personal desires and egotism come ever more to the fore, that traditional dress was replaced by fashion. It is connected with the change of consciousness in the human being, with the loosening, required by his development, of the bonds with the spiritual world. The latter ceased to be a determining factor because the human being could no longer perceive the aura.

Whereas the fact that they had their source in spiritual perception lent a quality of permanence to the styles of dress worn by the ancient peoples, “fashion,” like the moods of the human being, is subject to constant variation. It can be seen how its path would at times cross those of traditional costume, or how they would both play one into the other. “Costume” accompanies a people or an age through the course of its development, changing its forms in accordance with this; it then disappears at the close of a certain period of time. “Fashion,” on the other hand, is caught up in perpetual change, and hurries, quite regardless of rules and time-honored customs, into ever new forms and metamorphoses.⁷ Sometimes it can seem to be no more than a playful child of fantasy, but at other times it seems to rise up from dark demonic sources and causes the human being to forget his spiritual origin.

Though in ancient times it affected human life and customs only to a slight extent, fashion has been growing right up to the present day and has gained in strength in proportion as the human being has lost his connection with the spiritual world. It has advanced down the centuries at an ever-quickenning pace, continually changing. As early as

the fourteenth century, so we read in the Limburg *Chronicle*, fashion was changing so fast that even the tailors could not keep pace with it: “Styles of dress in these parts have changed so much in so short a time that men who were once good tailors are now good for nothing.” What would the chronicler have to say about the tempo in our days?

Through the growth of fashion, clothing lost more and more its connection with the soul-nature of a people or a community. In 1918 Max v. Boehn characterized it thus: “It has turned the real purpose behind the art of clothing completely upside-down; through fashion dress has become an end in itself and exists quite independently of any hygienic or aesthetic considerations.”⁸ But the human being has fallen into its clutches and is subject to powers which, since losing his connection with the spiritual world, he is unable to recognize. This problem too has been illuminated by Steiner. In a lecture given in Munich, he first described the true nature and origin of phantoms, ghosts and demons, and then went on to say:⁹

Demons arise because human beings do not approach one another in a frame of mind which one might characterize as follows: “I will tell others what I think, but I must leave it to them to decide whether to agree with me or not.”

At card tables, social evenings, tea parties and so forth, hundreds of demons of all kinds are called into existence, for at such gatherings we seldom find a mentality based on inner tolerance, but rather one which induces people to say to themselves: “If you do not agree with me, you are a fool.”

Thus human life actually calls spiritual beings into existence in the spiritual world. And all these beings—phantoms, specters and demons—have, in their turn, an influence upon the human being. Just think: Whenever this or that prejudice prevails epidemically, as it were, in our environment, whenever some foolish fashion suddenly arises, this is caused by the demons brought into existence by the human being, demons who thereby hinder the straight course of human progress and development. These beings created by mankind are constantly flitting and weaving about him.

We hinder our own progress through the fact that we can be creative in the spiritual world in this way. We must realize that everything we think or feel can produce effects of as great a significance as those produced by the firing of a gun. The latter may have terrible consequences, and is considered to be the more dangerous thing, simply because our ordinary senses are able to perceive the effects, whereas in the case of thoughts and emotions, we cannot perceive them.¹⁰

Fashion has conquered nearly the entire world in the course of the last few centuries, while the costumes of the peoples have receded more and more into the background and today lead a merely traditional existence of more or less historical value. Their original life is extinguished, though it still survives to a certain extent among those tribes and peoples who have preserved the connection with their old folk-spirituality through not having been caught up in the turmoil of modern civilization.

If one looks at the costumes reproduced in Rosenberg's *The History of Costume*, the changes that have taken place over the centuries among the various people can be clearly seen. These pictures show also how different peoples have influenced each other and how, in this way, quite new forms have been able to arise in the art of clothing.

If we consider fashion in our own time, we shall find that many influences play into it from old historical costumes, for example, from Egypt and Rome, or even from medieval knighthood. Much material could be collected to substantiate this. But over the last fifty years fashion has become almost entirely a creature of industry—commercial enterprise has taken control of it in order to make out of it as much money as possible. The individual of today accepts the dictates of fashion with their underlying principle of advantage to the producer, and cannot but feel himself to be its slave, for he can never completely escape its universal influence.

Fashion generally changes most quickly where there is great luxury to keep the wheels of industry turning. The influence of fashion upon judgment and taste is very strong indeed; we sacrifice to it our sense of decency, comfort and beauty without noticing the hold it has upon us.¹¹

Readymade garments nowadays constitute most of the clothing of a large part of mankind. The extremes to which this is carried could be seen some time ago in a German illustrated magazine which gave a report on the flooding of the English market with a sort of "European uniform" from Russia. Thus the same Eastern influence can be traced in the sphere of clothing as was described in connection with the rows of houses painted a uniform grey.¹² The tendency to bring about a uniformity stifles all creative soul-forces in the human being and leads finally to the death of art and of all individual human work. Such enterprises of mass production even bring our mobile, ever-changing fashions to a standstill.

Steiner characterized a further tendency of our age (Dornach, August 27, 1915). After recalling the fact that in ancient times men strove to imitate the aura in their clothes, he went on to say:

It is a characteristic aberration of our materialistic age that in certain circles it should be considered an ideal to do away with clothing altogether—for materialism is everywhere carried to its logical conclusion—and to advocate the cult of nudism, on the grounds that it is an extremely healthy practice. There is even a periodical that promotes such things and calls itself "Beauty."

This periodical is based on a completely false notion. It thinks that it stands for something quite unlike the crudest, the most blatant materialism. It believes that it sees reality in all that external, sense-perceptible nature presents to us as real, while in fact clothing arose out of a striving to preserve, as far as is possible in ordinary life, that state of consciousness in which the aura of the human being can be seen. The question arises, therefore, as to the origin of the tendency in our time to strive for the elimination of clothing.

It is a complete lack of an imaginative sense for dress. We should not see anything of an ideal nature in this tendency, but rather a lack of fantasy, of any sense of beauty. For clothing is actually meant to make the human being beautiful, and to see beauty only in the naked body would mean that the instinct of our age is a materialistic one.¹³

The Art of Clothing in the Past and in the Future

Plate 10

Let us consider the development of the art of clothing from yet another point of view. If we study the clothing in the centuries before and after Christ, taking note of the purely formal element constituted by the lines—that is to say, with special reference to the horizontal and vertical, and to symmetry and asymmetry—we can be struck by the fact that the clothing of preChristian times displays no marked symmetry in relation to the central vertical line of the body, nor does it place any special emphasis on a vertical line in the dress. We do not mean by this an emphasizing of the vertical direction through an expressive folding of the material itself—the plissé—which appears on ancient Babylonian signet cylinders (Plate 10, fig. 6) from the time of the Ur Dynasty (about 2300 BC)—or in single cases, such as the Attic female statuette in the Berlin Museum. Nor do we mean the central vertical line determined by the closing of a garment, or by some other practical consideration, as with the Ethiopians, whose garments are in any case too asymmetrical towards the upper part.¹⁴

For present purposes we are concerned with an emphasizing of the vertical by means of some kind of decoration, for example ribbons sewn on, or embroidery; just as the horizontal can be indicated by the sewing on of narrow ruffles, as we can see on the ancient Babylonian signet cylinders (figs. 1, 3, 6) and in other early works of art (figs. 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9). It is interesting in this connection to observe how the forms in architecture and clothing are related; for example, the step pyramids or step towers¹⁵ and the flounced skirt. Compare also the headgear of the Cretan figure (Plate 10, fig. 2) with the Tower of Samarra (fig. 2a), which was built in the spirit of this ancient period. This Cretan figure also illustrates the tendency among the ancient people to emphasize “roundness” in clothing in imitation of the rounded forms of the human body.

Strict symmetry of right and left, from the neck down to the feet, appears in antiquity only in individual cases; for example, in the above-mentioned Attic figure, or in the “Hera of Aegion in Achaia.” Asymmetry is the general rule, as we also find it is in the clothing of the ancient Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans.

Before we consider in more detail the garments of the Greeks and Romans, we should like to quote a remark of Steiner’s concerning the fundamental difference between Greek and Roman dress:

Under the influence of Augustus something came about in Rome which was altogether different from what had once lived in Greece. However much the Roman garments may have resembled the Greek, the Roman toga was not worn as a Greek wore his clothes, feeling them to be a part of himself. It had become something much more superficial, a way of decorating oneself for the world outside. One can even see a reflection of the established cult of the times in the ordered folds of the toga, which would never have appeared in a Greek garment—just as there is a tremendous difference between the stuttering Demosthenes, who, nevertheless, expressed the Greek spirit exceedingly well, and the Roman orator who adhered so carefully to all the rules of rhetoric in choosing his words and constructing his sentences.¹⁶

Although one cannot, in general, speak of symmetrical clothing in ancient Greece, the fact should not be overlooked that garments were often given inwoven, attached, or embroidered trimmings, an industry whose home was in Babylon and Phrygia. Such trimmings ran parallel to the seams of a garment—of the *chiton*, for example—or on either side of them, from the waist downwards (in about the same position as the seams of our women's skirts) or sometimes ran from the neck down to the lower edge of the garment. These vertical trimmings correspond to the *clavus* of the Romans.¹⁷

According to Rosenberg, in an earlier period the toga was the only garment worn by the Romans, the tunic being added later as underclothing. It was a privilege of senators to wear on the front of the tunic a wide purple stripe (*clavus latus*), descending from the neck to the lower hem. Several tunics were worn one on top of the other as protection against the cold. When two tunics were worn, it was usual for both men and for women to wear the long pleated outer tunic, or *stola*, which they shortened by pulling it out over the belt. One of these two garments was provided with sleeves. According to Hottenroth,¹⁸ the imperial tunic was also called the *dalmatica*. This garment of Dalmatian origin—a long tunic with wide sleeves and with or without a belt—referred to by Max von Boehn as “the luxury garment of declining antiquity,” was worn by the emperors from Diocletian onwards and introduced in 320 as the official attire of Christian deacons. The *dalmatica* was also part of the attire of the Holy Roman Emperors, who before their coronation were ordained as deacons. The long ornamental trimmings, the *claves*, extending from the shoulder to the lower edge of the garment, gave it a very special stamp. Originally the *claves*, which could vary in width, were reserved for Romans of special rank, but in Imperial Rome they were also worn by, for example, the young sons of patrician families.¹⁹

The *dalmatica* is wonderfully depicted in early Christian times on the walls of the catacombs, on which the first Christians represented their dead and sometimes the Madonna clothed in this garment with its vertical *claves* in symmetrical arrangement. If one compares this richly ornamented but, in itself, quite simple garment with the sumptuous asymmetrical clothing of the earlier citizen of Rome, one can see in it the expression of a new age.

