

EDITORIAL

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Time, Education and Children

How much time should be allotted to the teaching of what, and to whom, are questions that are regularly asked by the pedagogues, and much time and energy are spent during symposia and in meetings to try to find the correct answer in each case. We read voluminous memoranda on whether the curriculum for an undergraduate medical course should be five or six years, and we listen to learned dissertations. And so we should, for these are matters of extreme importance. But do we pause from time to time and ask when this teaching is to be done, not seen in the light of the age of the pupil, but from the point of view of the teacher?

We agree that a university education should begin after achieving matriculation and the average age of the students will therefore be just below or above twenty years of age during the first year. Nobody bothers about the average age of the lecturers. And even if the rules of a particular institution require that staff members must retire at a given age, this milestone is rather arbitrary, for some people are senile at the age of fifty years while others give of their best after sixty years. Be that as it may, time is still not completely taken into consideration, even with such retirement rules, for we either forget or deny one important fact, that ideas, norms, approaches and knowledge change with an ever-increasing tempo, and the date when the lecturer gleaned his knowledge is rapidly becoming as important a consideration as the moment when he imparts it to his students.

During the nineteenth century teaching at the various universities in Europe and Britain did not change very much from the early years

of that era until the late 1870s, even in science classes. Admittedly, the discoveries of Faraday, and similar important newer research work, would have been incorporated in the better courses, but the approach of the teachers would have remained basically the same. In those days all that was required of even the professor was that he should keep abreast of new discoveries. There was ample time for that since nothing happened very quickly, and above all, the norms remained unchanged. Nowadays the very essence of knowledge acquired by a lecturer a scant five years before he again imparts it to the newcomers, may justly be challenged, and this does not refer only to the scientific factual content, but to the very spirit in which the original ideas were formulated.

The oldest member on any publications control board has a more difficult task than his younger colleagues, for he must guard against stagnation and a tendency to expect a younger generation with whom he is rather out of touch to accept his norms. These new norms are not necessarily the outcome of a new permissiveness or lack of responsibility, but are frequently the result of discoveries or trends that are changing the face of the earth.

The moment we discover that the speed of light is not in reality the highest we can attain, our entire scientific world, and even our religious concepts, will overnight be subjected to a scrutiny so profound as to leave all but the most adaptable of the young ones gasping. That is the crux of the matter — it is the moment in time when the children are taught, more than the lapse of it during the teaching, that must be considered when quality of pedagogy is judged.

Die Vrou in die Samelewing

Deur die eeue heen was daar vroue soos Jeanne d'Arc en Marie Curie, en in die kunste persone soos Jenny Lind, wat buite die raamwerk van die strenge familiekring hul invloed laat geld het. Daar is talle sulkes en die verskynsel van die vrou wat ook in die groter gemeenskap haar volwaardige plek volstaan, is nie nuut nie. Maar nogtans was hierdie vrouens tot relatief onlangs die uitsondering, en die beeld van moeder in die huisgesin was immer, en is nog steeds, die hoofgedaante van die vroulike geslag. Niemand sal die belang van die rol van die moederfiguur as die kern van die familieverband ontken nie, maar ons wil nie in hierdie artikel verstrik raak in 'n bespreking van sieninge in verband met die emansipering van die vrou nie. Die feit bly egter staan dat die verskynsel van die vrou wat in haar eie reg deelneem aan die aktiwiteite van die breë samelewing daaglik toeneem, en ons sal die probleme wat dit moontlik kan skep die hoof moet bied. Daar is geen keer aan nie, en iedereen, vanaf die tradisionele mansfiguur tot die dienende Martha, sal objektiewe denke moet toepas.

Kom ons gebruik 'n voorbeeld ter illustrasie van die komende probleem. 'n Jong egpaar is albei bo die gemiddelde intelligent en ambisieus. Die man kies ingenieurswese as sy beroep, en na 'n aantal jare bereik hy die hoogste sport op sy gebied as direkteur van 'n groot bedryf. Sy vrou toon argitektoniese aanleg en uiteindelik word ook haar ervaring en talente erken deurdat sy die professorskop by 'n belangrike universiteit aangebied word. Alles gaan dus voor die wind, en hoewel die kinders reeds op-

geskote is, woon hulle nog as afhanklikes in die gelukkige familiekring. Die probleem bestaan egter daarin dat die professoraat gesetel is in 'n ander stad as waar die man werksaam is. Wat nou?

Moet die vrou haar eeue-oue rol as Ruth aanvaar en sê: 'Waar jy gaan sal ek gaan', of is dit die man wat sy werkkring moet prysgee? As geld die deurslaggewende faktor moet wees, is die besluit nie so moeilik nie, want gesonde finansiële redenasie sal die mins-verdienende noodsaak om die volgeling te wees. As dit egter nie om wêreldsgoed gaan nie, maar om dienslewering aan die samelewing en die status wat dit meebring, sal die besluit nie so eenvoudig wees nie. Daar is nie baie keuses nie. Die man of die vrou (en in die huidige klimaat sal dit in alle waarskynlikheid van die vrou verwag word), sal 'n swaarverworwe lewensprestasie moet prysgee, of hulle sal moet probeer om aan te pas aan 'n half-geskeie leefwyse wat veral vir die kinders moeilik verwerkbaar sal wees.

Met ander woorde, waarop dit werklik neerkom is die nuwe konsep van twee lewensmaats wat, ten spyte van 'n gelukkige huwelikslewe, 'n keuse moet maak tussen eiewaardige intellektuele prestasie of die frustasie van selfnegering. 'n Skouerophalende of patriargale antwoord gaan vir niemand iets in die sak bring nie, want die probleem sal met of daarsonder voortbestaan, en op die ou end gaan dit die twee tradisionele helpers, die dominee en die huisarts, wees wat die oplossing sal moet soek—as daar 'n oplossing te vinde is.