Although it was already prepared in Greece, it was not until the close of antiquity, after its gradual development in Roman times, that this garment took on the expressive form in which we see it in the early Christian era. World-historical events are always reflected in the artistic creations of mankind. In art and in the crafts, and, as we have seen above, in clothing too, the inner and outer experience of the human being reveals itself. So one feels impelled to ask: What was taking place in history at the time when the old Roman garment was superseded by a new one? It was at the time of the first Roman Emperor that Christianity entered into world history.

Through the spiritual nature of Christianity, a special lighting-up of consciousness was able to take place in mankind through the course of the centuries. The significance of this change as reflected in the development of philosophy has been described by Steiner in his book *Riddles of Philosophy*, as well as in many other books and lectures. Through Christianity souls were acquiring the capacity to win back in freedom and independence, and with ever-increasing clarity of consciousness, the connection with the spiritual world which they had lost as the Mysteries which had once guided them fell into decline. To the human being was given the possibility of a new experience of the "I." It is the Christ who gives the impulse enabling all men—each as a separate individual—to experience the "I am."²⁰ All that went before was a preparation for this development of consciousness of selfhood, of the "I am."

This development is reflected in many different ways in Christian art. Feelings, sensations and thoughts can find their outer expression in color. Can we not feel a simple vertical line, by contrast with a curved or horizontal one, to be an expression of the force of uprightness in the human being? Does not such a line connect the human being with the heights of the Cosmos?

If we learn to cultivate an inner experience of the dynamics of lines and forms, a deeper understanding of them awakens in us. And then it should be possible for us to gain an insight into the remarkable occurrence of the vertical ornamental line of the garments of the early Christian era. The *claves* would seem to be a confirmation of the profound inner experience that souls were undergoing with a greater or lesser degree of consciousness. Here one can feel how the human garment has been given an artistic form which speaks of the experience of standing firmly on the earth and, at the same time, of looking upwards to a divine world. Thus the new age created for itself a new form, even to the style of dress.

It is worth noting in this connection that Roman civilization did not transform its old garment, the toga, on its entry into the new era, but rather, at the moment of reception of the Christian Ego-impulse, replaced the Etruscan, that is to say the Eastern, Asiatic toga, with the *dalmatica*, which came from an old European people, the Illyrians. The Dalmatians were descendants of the Illyrians, an old European, not an Asiatic, people. Dalmatia was a part of Illyria.

It will very often be found that what the divine worlds wish to accomplish in their guidance of mankind is reflected in early works of art, and that these, by foreshadowing what

is to come, point the way that mankind must follow. Thus the Bearded Sphinx of Tanis (Plate 10, fig. 10) cannot but make a striking impression on anyone who has an eye for such things. The body of the sphinx reclines on the ground behind, while at the front it rises upwards in two verticals, and this effect is intensified by the vertical in the beard. The character of ego-affirmation in the vertical thrust is, as it were, a call to the human being to overcome the animal body and to strengthen himself to ascend to true humanity. Here too there appears in the vertical line the force of the erect which gives the human being the power to take hold of his ego. The same strong impression can be purveyed by the Winged Bull of Khorsabad.²¹ Here the vertical is particularly pronounced in beard and headdress, which together with the hairstyle, is the part of the human body in which the vertical first appears among these ancient peoples.

If we attempt to trace further the evolution of this early Christian garment, the dalmatica with its two claves or one broad clavus in the middle, we shall be led from here directly to the dress of the medieval Orders and of Knighthood. Not through historical investigation, but through becoming aware of the reappearance here and there of similar lines and forms, the monk's habit with the "stole" can be identified as a further development of the garment that appeared in early Christianity. In the scapula the two claves are grown together with the vertical field separating them to form a single piece which is then detached from its background and connected on the shoulders to a similar piece behind. This scapula (stole), usually worn with a belt, thus forming a cross, was elaborated in individual ways by the different monastic Orders. Thus we see how Christianity continued with a form of dress in which symmetry is used to emphasize the vertical in a most expressive way.

Rosenberg says of the dress of the Benedictine Order, which was founded in 529 AD on Monte Cassino in Latium, that it was "copied from that of the early Christian priesthood. It was thus through the Benedictines who elaborated this basic design that it was handed down to the other Orders and survives to the present day." And in fact one finds the stole in Europe down through the centuries, not only in the monk's habit, but also in the costly attire of high dignitaries of the Church and even of secular rulers, right up to kings, emperors and empresses.

Out of the powerful Benedictine Order there arose, about five hundred years later, the Order of the Cistercians. The center from which the Cistercian Order spread was the Monastery of Citeaux in France. These monks wore a white, or rather, grey, tunic of undyed wool, with a black stole.²²

A connection was made with this garment by Steiner when he created the costumes for his Mystery Dramas. He told how, when the question arose regarding suitable costumes for his female characters, it occurred to him that it should be something similar to the habit of the Cistercians. Thus in a modified form and with splendid colors—stole and belt often of different colors, but usually darker than the rest of the garment—there arose between 1909 and 1912 the impressive and eloquently colored costumes of the Mystery Dramas.

Some elements in the style of dress on the stage influenced the audience, until at the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, fashion took hold of it and stole-dresses appeared in public life. Without regard to their source these forms were popularized until they soon lost their original character (the belt, for example, falling right down to the hips) and finally disappeared from the world of women's clothing altogether.

If we seek in preChristian times for forms of clothing which resemble these stole-garments and which could even, as it were, have anticipated them, we can find intimations of them amongst the Hebrews in the *ephod*, which, following the Mosaic law, was decorated with a tassel at each of its four corners.²³ A shoulder garment of this kind, consisting of two pieces, was worn by the Jewish High Priest. There is also a picture of the last Persian King who is shown dressed in a purple garment of which the following is said: "The King alone wore in front a broad white stripe which remained throughout his reign the symbol of kingly authority."²⁴ It is remarkable to find these stole-like forms among the ancient Persians and Jews, both of whom, as Steiner has often described, prepared the way for Christianity.

Although the stole-garment created by Steiner has now disappeared from the world of fashion, it lives on in the Mystery Plays at the Goetheanum in Dornach. When these plays were first performed in Munich, Steiner gave these garments a very strict form, the body being covered all the way from the neck to the hands. He remarked that there would come a time when the painting of the nude would disappear and the only parts of the body that painters would wish to leave unclothed would be the head and hands. These words gain in significance through the knowledge, given to us by anthroposophy, that mankind will in the future win back in a new form the capacity to perceive the spiritual world, and thus also the human aura.²⁵

But the stole-garment will continue to be of importance not only on the stage. Elsewhere too there will always be individuals who find this a suitable garment for themselves and who will wear it, if only on special occasions. Being related through the form of such a garment to the dress worn by the early Christians, the wearer can feel inspired to meet the storms of life with courage and poise. As a picture of inner uprightness, this dress can also bring to expression, through the colors chosen, any of the temperaments, moods of seriousness or gaiety, or soul-qualities which the human being is still striving to attain. Thus its colors can bring about, or merely reflect, states of spirit and soul in the human being, just as we indicated with respect to stage costumes.²⁶

A question arising naturally from these remarks would be the following: How could a style of clothing be evolved for the human being now and in the future, which is truly contemporary where color and form are concerned? Could there not arise an art of clothing that is at once new and capable of further development? The answer can be found if we recall Steiner's remark about dress, that artistic forms can arise only through a relation to the spirit and that this relation must be rediscovered if we wish to enter again the realm of the truly artistic.

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1. Part of an ancient Babylonian cylinder-seal
2. Serpent priestess. Painted Cretan pottery figure (c. 1500 BC or 2000 BC).
- 2a. Tower of Samarra on the Tigris
3. Part of an ancient Babylonian cylinder-seal
4. Gold ring from Mycenae (from the 2nd millennium BC)
5. Part of the bas-relief from the Table of Law with Hammurabi, ancient Babylonian (c. 1920 BC)
6. Part of an ancient Babylonian cylinder-seal (the time of the Ur dynasty)
7. Part of a limestone bas-relief of Gudea, ancient Babylonian (Gudea, c. 2340 BC)
8. Bas-relief of King Anubanini's victory
9. Ancient Chaldean female statue
10. Granite sphinx from Tanis, Egypt
11. Fresco in the Vigna-Massimo catacomb (early AD)
12. Paenula, Roman (early AD)
13. Aristocratic lady in dalmatica with clavus stripes, Roman (early AD)
14. Representation of Mary with a Wise Man from the East, Roman (early AD)
15. Good Shepherd of the parable, Roman (early AD)
16. Man in tunic with broad center stripe



Through anthroposophy the road to the spirit has been made open to humanity in a new way, so that the creative human being is now enabled in freedom, and out of spiritual understanding, to give individual artistic form not only to the way he clothes his body in accordance with his spiritual nature, but also to the whole of his environment. The connection with the spirit enables the human being to become a creator of true culture, and thus he can bring into being, through selfless dedication to his earthly tasks, the new handicrafts whose seeds have been laid by Steiner in the indications given in this book, and which take their place beside all the other spiritual gifts he has made to humanity.

Whereas in earlier times the clothing arose out of a certain group-soul instinctiveness, in the future a human being, standing in freedom within the spirit, will be able, out of his own insight, to design his clothing artistically, and thus to overcome the authority wielded in the world by fashion. A new human community will evolve, whose inner relatedness in the spirit will come to expression in its outer dress.

It is not by accident that Steiner's indications concerning handicrafts are related to educational problems. The education of the growing human being is a great task of humanity, and one involving immense responsibility. For not only does the destiny of the individual depend upon a right education in childhood; the destinies of peoples and even of whole epochs can be determined by it. Steiner has shown us through spiritual knowledge the true path of education for the growing human being. The will to tread this path should be the basis for all other strivings in this sphere. For only then will those human beings arise who are able to bring to fulfillment all that Steiner has bequeathed to us in the form of tasks for the future. He knew that the future of the human race lay in the hands of education. And thus he said to the teachers and parents at the opening of the Free Waldorf School in Stuttgart on September 7, 1919:

All that we accomplish artistically is able to attain to its highest flowering if we can channel it into the greatest art of all—that art in which we are handling not dead materials like tone and color, but that art in which the living human being is handed over to us in an incomplete state and in which our task is to bring him, through an artistic education, to a certain degree of completion.

ENDNOTES

1. June 14, 1908; August 27, 1915; and June 1–2, 1923.
2. This and the two following quotations are not given literally.
3. This is not in contradiction to an earlier statement, for human beings also experience each other through their aura in the life before birth. (See *Theosophy*, chapter VI.)
4. "The Art of Clothing," Dornach, June 1, 1923. Here not given quite literally.
5. Ibid.
6. Steiner has given information concerning the nature of the Mysteries in numerous lectures and writings. He speaks of how the priest-sages were the guardians of a higher wisdom through which

mankind was led and guided in ancient times. It is in this wisdom that art, science and religion have their origins. (See also *Christianity as Mystical Fact*.)

7. We are not entering here into the question of style and its development.
8. This remark and the quotation from the Limburg *Chronicle* are taken from Max von Boehn's *Bekleidungskunst und Mode*, 1918.
9. Munich, June 14, 1908 (not a literal quotation).
10. Munich, June 14, 1908.
11. *Universal-Lexicon* by H.A. Pierer, 2nd edition.
12. See chapter II.
13. Not a verbatim quotation.
14. The statements of Steiner's concerning the development of clothing contain no reference to the role of horizontal and vertical. The author bears full responsibility for the treatment of it in this chapter.
15. E.g. the step pyramids at Sakkara and at Medum (Springer); also the step tower of Khorsabad (Woermann), or the Tower of Babylon, consisting, according to Rawlinson, of seven steps (Jeremias). The spiral occurring often in buildings and clothing probably represents the movement of the sun. Alfred Jeremias says: "The idea of seven heavens is the most prevalent. In Babylon this is attested since Sumerian times by the pyramid with seven steps ... The conception of seven heavens is derived from the movement of the seven planets. The daily course of the sun is seen as a curve forming part of a circle; in the course of a year the observer sees the sun moving in a rising and descending spiral. The two ideas combined give rise to the conception of a mountain or tower on which a spiral rises and descends. The same picture can be derived from observation of the moon's movements."
16. From a lecture given in Dornach, October 13, 1918.
17. *Das Leben der Griechen und Römer* by Erns Guhl and Wilhelm Koner.
18. *Trachten* [Costumes] by F. Hottenroth, I, 1884.
19. *Geschichte der Kostüme* by Adolf Rosenberg.
20. See Rudolf Steiner, *The Gospel of St John*, Hamburg, May 1908, lecture 3.
21. In the Louvre (Woermann). See also the portal vestments of Khorsabad (Springer), or the three gods on a boundary stone in Asia Minor; also the god Raman of Babylon (Jeremias).
22. *Orders and Congregations of the Catholic Church* by Dr. Max Heimbucher.
23. Op. cit., Hottenroth.
24. Kretschmer, *Die Trachten der Völker*.
25. See *Theosophie* by Rudolf Steiner.
26. Chapter XI.

APPENDIX I

THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF MAKING ANIMALS IN SOFT HANDWORK

It has become customary at the Waldorf school to call needlework and the crafts “soft” and “hard” handwork respectively. This points to an important difference between the two fields of activity, the full extent of which one can realize only as time goes on. It is not only that different materials are used, but that through working with these materials quite different soul-forces in the child are awakened and brought into activity. And although the educational value of the two activities can be said to lie in separate spheres, they complement each other in a wonderful way and often flow together or overlap, owing to the great variety of things that can be made in both soft and hard handwork.

To begin with, let us see in what ways they are different. We have taken as our example the animal, which is shaped in wood in hard handwork and in soft handwork is first sewn together out of flat pieces of material and then receives its form from within outwards through stuffing. In hard handwork we are dealing with wood. We hammer, plane, carve, and so forth. Here strong forces of will make use of the limbs of the child to work creatively upon the outer world. In soft handwork the spun and woven materials are handled with great care. The bright colors bring joy to the heart and the senses, and the child tries with loving understanding to bring them into relation one with another. Soul-forces of a feeling nature are active here. They are connected not with the limbs but with the streaming of blood and breath in the breast region of the human being, and thus the hands are used only as a means of bringing to outer manifestation what is experienced inwardly.

Just as a living stream of water forms and changes the rock from outside, so does the living will, working at the wood from outside, create out of the life-forces the work of art, the animal. Life-forces stream to the human being from the Cosmos; soul-forces take hold of him inwardly and give form to the body from within outwards.

Just as soul and spirit are working creatively in the human being when, between the ages of seven and fourteen, they mold and ensoul the physical body and its organs from within, so does the child work upon the animal in the handwork lesson, stuffing it to give it form from within outwards. The animal is also, as it were, ensouled by the child in this way. It is often quite astonishing to see how the child brings to expression his temperament, his own being, in the animal he makes, and we get, for example, not only choleric lions, but phlegmatic and melancholic ones. Wit and humor very frequently come out in the animals, which are nearly always the favorite toy of the child, even while they are still being made.

Dolls, too, belong to this sphere. “Let them make laughing dolls, dolls that express a soul-mood,” Steiner once said to us. The girls make both dolls and animals with great

enthusiasm, while boys generally prefer animals. At age nine to ten, when the natural history of the human being begins in the main lesson, it is possible for the children to shape their animals and dolls in a more conscious way. Before that time animal and doll forms arise entirely out of unconscious soul-regions.

Whereas in soft handwork the animal is ensouled, it is the living animal that comes about in hard handwork. Here the animal can move in a quite external way and often brings about very amusing effects through its movements, thus expressing also something of a soul nature.

Generally the soft animals, with their direct expression of feeling and their inimitably comic appearance, are not movable in the ordinary sense. But from within they are very much alive. If a child makes an elephant charging with upturned trunk, in the child's imagination the elephant is really running and swinging its trunk up and down. A toy of this kind which is imagined in constant living movement, will always arouse the child's fantasy to renewed activity. This works back in a plastic, formative way upon the brain. Such toys are more favorable to the child's development than many "beautiful" modern ones, whose effect in the end is to dull the brain, since their outer perfection leaves no room for any contribution from the side of the child's imagination.

In general far too little consideration has been given to the educational value of the children's making of the dolls and animals themselves. But other important things are involved too. For example, making clothes for a doll is the best preparation for the sewing of similar articles of clothing for themselves and others when the children are older. In this way they are led from play to useful work—and also to moral impulses. For dolls and animals are always taken into the children's loving care. This calls forth in the child that selfless love for the human being and for animals which can lead in later life to the finest social impulses.

So it is forces of feeling, of love, which are awakened in the child through soft handwork, and primarily forces of will which are developed in hard handwork. Eurythmy and gymnastics are related to each other in a similar way. Many further examples could be quoted to show how in the Waldorf school as much consideration is given to the education of feeling and will as to the training of the intellectual faculties, so that the whole human being, not the intellect alone, can come to full development.

Soft and hard handwork have as their aim the awakening of artistic feeling and creative ability. Artistic feeling, the love of beauty, favors growth in the soul of the child and builds up in him a sense for the true and a feeling for the good.

We should like to close this chapter by quoting from Steiner:

Joy in living, a love for all existence, energy for work—such are among the lifelong results of a right cultivation of the feeling for beauty and for art. The relationship of one human being to another, how noble, how beautiful it becomes under this influence! Again, the moral sense, which is also being formed in the child during these years through the pictures of life that are

placed before him, through the authorities to whom he looks up—this moral sense becomes assured, if the child out of his own sense of beauty feels the good to be at the same time beautiful, the bad to be at the same time ugly.¹

ENDNOTE

1. From *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy*.

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM CONFERENCES AT THE WALDORF SCHOOL, STUTTGART

Part I:

Kindergarten, Play, Left-handedness and Handwriting

Cutting-out: Picture Books with Moving Pictures in the Nursery Class

The question was asked whether cutting-out should be done in the Nursery Class.

Dr. Steiner: “If you get the children to make artificial things of this kind, you will discover that one child or another has some talent in this direction. There will not be many; the others have to be talked into it. If the things are pretty, they are pretty, but in themselves they are artificial. I would allow it to be done only if I saw that a child had a leaning that way—there are such children—but I would not introduce the work for its own sake.”

Dr. Steiner, after a further remark: “You mean cutting out and pasting? If you find that a child has a talent for making silhouettes, you can let him do it. But I would certainly not use Froebel methods.

“You will probably best occupy the children by getting them to make meaningful things with the most primitive materials. It could be anything—you must try by listening to find out what interests them. There are children, girls especially, for whom you can make dolls out of a handkerchief; the dolls write each other letters and the letters are delivered. You, or the children, can be the postman or the post office. The point is to make meaningful things with the crudest objects.

“And then at the time of the change of teeth, when the children are ready for it, they will want to represent something themselves—one will pretend to be a hare, and the other a dog—meaningful things that the children can perform in a dreamlike way. The principle of play, up to the change of teeth, consists in the child’s imitating things that have meaning—puppets and dolls. There can be a big Punch with a smaller one by his side—they need only be two pieces of wood. From the seventh year you introduce singing and dancing games, in which something is acted. Two can be a house; the others live in it. And the child stands inside it himself.”¹

Dr. Steiner: “A picture book with moving pictures pulled with strings from below would be particularly necessary in the Kindergarten. If you would work at this! It would involve a short text with moving pictures above.”²

Certain forms of play in childhood reappear in a person’s approach to life when he is over twenty.

Dr. Steiner: “The way a child plays will later show in his attitude to life as an adult. A child who plays slowly will, when he is in his twenties, think slowly where the gathering together of life-experience is concerned. A child who is superficial in play will be superficial in later life too. A child who says he will break his toy to pieces because he wants to see what it looks like inside, will become a philosopher; for this is the way in which thinking tackles the problems of life.

“Certainly you can do a great deal through play. If a child has a tendency to play slowly, you can induce him to play faster. You give him just the sort of games that require a certain nimbleness.”³

Bad Handwriting, Toy Bricks, Movable Toys, Writing with the Left Hand

Dr. Steiner: “I do not think that any improvement can be brought about in handwriting through attempting to make the children write better. Your efforts must be directed to making them more skillful in the drawing of forms. If they were to play the piano, their handwriting would improve also.

“It is quite correct to say that handwriting has been as bad as it is only since the time when children’s toys began to be so extremely materialistic. It is appalling that so large a proportion of toys should consist of bricks. These ought never to be a toy because they are atomistic and do not develop skill in the fingers. If the child has a simple smithy the point is that he should work in it. I should like to see a child with a toy that moves. This I have said in *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy*. These modern toys are shockingly bad—they cannot bring about skillfulness in the fingers, and so children write badly.

“It would also help if one could get children who write badly with their hands to make quite simple forms with their feet (but one cannot do this in class). This has its effect upon the hand. They should draw small circles, semicircles, triangles, with their feet. Let them hold a pencil between their big toe and second toe and draw circles with it! This is not easily done; it is hard to get used to, but is very interesting to do. I should consider it a very good thing if they were to make figures in sand outdoors with a stick; it works back very strongly on the hand. Or if you got the child to pick up a handkerchief with its foot instead of its hand—that also has a strong effect. I don’t mean that children should eat with their feet—but a problem like this cannot be solved symptomatically. One must try, not to aim directly at improvement in handwriting, but to make the children skillful in the drawing of artistic forms. Let them work out the symmetrical counterpart of a complicated form. Beating time is good for the development of intellectual or logical forms.”⁴

A question was asked about writing with the left hand.

Dr. Steiner: “In general you will find that children with spiritual leanings have no difficulty in writing with either the left or the right hand. But it would make idiots of children who are materialistic. Using left and right hands alternately can be a very risky practice in everything connected with the intellect. In drawing this is not so. Drawing can very well be done with either hand.”⁵

Piano Lessons and Left-handedness

A Music teacher: "I should like to ask about the effect, especially at the beginning, of the equal exercising of right and left hands in learning to play the piano."

Dr. Steiner: "This question is very much to the point. It is a fact that piano-playing provides a very good opportunity for correcting left-handedness. This must be given very special attention; left-handedness should always be corrected. In this connection you ought also to consider the temperament; so that melancholies, who will be somewhat inclined to play with the left hand, should have more emphasis placed on the right. With choleric priority should be given to the left hand. You must see to it that phlegmatics, and sanguines too, use both hands equally. Everything would depend on this.

"It is also of advantage if you try as far as possible to accustom the children, not to having merely a mechanical feeling for the piano, but to feeling the keys as such, and the different parts of the keyboard, so that the sense of touch alone will tell them whether it is high or low, right or left."⁶

Left-handedness, a Karmic Phenomenon

It was asked whether children should be broken of left-handedness.

Dr. Steiner: "As a rule, yes. Left-handed children, while they are still young, can be trained to use the right hand in all school work. It would be right not to do this only if it could have harmful effects—which would only seldom be the case. The child is not a sum, but a complicated potency. If you try to bring about symmetry between right and left in the children, it can lead in later life to feeble-mindedness.

"Left-handedness is quite definitely a karmic phenomenon, a phenomenon of karmic weakness. To take an example: An individual who has overworked in his previous life on earth, and has overexerted himself not only physically, but altogether—in his intellect and soul-life also—and who, as a result, comes into the next life with a marked weakness, is not in a position to overcome this weakness. Consequently what is normally built up strongly becomes weak, and left leg and left hand are called upon for assistance, are used as a substitute. The predominance of the left hand leads to the use of the right instead of the left frontal convolution of the brain in speech. If it is given way to too much, a weakness will remain for the following (third) earthly life. If not, the weakness adjusts itself.

"If you try to make a child do everything, writing and drawing, equally well with the right and left hands, this will lead to weakness of character in later life. The attempt to make children able to work with both hands equally well is the most extreme form of dilettantism. It is connected with the complete ignorance today of the true nature of the human being."⁷

Upright or Sloping Handwriting

A question was asked about upright handwriting.

Dr. Steiner: "It would be desirable, as long as one keeps to writing with the right hand, not to have upright handwriting. It does not lie in the nature of the human

organization to write in this way. It need not incline too much, but it ought to be a handwriting that gives an artistic impression. Upright handwriting would be justified only if it gave an artistic impression, but it does not do this.

“I have explained elsewhere that there are two ways of writing. One is writing from the wrist. People who do this do not use their eye when writing. They make their body into a mechanism and write from the wrist. Many people have been taught to write in this way. But artistic handwriting is writing in which the eye is used. The hand is merely the executing organ.

“Now no one will ever develop an upright writing through writing mechanically from the wrist. Such writing will always be oblique; hence upright writing could be justified only if it were artistic. It is a matter of taste, but it does not satisfy an aesthetic judgment. It can never be beautiful; it always looks unnatural. Thus it is not justified, and there is no reason to introduce upright handwriting. You must try to see to it that no child in the school writes an upright hand, but in the upper classes you cannot be too insistent.”⁸

ENDNOTES

1. Teachers' Conference, June 12, 1920.
2. Teachers' Conference, November 22, 1920.
3. Teachers' Conference, June 14, 1920.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Teachers' Conference, May 10, 1922.
7. Teachers' Conference, May 25, 1923.
8. Teachers' Conference, October 28, 1922.

Part II: *Handwork, Crafts, Bookbinding*

The Artistic Preparation of the Handwork Lesson

Dr. Steiner: “The right thing would be for teachers with an artistic training to take on the teaching of handwork.”¹

“We can include the 10th Class in the teaching of handwork. We must make these lessons more and more artistic.”²

“I should like to see to it that handwork is taught in a really artistic way. It is mostly very philistine. It ought to be done really artistically.”³

“The starting point in handwork and the crafts should always be the purpose to be served by the object in question. This is what determines its color and form. The children should not do ‘studio work’ (e.g. mats whose function is purely ornamental). In every case we must take into account the purpose which the object has to fulfill in life—that is the meaning of handicrafts.”⁴

Should Handwork Lessons Be Optional for Boys?

Question: “Can we not make handwork lessons optional for boys in the upper school? The girls have asked whether the boys might not be allowed to stay away.”

Dr. Steiner: “How could we do that? We have made this subject a part of our syllabus, and there is no reason to change it. It cannot be made optional.”

Frl. X: “The boys who have grown up in the Waldorf school do not object to doing handwork. It is different with those who come to us from other schools.”

Dr. Steiner: “It is possible to have variation within the lesson ... One can occupy the children in the greatest variety of ways ... give the boys one kind of work and the girls another.”

Frl. X would like to make the shorthand lesson optional.

Dr. Steiner: “Sometimes I have the feeling—and for this reason have been thinking seriously that teachers should be relieved of some of their work—that there is not enough freshness in the teachers to bring verve into the lessons. Verve, dash, are essential to our activity as teachers. This can be far more important than many other things. If, for instance, a boy wants to do a piece of handwork, you must think over what you must give him to do so that he enters fully into the work.”⁵

Difficult Children

Dr. Steiner: “Taking difficult children out of the class and dealing with them separately is not a good method. If necessary you should divide the class or give extra lessons,

but do not take individuals out of the class. Ordinary schools do not have children like this. Here they must go up through the school with the others. But I think it will be possible if you make friends with them ... Humanity also has such difficult people, and it is our task not to rid ourselves of them, but really to treat them too.”⁶

The Education of the Child at School

Brief indications given by Steiner at various conferences

“Not ambition, but devotion to the object of study is what we must encourage in the child ... I should appeal not to ambition but to the sense of shame. The children must feel ashamed if they don’t get anything done ... Praise does not make the children ambitious; we must not omit praise and blame! If you clothe blame in a humorous remark, you will find it extremely effective, and the children do not forget it.”

“Make the lazy ones stay behind after 12 o’clock, and tell them that this will often happen.”

“Sit backward (or careless) children at the front, and violent children in a corner where they have fewer neighbors, for example at the end of the front or back row.”⁷

“It can happen that assessments by two different teachers of the temperament of a child do not coincide because their judgment is influenced by their own temperaments.”

“In Classes 7 and 8 it is important for the children not to lose their sense of the teacher’s authority. Appear to give way, but do not really give way at all.”

“What the teacher thinks has its effect upon the students if in his whole being he is really ‘with’ them. Similarly, all that lives in the teacher by way of artistic impulse communicates itself to the children in the teaching of artistic subjects.”

“An individual can experience in his soul only that thought which he has evolved himself.⁸ But the child is not strong enough to evolve his own thoughts.”

“The teacher who works pictorially makes it possible for the thought to arise in the child through the very fact that he has the thought himself.”

Pedagogical Questions and Additions to the Curriculum

Herr X: “The children have been objecting to one of the subjects in the curriculum.”

Dr. Steiner: “The children were in a frame of mind which made them ask: ‘What are we learning this for?’ The children should not be allowed to judge in this way. The boys must be dealt with too. How does a teacher stand in the class when he himself enters into something with enthusiasm? It is simply impossible to miss the mark if you have enthusiasm for something ...

“Then the question arises, what provision do we make for the [at that time difficult] 10th Class, so that Handwork can be introduced into their timetable. This should play a part in the class ... We must ensure that the syllabus of the 11th Class includes bookbinding and box-making, and that the waterwheel, the turbine, and paper-manufacturing are dealt with in the Technology class.”

A question was asked about Handicrafts in Class 11. Dr. Steiner: "Bookbinding has an important part to play in handicrafts. The main thing is that the children should learn the knacks involved in binding a book. Bookbinding and box-making."

Frl. X: "Work began in Handicrafts in Class 10 and is continuing into Class 11."⁹

Dr. Steiner: "A few weeks' difference does not matter ... Ironing and mangling should also be done (perhaps in the 8th Class). And can the children chop wood?"

Economy in Handwork Lessons

Dr. Steiner: "The upper classes should have handwork and gymnastics in the afternoon. Even so it should be possible to make a practicable timetable ... The handwork lesson is most easily managed if it is left until the afternoon¹⁰ ... In future the first four classes will be having two successive hours of handwork a week, and all the other classes one hour a week." (Each class had been having a double lesson every week).

"We must limit it somehow ... Optional lessons must be added for those children who want more. What happens in these handwork lessons is a kind of amusement, and the teacher needs to do very little.

"At some schools they give four hours of handwork a week. This we cannot do. We are not a Girls' Preparatory School ...

"Of course no one will pretend that more cannot be learned in two hours than in one. But you will have more time in the handwork lesson if you plan it economically and get the children used to the idea that it does not take an hour before they really settle down to work ... There must be economy in teaching. This has been said from the beginning."¹¹

Block Periods in Relation to Handwork and Handicrafts

As shortage of time had limited handwork lessons to fortnightly periods, Dr. Steiner introduced the block period (as with the main lesson) so that the splitting up of lessons would be avoided. Dr. Steiner: "Rather than split up the lessons, it would be preferable to work with a group of children every day for a week. It is extremely important for later life, especially if the children find it disagreeable to have to persevere with their work over a long period of time. The breaking up of work into periods has its significance here too ... The only subject which does not suffer so much through lack of concentration is speech practice. Main lessons and artistic lessons do not only suffer from a psychological point of view; something in the human being is actually damaged.

"Knitting and crochet need not be done every day for a week, nor done systematically. I can imagine that it would be quite stimulating to spend a quarter of an hour at a definite time every Wednesday knitting a sock that is to be finished in six months. But it is quite a different thing to have to work at a plastic object every Wednesday. You can learn to knit socks in this way ..."

A Handwork teacher: "I feel that it is a good thing if the children have their lessons once a week."

Dr. Steiner: “Where it is not a question of handicrafts the intervals make no difference. In the handicrafts, you must aim at bringing about a certain concentration in the children. If the children are to bind books, concentrated work is necessary ...”¹²

Handwork and Handicrafts

Dr. Steiner: “How are the handwork lessons getting on?”

Frl. X.: “Before Christmas the upper classes made costumes for the children’s performances. What kind of artistic work can be done in Classes 1 and 2? Before Christmas we did modeling and made figures for the Nativity.”

Dr. Steiner: “You must choose your work as the situation requires. Not everything provides scope for artistic activity. You must not neglect the artistic or allow it to dry up, but there is not much to be done with the artistic sense where knitting a sock is concerned. You can always interrupt a child while he is knitting a sock and get him to work on some other little thing for a while. We want to introduce a piquant touch on the social evening. Get them to make tasteful little ribbons with paper trimmings attached to them. Things that can be used, that have some significance in life—are what can be made tastefully and artistically. No concessions! Allow nothing to be made that is merely a product of ingenuity or coquetry. You won’t be able to use paper for much.”

A Teacher: “The children have begun making toys, but they are not finished yet.”

Dr. Steiner: “There is no reason why they should not make wooden spoons. They do not have to make out-of-the-way things. As little luxury as possible!”¹³

Handwork and Handicrafts Lessons and the Artistic Sense

Dr. Steiner: “Training in manual skill must be led over into the really artistic. This has already happened with modeling, which you can alternate with painting—those children who are good at it can paint.

“... We need in our teaching something like an aesthetic connection between the plastic painting element and the musical.

“... It seems to me that the children should be taught as early as possible the concept of a beautiful armchair, a beautiful table. You should put an end to the absurd idea that a chair must be beautiful only to the eye. We want to feel the chair, feel the beauty of the chair when we sit on it, just as I said yesterday in the handwork lesson that the children should feel that the embroidery tells them on what side a thing is to be opened. I believe that a closer connection will now develop between handwork, manual training, and artistic feeling.

“Hermann Grimm always complained that when young people came to him and he showed them pictures, they could not tell whether a person in the picture was standing in front or behind. They had not the slightest ability to see. The students did not know whether a person was standing in front or behind.”¹⁴

Dr. Steiner: “There are people who embroider a thing, but whose embroidery might equally well be on something else.”¹⁵

Brussels Lace and the Use of the Thimble

A question was asked about lace making. Dr. Steiner: “It is terribly tedious work. These things were usually done in the most frightful outer circumstances. All the people fell ill, and outcasts were employed to do it. Brussels lace is a terrible thing. I would not introduce it. What you are now doing in handwork is very nice. Be a little strict! Today I saw a girl sewing without a thimble!”¹⁶

“I have not been in the handwork lessons very much recently, but on one occasion I had to ask myself: Why hasn’t the child a thimble? I have always said that we must get the children accustomed to sewing with a thimble. A child cannot sew without a thimble—it is hardly possible. Children sewing without thimbles! That won’t do!”¹⁷

Manual Training

Dr. Steiner: “In manual training the teacher should cultivate incidentally, unobtrusively the artistic element, a sense for the artistic, in his students. They should make not only useful objects, but also toys, sensible toys. I should like to see them working on the kind of toy in which two smiths make each other move alternately. This develops skill in the children.



“You can also get them to make gifts. This is also something the teacher should aim at. And if you were to get the children to gather moss and make the Christmas nativity, shaping it themselves and painting the little sheep for it, the solemn festive mood brought about in this way would prove to be of great value in the life of the child.

“But, of course, do not neglect useful objects. Children are especially fond of making rattles—something like a practical joke: ‘We rattle, we rattle, all twelve together, the bells come from Rome.’”¹⁸

Handwork and Everyday Life

A question was asked about such things as sewing cards. Dr. Steiner: “I should not wish to make the children work at things in school that have no place in real life. A relation to life cannot arise out of something that has no life in it. ‘Froebel’ things are invented for school. But only things belonging to the everyday world, to real life, should be used in this way in our schools.”

A Teacher: “The children in the 10th Class have often asked what is the deeper meaning of learning how to spin.”

Dr. Steiner: “Spinning is particularly well-adapted to the soul-life of the children, and through it they come to have a real knowledge of practical life. Such knowledge cannot be gained merely by looking at a thing: It must be practiced as it is practiced in reality.

“We have technology from the 10th Class upwards. In the 10th Class we have weaving. Let them make woven materials in the simplest way possible. It is enough, if they are given a pattern to copy. In the 11th Class they learn about steam turbines.”¹⁹

A Student Who Learned How to Make Shoes

A Teacher: “This student cannot keep up with the class. But he is gifted in languages. He is rather sly, cunning.”

Dr. Steiner: “You must give him jobs to do from time to time, and have chats with him. The occupation should vary ... What use would the Hilfsklasse be to him? He is far too agitated. It would make a much deeper impression on him if you got him to make a pair of shoes. You must provide him with the opportunity to hammer in nails and make shoes. A proper pair of boots for someone else. You should let him make shoes in the handwork lesson. It would be a very good thing. He would enjoy it. Double soles. Shoes with soles!”²⁰ (This student did in fact have lessons in shoemaking from a Waldorf school teacher who knew the craft, and his development showed great improvement as a result.)

Handwork and Mathematics

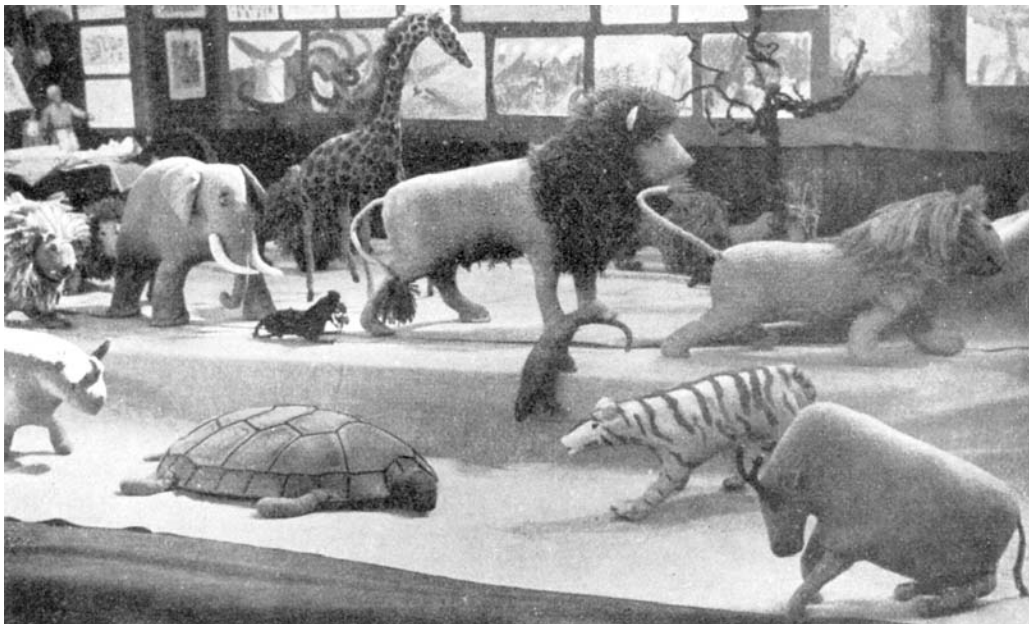
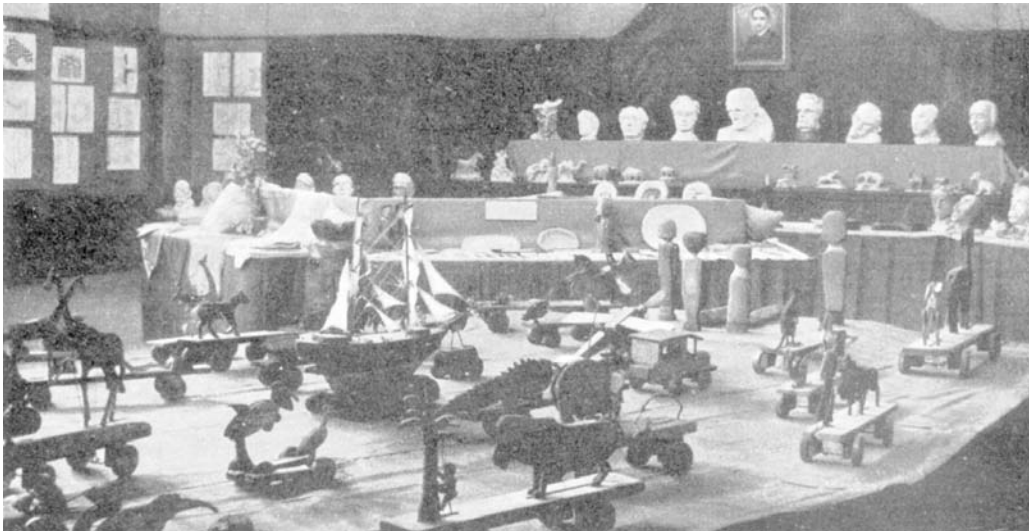
Dr. Steiner: “I should like to draw the attention of those teachers who have to do with drawing to Baravalle’s Thesis. The things in it are also extremely important for aesthetics. All of you should study it. Handwork teaching above all can benefit immensely from Baravalle’s Thesis. There is certainly much in it that will help you to solve such problems as how to form a collar, a belt or a waistband according to the principles inherent in them.

“A work like this one of Baravalle’s is of fundamental importance for the Waldorf teacher because it shows in an imaginative way the leading over of the mathematical into the pictorial. This could be extended. What he has done for form could also be done for color and sound ... You will find a good deal about the world of sound in Goethe’s *Outline of a Theory of Sound* in my last volume of the Kürschner Weimar edition. This account is enormously rich in content. The color theory can also be treated in this way ...

“... It is extremely important, it brings life to the whole College of Teachers if a right interest is taken in the original works of the College members ...”²¹

Bookbinding

The question was asked whether arrangements could not be made to set up classes in bookbinding. Dr. Steiner: “You mean, whether it would fit in with the curriculum? Bookbinding is something that could be fitted into the plans for a continuation of the



From the Workshops

Top, Plastic work, Classes 11–12. Middle, Moveable toys, Classes 8–10.

From the Handwork Rooms

Bottom, Stuffed animals, Classes 6–7.

school. [The upper classes did not yet exist in 1920.] As an experiment it could consist in the binding of schoolbooks ... It is something that can really be developed as a craft. There is no real transition from the beautiful bindings of earlier times, which gradually disappeared, to the quite philistine ones; and experiments made in recent years are generally little more than affectations. Nevertheless, to produce something in this field that is of real value is a very attractive idea. Just think of all the books made today that are not books at all! We must start making real books again ... Bookbinding as such is not difficult work. Of course one must have mastered the technical side, although this would offer room for improvement if it came to gold-tooling. What has to be learned is relatively easy. It is only a matter of practice.”²²

In due course the school came to include an 11th Class, and in 1923 Dr. Steiner arranged for this class to have lessons in bookbinding. Bookbinding should bring a conclusion to all the handwork done from the 1st to the 10th Class. Dr. Steiner often said that bookbinding belongs to handwork and not to the crafts. He also expressed the wish that handwork should continue alongside bookbinding in the 11th Class. As to the indications given concerning bookbinding by Dr. Steiner, Frau Leinhas, the teacher entrusted with this task, reported as follows:

The first time that Dr. Steiner spoke to me about bookbinding, which I did not know how to do then, he said, “But you can learn bookbinding,” which I then proceeded to do.

I was told by my teacher that edge-gilding and gold-tooling were too expensive and too difficult to do in a school. When I told Dr. Steiner this he said, “Not at all. Of course the children must learn it.”

Before I started teaching, Dr. Steiner expressed the fundamentals of bookbinding in the following words: “In bookbinding the children have to learn how to unite something spiritual with the physical.”

In answer to my question as to how we should begin, he said: “Start by making boxes, so that the children get used to handling the materials—glue and cardboard. But the thing that is of primary importance in the teaching of bookbinding is the way the threads run.” I understood that he did not mean only the threads in the sewing frame, but also the threads that lead from one human being to another, the threads that must arise between teacher and students. This made my task, the work to be done, quite clear to me, and all the doubts and difficulties that I had had a short time before vanished completely.

Later I showed Dr. Steiner some sheets of paper which had been colored and prepared for the making of book covers. He said: “Ideally the whole content of the book should be represented on the paper; the whole content should be able to come to expression there. First the book would have to be studied and then would come the artistic work. But the children must first learn the technique of handling the materials. The paper for the cover must be lightest in color where the book is opened; so it is dark at the back and light at the front. One should be able to tell from the coloring

which is the front and which is the back. The back cover must in general be kept somewhat darker.”

When I showed Dr. Steiner a book which, for some special reason, had been given a very wide cover he said to me: “Yes, but it is better if the children make an upright format.” He added: “Pictures require a wide format, and anything printed or written an upright format.”

It should be added that Dr. Steiner demanded of the students absolute exactness where the techniques of bookbinding were concerned. While he was inspecting the first books to be completed, Dr. Steiner picked one of them up and opened it. It stayed open on the flat of his hand, and did not shut itself again as new books so often do. As he looked at it his words were few, but they meant a great deal to us: “Yes, that is how a book should be.”

Frau Molt, who shared the teaching of bookbinding with Frau Leinhas for a time, added the following indications from Steiner to the report:

First let the children make cardboard boxes. And then, in bookbinding, start with cardboard, half-cloth, and whole-cloth bindings; but later you must go on into the artistic, to half-leather and whole-leather bindings. The children themselves must make everything that belongs to the books—including the appropriate cover designs and endpapers. It should be possible to see from the outside of a book what its contents are. Actually, everyone should know how to bind his own books.

ENDNOTES

1. Teachers' Conference, September 22, 1920.
2. June 16, 1921.
3. November 15, 1920.
4. From a conversation between Dr. Steiner and handwork teachers at the Waldorf School, Stuttgart.
5. Teachers' Conference, December 9, 1922.
6. Teachers' Conference, July 31, 1923.
7. In the handwork lesson children of the same temperament are usually put together, as in the main lesson. Indications concerning the temperaments are given in the first of the *Discussions with Teachers*, August 1919.
8. From a notebook of Rudolf Steiner, 1922. See “Anthroposophie,” IX, No. 52.
9. May 10, 1822.
10. April 28, 1822.
11. See Rudolf Steiner, *Course of My Life*, Chapter 6.
12. Teachers' Conference, November 16, 1921.
13. Teachers' Conference, January 16, 1921.
14. Teachers' Conference, June 17, 1921.
15. Teachers' Conference, November 16, 1921.
16. Teachers' Conference, June 23, 1920.
17. Teachers' Conference, July 30, 1920.

18. Teachers' Conference, September 22, 1920.
19. From Teachers' Conferences, September 18, 1923; February 14, 1923; and April 29, 1924.
20. Teachers' Conference, May 26, 1921.
21. Teachers' Conference, September 11, 1921.
22. Teachers' Conference, June 14, 1920.

Part III:

Painting and Drawing, Art and Aesthetics, Wall Decoration and Displays

Preparing the Painting Lesson

Dr. Steiner: “The children must not be allowed to paint with watercolors unless their paper is stretched. Otherwise they become slovenly. The children must learn to stretch their paper themselves. They should learn to stretch their paper neatly with glue. They must work with paint only on stretched paper—not in exercise books! It does not matter if time is taken up by this sort of preparation. The children have plenty of time if the teacher deals properly with them. They do things much too quickly.

“Painting should be done only on stretched drawing paper. We cannot have drawing boards, since they are too expensive, but it is quite possible to use a board which has been planed smooth. Could it not be arranged for such boards, on which paper can be stretched, to be made in the handicrafts lesson? The use of ordinary exercise books for painting is not a satisfactory method. As soon as you begin using paints, you should also begin to stretch the paper.”¹

Painting out of Color

Dr. Steiner: “In the teaching of art you can do very different things in very different ways. It is not right to say that this is exclusively good, and that is exclusively bad. In Dornach they are teaching how to paint out of the colors, and are thus working in a good way. We have seen what a good influence it has. We get them to use their paints so that they apply colors only out of their elementary color-imagination. For example, you say to the child: ‘Here in the middle of the paper you have a spot of yellow. Now make it blue (on another sheet). Do the whole picture again, so that all the other colors are changed accordingly.’ A real deepening of the experience of color comes about in the child if he has to change a color and then change everything else to correspond, for example, on a bag which he has to stitch and embroider so that everything is in exactly the right place. All that you, Frl. X, have told us leads in this direction, and that is very good. Only one cannot say in which class to start. You will have the most success if you do it from the lowest class onwards, and only teach writing when you can develop it out of this painting.”²

Painting in the Upper School

Dr. Steiner: “In painting, the children should do ‘Nature moods.’ The students in the school at Dornach did really outstanding work in painting.³ I asked them to show the difference between sunrise and sunset—some of them did this quite brilliantly. Things of this kind can be done. ‘Rain in the Forest’ is an exercise for fourteen- to fifteen-year-olds. The

children should learn to distinguish between what belongs to painting and what belongs to the plastic arts.”⁴

Painting in the Lower and Upper Classes

A handicrafts teacher said he regretted that painting lessons in the upper school could not be carried on with as much regularity and continuity as in the lower school.

Dr. Steiner: “It does no harm if painting is interrupted and replaced by modeling for a year or two. It is a fact that the painting done in class works on in the subconscious, and that when it is taken up again everything is done with vigor and great aptitude. This is always the case when something is held back. Great progress is made just when the activity has been interrupted.

“I think that there is still need for improvement where the technical aspects of painting in the lower classes are concerned. The use of materials is not properly worked out.

“Actually the children should not be made to paint on sheets of paper which continually pucker; you must prevail on them to apply the colors on stretched paper. Then the painting should be carried out from beginning to end, so that the sheet of paper is really used up. Most of their paintings are only beginnings.

“In the two upper classes (11 and 12), you could allow painting to be taken up again by those who have a gift for it. There is plenty of time for this. They should start again with the simplest things. If the standpoint from which you work is connected with a true understanding of painting, you will not encounter too many difficulties.

“With younger children it is a creating out of the soul that must be strived for in painting. With older children phenomena of the objective world should be painted, while one’s standpoint must always be what is true with respect to painting. You must show how light behaves when it falls upon an object, or how, for a painter, it behaves when it is merely reflected. Everything must be practically related to the visible phenomena. Much harm can be done if children are made to paint objects before their tenth year.

(Dr. Steiner drew on the blackboard with colored chalk.)

“The older the children, the more you should make the painting element your starting point. You should make the following clear to them: There is the sun. The sunlight falls on the tree. Now you must not start from the tree and draw that. You must start from the light and dark surfaces, so that the tree arises out of the light and dark of the color, out of the color that comes from the light. You do not start from the abstract idea: ‘The tree is green.’ It is not the leaves that should be painted green; leaves should not be painted at all. It is light surfaces that should be painted. This can be achieved. It is possible to do this.

“Then, if I were having to start with thirteen- to fourteen-year-olds, I should bring along Dürer’s *Melancholia* and show them how wonderfully light and shade are distributed on the polyhedron and the sphere. Or the light at the window in the picture of St. Jerome.

It is very fruitful to start out from these pictures. You should let the children transpose this black and white into a 'color-fantasia.'⁵

"I should try to evolve all freehand drawing from Dürer's *Melancholia*. In this picture there is every possible gradation of light and dark, and this can be transposed into color. If you can bring the students to an understanding of the whole of this picture, they should be able to do anything."⁶ On a later occasion Dr. Steiner said that he would especially like to see the *Melancholia* transposed into color by fourteen- to fifteen-year-old children who were new to the Waldorf school.

An Example of How not to Teach Painting

Dr. Steiner: "A Mr. X has appeared in town X. He is teaching at a school. He looks like an arch-pedant. He has acquired the ability to make elementary school children paint pictures that are perfect—in the sense understood by people who know nothing about art. It is really remarkable what perfect things these children can do. But this ability disappears at the age of fourteen to fifteen; it comes to an end. The children are unable to do it after that ... The fact that it disappears is connected with the 'demon' of the chest, of the circulatory system. It stops as soon as the human being begins to wake up to himself. People must realize what mischief there is in doing such things as these. It is outrageous. We are opposing this in the Waldorf school through the principle that the children should paint artistically. The children in town X are painting Madonnas with all appurtenances. They are painting battle scenes, and Constantine and the Caesars. It is incredible; they are absolutely perfect."

Frl. Y: "This teacher X will not accept older children."

Dr. Steiner: "You can see that in him there is the counter-demon, which arouses the demons in the children. Here you see what is really happening in the educational world today. It is essential for our teachers to learn to recognize more and more clearly the false paths taken by education in the present day, so that they may possess clear insight into what the human being really is."⁷

The Teaching of Art:

Light and Dark in Dürer and Rembrandt, the Sculptural Arts, Rococo

Dr. Steiner: "Do you really think that the many different objects in Dürer's *Melancholia* are to be taken to represent divine attributes? The difference between Dürer and Rembrandt with respect to light and dark is this: To Rembrandt the problem of light and dark is that of light and dark as such, whereas Dürer's understanding of the problem leads him to show light and dark on as many objects as possible. The many things in the *Melancholia* are not to be understood as attributes; the explanation of them is rather that Dürer wished to place in the picture-space as many objects as possible. With Dürer the problem might be expressed in the question: How does light behave for our vision when it is reflected from different objects?"

In a Berlin lecture, Dr. Steiner once sharply rejected a mystical interpretation of Dürer's *Melancholia*. He said that Dürer had composed the picture in order to show on the female figure and on the other objects the same gradations of light and dark as are found on the pentagon-dodecahedron. He said that all the different tones of light and dark that are on the stone can be found again on the female figure. This had been for Dürer the idea underlying his composition).

Dr. Steiner: "For Rembrandt the problem is essentially the interaction of light and dark. The problem of the *Melancholia* would not have occurred to him in the same way. He would have done it much more abstractly ... In teaching you can contrast the light/dark in Rembrandt, which is taken by him qualitatively, with the painting of southern European art.

"The things can thus be worked in together. This can also be done of course when you show how Rembrandt, who has plastic forms in his pictures, understands the problem of light and dark qualitatively, and how space is here only a means of solving this problem in painting—and when you contrast with this the fact that plastic art is exclusively a problem of space. In this way you can lead over to plastic art. And probably the best thing to do here would be to connect it with the classical plastic art of the French in later times.

"In Rococo, of course you must take the good side, you have the extreme plastic counterpart to Rembrandt. You can show in Rococo how different is the effect of light and dark in plastic art from that in the paintings of Rembrandt. But you must always point out that Rococo, although considered by some to be of less value artistically than Baroque, is nevertheless higher in the scale of artistic development."

Question: "Should certain stages in the history of art be brought into relief?"

Dr. Steiner: "I should point out how these stages came to expression differently in different places. It is interesting to show how, at the time of Dürer, the things being done in Holland were quite different from what Rembrandt was going to do later. Different times for different places." (The dark/light problem which occupied Dürer in Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century appeared in Holland in a quite different form, through Rembrandt, in the seventeenth century.)⁸

The Teaching of Aesthetics

The Development, by Means of Examples, of the Concepts of the Beautiful, the Sublime, the Comic, and so forth

Dr. Steiner: "These are children of somewhere between fourteen and sixteen years of age. I should try, by using concrete examples, to bring to the children the concept of the beautiful, of art as such, metamorphoses of the beautiful through the different stylistic periods—the beautiful of the Greeks, the beautiful of the Renaissance. It is especially important for children at this age, that what is usually presented to them in an abstract form should be given a certain concreteness ... It can be particularly ennobling if, at this age, the child is given the opportunity to understand the nature of the beautiful, of the sublime.

What is the comic? How does the comic express itself in music, or in poetry? ... What is declamation? What is recitation? When lecturing on declamation and recitation, I discovered that most people did not know that there was a difference. If you take the way in which Greek verse must be delivered, you have recitation in its archetypal form, because it depends upon the meter, upon long and short ... In German the important thing is the working out of the principal and secondary accents, which must therefore be taken as a basis for the ‘Song of the Nibelungs’; that is declamation. You have heard me quote the example of Goethe’s German and Roman *Iphigenia*. The German *Iphigenia* must be declaimed, the Roman recited.”⁹⁹

Wall Decoration in Classrooms (Cp. p. 66, 103–106)

Dr. Steiner: “It seems to me that in the rooms where subjects are taught that have been newly incorporated into the curriculum, there ought to be something in the way of pictures on the walls. That such a thing was missing struck me most forcibly in the Religion class. If the walls are not to confront us merely as walls, they should have some kind of picture on them. This would have to be done very carefully ... It would have to be entirely in keeping with the character of our education. For this reason it cannot be carried into effect until I return to Stuttgart. Where are the painters who could do something? The initiative should come from the class teachers. Then the whole thing can be approached in a really artistic way. Something special really ought to be done for this school ...”

Dr. Steiner: “This poem [‘The Giant Toy’ by Chamisso had been talked over with the children shortly before] should be translated for the children, not into prose, but into a picture. A deep impression is made if something can be seen on the walls which has been taken from the lesson and which the children have entered into with their feelings. I spoke long ago, at the beginning of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, to Fräulein W. of the necessity to create something which expressed the idea of metamorphosis as it advances through the living kingdoms of nature—something similar to what has been done in the Goetheanum in the transition from one architrave to the next. It would lighten the task of the teacher enormously if he had such pictures to which he could turn when he is explaining something.”

X: “Would it be admissible pedagogically for the children to make something for the classroom themselves?”

Dr. Steiner: “It depends very much on circumstances ... Actually it is quite a mistaken idea to hang an ordinary picture on the wall. What is it supposed to be doing up there? In artistic times it never occurred to people to hang pictures on walls. A picture must belong to the room. *The Last Supper* of Leonardo is in the refectory of a monastery. The monks formed three parts of a circle, the fourth wall had the painting on it. He ate with them. He belonged there. This was its justification ... If you want to hang up pictures, it is necessary that it should be done properly. It can have its importance if the children have pictures which make a lasting impression on them.”

One should mention here that Dr. Steiner had allowed large photographs of the interior of the first Goetheanum to be hung up in the handwork rooms.¹⁰

Wall Decoration in the Waldorf School

Dr. Steiner: “Take it then as the setting up of an ideal that the artistic arrangement of the classrooms should really arise out of the pedagogy itself. A further development of the artistic layout of the schoolrooms by means of pictures is certainly necessary ... In the lower classes (1–6) the most important thing would really be the content of what is presented to them in the form of pictures. Then one can lead over gradually to the artistic on the one hand and, on the other, to the more practical concerns of life. I shall mention only the main points today. The question can be entered into considerably more deeply as time goes on.

“It should be obvious that, even when it is the content that is of primary importance, it is not a commonplace illustration that is required. The things must be presented artistically—not artistically in the one-sided sense, where what is expressed is no more than a special artistic opinion or style, but in such a way that something that is more universally human comes to expression.

“In Class 1 the walls should be decorated with scenes from fairy tales, if possible in color. Now I must emphasize that if it is not possible to carry through the whole scheme in color, some of the pictures will have to be black and white reproductions. It is better to have a black and white reproduction that is technically good than a bad colored copy of the things I have in mind. These would involve illustrations of fairy tales in Class 1, and of legends in Class 2. This must be strictly adhered to.

“You can imagine that the right influence can be exerted continually upon the soul of the child by means of these pictures, and in a quite definite way. They must not, of course, be like the illustrations in picture books; they must be done artistically. It would be worthwhile giving yourselves exercises to carry out; this does not mean that you are required to paint in any one-sided manner. The things must have a character that is universally human.

“3rd Class: Still life—pictures of plants and flowers, of living, but not yet feeling, Nature. 4th Class: The world of sensation, the animal. 5th Class: Human beings in groups, e.g. round dances; or a street in which people are gathering. 6th Class: The individual human being; heads; the human being in Nature, e.g. a man standing in a landscape in sunshine or rain, or a small lake with a man rowing on it.

“We are now at the point where the content ceases to be of primary importance, and where picture decoration must begin to enter the artistic sphere. We should start with the most artistic of all—bearing in mind, of course, that if copies are not available we must have them in black and white. It is a good thing for children at 7th Class age to have a Raphael and Leonardo; these can be kept on into the 8th Class. They can be shared between the two classes. The essential thing is that the children should have these pictures in front of them. You should not imagine that the wall decoration has to be so arranged that it runs parallel

to the curriculum; the children must have had the pictures around them before they are mentioned in History of Art lessons. Before the course begins the pictures can be referred to from time to time. Fundamentally, it is the artistic with which the eyes of the child should be occupied. At the beginning he should receive the bare sense-impression, and know that these pictures are considered to be beautiful. In the next classes the important thing will be a discreet bringing together of the artistic and the practical aspects of life, so that the child has both constantly before him ...

“9th Class: On the one hand Giotto, for example; on the other, plans, completely technical, of a field, pastureland, a wood, and so forth. There could also be an astronomical chart, on which stylized figures are drawn representing the various constellations.

“10th Class: On the artistic side, Holbein and Dürer; on the technical, scientific side, e.g. life under the sea, marine animals—instructive pictures which have also an artistic effect.

“11th Class: Holbein, Dürer, also Rembrandt. Earlier pictures can also be included. This would always be the case for Classes 11 and 12. It is the age at which the pictures can run parallel to the curriculum. On the scientific side: Sections through the earth, geological cross-sections, and contour maps, and so forth, executed in a suitably artistic way. Not until Class 12 would you have physiological and anatomical charts in addition to Holbein, Dürer and Rembrandt.

“These are the things I wanted to put before you as one chapter of our pedagogy. It is absolutely necessary for us to insure that the artistic is handled especially well in our education, for it is indeed one of the means whereby anthroposophy works for the progress of mankind.

“You see, it can be said that right up to the sixteenth century, there was no sharp distinction in any sphere between an intellectual and an artistic comprehension of the world. It is not realized today that until the tenth century there was no strict separation of art and ‘exact’ knowledge at all—even scholasticism made use of a certain architectonic art in the layout of its books, quite apart from the initial letters. In our days children are poisoned in the very earliest years by the intellectualistic nature of all they are taught at school.

“Thus we should bear in mind in all our work that our aim is to present a counterforce to the intellectualism prevailing in all modern thinking, by allowing all that we do in our pedagogy to be permeated through and through by art. We must see to it that modern systematic books do not influence us in the way we present things to the children. Modern systematic books are philistine and inartistic. People are ashamed to approach anything as though it were artistic. The modern scholar is ashamed to develop an artistic style, or to arrange his chapters artistically. These are things which we must bear in mind in our preparation.¹¹

“I have only a few things to add to what I said recently. The question has still to be answered as to what pictures are to be used for the decoration of the music rooms. In no circumstances can a music room be decorated with paintings of a representational kind. At

most it could be decorated plastically by setting up plastic forms; or if paintings are wanted, one would have to use color harmonies, pure color effects; paintings containing pure color effects ... Where music is concerned it is better to leave the room quite plain, without pictures, than to introduce pictures that are psychologically incompatible with the music that is to be heard in it.

“Now the decoration of the eurythmy rooms. This I distinguish from the music rooms, though with us they may have to coincide. If necessary some music lessons could be held in the eurythmy rooms, but it would have to be a temporary arrangement. The eurythmy room itself should be decorated with themes taken from the dynamics of the human being, from the dynamics of the soul—human expression treated in an artistic way ... The eurythmy figures would have to be set up in a glass case in the eurythmy room ...

“In the gymnasium the human being should be represented, but with special emphasis on his ‘placing himself in the world’; in eurythmy the question is to find a way of expressing the world around him by means of the sense of balance and movement, e.g. holding himself courageously over an abyss. The human being’s relationship to the world should be the theme for the decoration of the gymnasium.

“Handwork would require interiors in which special attention is given to the feeling element. There still remains the handicrafts room. This should be decorated with artistically conceived themes from everyday life and from the arts and crafts, so that there is something on the walls that receives with sympathy all that is done in the room ... The same applies to spinning as to handicrafts.

“I think that the teachers’ room should be decorated as the taste and harmonious agreement of the teachers themselves demand. Therefore nothing should be prescribed for the teachers’ room; everything should arise out of the taste and mutual agreement of the teachers themselves. It should be the outcome of an especially intimate conference, which leads, but without professionalism, into the artistic sphere.

“In the passages we must insure that to the left and right of each door there is something similar to what is to be found in the classroom.

“The character of the picture frame should be determined by the picture. In cases where I have had to give advice as to the coloring of a picture frame, I have usually found that a color in the picture should be used for the frame. The shape of the frame must depend upon the picture.”

Questions were then asked about the Physics room, the Chemistry room and the Hilfsklasse, and also about the room for the Sunday Service. Dr. Steiner postponed the answering of these questions, as administrative problems had to be discussed. On another occasion Dr. Steiner suggested that various apparatus could be set up in the Physics room, and the *Laocoön Group* in Religion lessons with Class 9.¹²

Indications Concerning the Color of the Walls of Classrooms and Other Rooms for the Waldorf School

In 1920, after the opening of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Steiner suggested for the rooms situated in what was known as the “Baracke,” a bluish lilac for the classrooms, yellow for the passages, and indigo for the choir room. When, in 1922, what is now [1937] the main building of the school was completed, Dr. Steiner indicated the following colors:

4th Class – pale green

5th Class – green with tinge of blue

6th Class – blue

7th Class – indigo

8th & 9th Classes – violet

10th Class – lilac

11th Class – lilac, lighter than the gymnasium

Gymnasium – reddish lilac; Eurythmy room – mauve; Crafts room – orange;
Handwork room – light violet, inclining to red; Physics room – blue; Doctor’s room – reddish; Passages – reddish lilac.

For the Goethe School in Hamburg, Dr. Steiner suggested the following:

1st, 2nd, 3rd Classes – red, progressively lighter

4th, 5th, 6th Classes – orange, progressively lighter

7th Class – yellow

8th, 9th Classes – green, lighter in 9th than in 8th

10th, 11th Classes – blue, approaching violet in 11th

12th Class – violet

Physics room – green

Choir room – lilac

Red, orange and yellow were taken over by the Waldorf School in Stuttgart for Classes 1, 2 and 3 when their rooms had to be redecorated.

For the New School in London, the following indications were given:

For 5–6-year-old children – red, orange, yellow

For 7–8-year-old children – green

For 9-year-old children – a darker green

For 10–11-year old children – blue

Eurythmy room – pale violet

Passages – yellow

Displays of Work Done by Students

Dr. Steiner: “The exhibiting of students’ work is pointless except on occasions when courses are arranged in which the entire framework, content, and structure of the Waldorf school are discussed. But if you only exhibit work, the people who will come to see it, while they have no clear understanding of the aims of the Waldorf school, will not know what they are supposed to think. It would be the same as taking the pictures out of a storybook and giving them to the children without telling them the stories; the children would not understand the pictures ...”

On another occasion, Dr. Steiner said: “We consider it unpedagogical to exhibit the children’s paintings alone ...”¹³

Photographing the Works of Art in Dornach

Dr. Steiner: “All that has been painted out of color in the cupola can be understood only if the fact is appreciated that it has been painted out of the color. If you tried to reproduce it photographically it would be worthless unless you make it as big as it is in the cupola. We do not wish to merely reproduce something. The less these pictures correspond to those in the cupola the better. Black and white only gives an indication of it; it cries out for color. The making of reproductions is quite inartistic and is only a makeshift. I should not like to have colored photographs taken of the painting in the cupola. What is really wanted is that the essential be given. It is the same with the windows. I should oppose any attempt to achieve something by means of reproductions. One should not try to reproduce these things as faithfully as possible. In a similar way it is not desirable for a piece of music to be deceptively imitated by a gramophone record. In the form in which these reproductions appear, what is reproduced is the most trivial, the least essential thing. You have the feeling that this color or that ought to be there.

“It is similar to what I said in *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy* about giving a child a beautifully finished doll. You should really give him one made out of a handkerchief.”¹⁴

Photographing of Plastic Art: Steiner’s Drawing of *The Kabiri* (Plate 15)

Just as Dr. Steiner opposed the photographing of the cupola painting and of the windows of the first Goetheanum, he once spoke against the photographing of plastic forms—for instance, of *The Kabiri*, which he had modeled in clay for a performance of Goethe’s *Faust*, part II. He said that plastic works of art could not be rendered satisfactorily by means of photography. One would have to recreate them in the form of a drawing, which could then be reproduced. Steiner made a drawing of *The Kabiri* to experiment with the techniques. He wanted to see whether plastic forms could be rendered adequately in a shaded drawing. The experiment proved to him that they could. He therefore recommended this drawing of *The Kabiri* as a technical guide for the work of other artists. The windows of the second Goetheanum were later drawn in the way indicated by Dr. Steiner.



Plate 15: The Kabiri
 Drawing by Rudolf Steiner

Dr. Steiner drew *The Kabiri* on the occasion of the birthday of Frau Geheimrat Röchling. The drawing bore the following dedication:

We are approached on the Day of Becoming
 By the Beings of Becoming of ancient times.
 They bear the thoughts of love
 From heart to heart;
 Our thoughts through them are strengthened,
 That they may hold in lasting memory
 The Festival of Becoming.

– January 28 1918, for Helene Röchling

A reproduction of this appeared in Goethe's *Faust in the Light of Spiritual Science, Vol. 2: The Problem of Faust*. It bears the title "The Kabiri. A sketch by Steiner of his own plastic work."¹⁵ Although he said that, in general, plastic forms, by their very nature, cannot be adequately

reproduced by means of photography, Steiner himself showed such photographs on the screen on many occasions, and expressed his pleasure when he saw that the forms had come out well. Several attempts were made to photograph the cupola paintings in Dornach. These pictures were also shown by Steiner. To photograph the windows (against the light) seemed hardly possible, but this was also attempted.

When Frau Assja Turgenieff was intending to reproduce the windows of the first Goetheanum with the aid of sketches made for this purpose by Steiner, he advised her to follow the technique he had used in the drawing of *The Kabiri*. The result of this was the execution by Frau Turgenieff of the beautiful etchings which were later published in *Die Drei*.¹⁶

ENDNOTES

1. Teachers' Conferences, July 3 and 12, 1923.
2. Teachers' Conference, November 16, 1921.
3. Steiner himself demonstrated to the students how a sunrise and sunset should be painted. The two originals, as well as his three color sketches—"Tree in Sunlight by a Waterfall," "Trees at Rest," and "Trees in a Storm"—were later published by the Friedwart School. See also the seventh of Steiner's school sketches, the "Madonna."
4. Teachers' Conference, April 25, 1923.
5. Teachers' Conference, February 5, 1924.
6. Teachers' Conference, July 12, 1923.
7. Teachers' Conference, April 28, 1922.
8. Teachers' Conference, December 9, 1922.
9. Teachers' Conference, September 11, 1921.
10. Teachers' Conference, November 22, 1920.
11. Teachers' Conference, January 23, 1923.
12. Teachers' Conference, January 31, 1923.
13. Teachers' Conferences, December 18 and July 31, 1923.
14. Teachers' Conference, June 14, 1920.
15. This drawing can also be obtained separately.
16. *Die Drei*, volumes 5 and 6; also in Frau Turgenieff's work, *The Goetheanum Windows*.