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an education movement that doesn't encourage questions

February 25, 2011 · by [alicia hamberg](#) · in [annat](#)

Update on September 22, 2011. I would very much like to warn people to get involved with the pair behind the Steinermentary project. I don't have the time to write more about it right now (see discussion threads), but I wish that nobody takes the post below as a sign of support for them or as a recommendation for people to get involved with them.

*

This is important. [<http://www.steinermentary.com/SM/Steinermentary.html>]*

The Steiner Movement's traditional get-out is the "not a good fit" kiss-off. And they feel very got at by people who "weren't a good fit" passing on information that contradicts that idea. Heaven forbid that people should make known the abusive treatment they received – even when public funding is imminent.

[...]

Perhaps it can only really be the testimony of ordinary people which can educate people about the unhealthy facets of the 'fastest growing alternative education movement in the world'.

People who dare to warn others of such dangers are even threatened on the internet and in other ways, and always painted as 'anti-Steiner'.

[...]

All negative feedback is used to create an impression of an innocent movement under attack by ignorant and envious detractors.

[...]

When you put that knowledge together with the fact that the Swedish Federation are alleged to have actually paid a well-known Steiner-bot to pose as a mum on Mumsnet in order to rubbish the claims of such people, people whose own ghastly experience has driven them to try and warn others, the extent of the cover-up starts to reveal itself.

[Link](#) to the Swedish waldorf federation! I think everybody needs to know which organization we're talking about. It's the official body organizing Swedish waldorf schools, our equivalent of AWSNA and SWSF. And, yes, they did in fact hire [him](#). But they don't want to admit to it, they don't want to take any responsibility for it. They don't want to stand up for their decision. Instead they hope people won't know who he is, and that nobody will know they hired him. To make matters worse, Swedish waldorf schools are wholly tax-funded, and has been for a couple of decades now. It's nice to know the money is going into worthwhile projects, like having critical voices shut up.

If waldorf schools think some people complain because they weren't a good fit, then waldorf schools need to improve their skills in detecting who's not a good fit. But they don't. They don't tell people that their child would be happier elsewhere. It's only when people criticize that the excuses appear. 'Oh, it wasn't for you, what a pity' — well, they didn't need nine years, as in my case, to understand this. If they had possessed only rudimentary perceptive gifts, they'd known this after two weeks.

Read the post!

* On September 3, 2011, I'm not so sure anymore that this project is worth paying attention to actually. And I think you should know this, if, by any chance, you happen upon this old post. Unfortunately, I made a mistake. I may have advertised this project in other posts too, but I can't possibly find them. Or do anything about it. So this has to be sufficient.



10 Comments



1. *margaret* · [February 26, 2011 - 12:20 am](#) ·

A — you are correct, within two weeks it is very obvious if a child is not a good fit within a classroom setting. Ethically and in the best interest of the child the teacher needs to have this discussion with the parent and other options should be discussed.

Perhaps within the Waldorf setting it may come down to two things:

1. The Waldorf teacher falsely perceives that he possesses a special 'knowing' and the child is better off in the Waldorf classroom despite what the parents may think. The teacher thus persuades the parent to keep the child enrolled.
2. Money (funding) for the seat to be filled.



2. *alicia h* · [February 26, 2011 - 12:28 am](#) ·

And it certainly shouldn't take years. The clues should be there pretty quickly, for anyone prepared to see them, and then teachers and parents must begin to plan a course of action. It takes a while to transfer anyway. And perhaps you want to wait and see if things will improve — but even if, not for years! To the next break, perhaps. If things aren't too bad, in which case transfer should be immediate.

I think both 1 & 2 are important factors. I also suspect that the teachers (and sometimes the parents) honestly think the kid would be worse off elsewhere. (Remember what waldorf teachers think of other education systems.) Or they don't think it's that bad at all. It's the child's responsibility to learn to be a good fit, it's the child's task to adapt. And from their perspective, this may seem really beneficial to the child.



3. *Diana* · [February 26, 2011 - 4:14 pm](#) ·

Wow, this **is** important! Can I put it on critics?

Yes, I think video is the right tool. Things might have been different for a lot of people, if a parent had come in with an easy-to-use, unobtrusive handheld videocam in certain classrooms, and filmed for just a few minutes before the teacher realized what was going on and had the person hauled out of the classroom. (The family would almost certainly then be asked to leave the school. But other families would know what was going on.)

Quite a few of the things that critics are accused of "making up," things we actually saw happen that Waldorf defenders believe we are lying about ... well, those debates would simply be over if people could see what happened with their own eyes.

We should remember that video can be misused and manipulated. We shouldn't necessarily take video footage at face value as immediately and obviously accurate and truthful. But it's certainly a powerful and important tool.

It could be extremely useful in custody cases or in cases where a noncustodial parent needs to convince a judge that the child should not be in this school.



4. *alicia h* · [February 26, 2011 - 5:12 pm](#) ·

'Can I put it on critics?'

Sure!

I'm more of a reading/writing person myself, but lots of other people seem to spend much time on youtube, so I suppose it's a very useful addition to other means of communication. I mean, there's a lot of junk on youtube, but there is a lot of written junk on websites too, so...



5. [alicia h](#) · [February 27, 2011 - 6:51 pm](#) ·

'Quite a few of the things that critics are accused of "making up," things we actually saw happen that Waldorf defenders believe we are lying about ... well, those debates would simply be over if people could see what happened with their own eyes.'

I suppose it depends on people actually having the presence to bring the camera and record stuff. I mean, if it's this kind of documentation we're talking about. That would be very good, but a rare occurrence. (I mean, there's a video thingy and a microphone on my DSLR camera, but I have no idea how to use it — I haven't even used it to film Mr Dog. I forget it's there. Maybe that's just me, though.)

Another use for it is, naturally, to create opinion somehow, like argue something the same way you'd do in a text. But in this case too, I prefer to read the arguments.

And as for reenactments of interviews, I think they had one or two of those on the website, I feel that... I don't have the patience. I mean, to me, they obviously had a manuscript to read from, and then I'd rather read the manuscript than listen to someone read it for me. (My father used to read to me from books when I was a kid, and I simply read quickly to the end of the page and waited and waited and waited for him to finally turn the page... absolutely silly.)

Again, that's me. I'm sure it's different for other people, they may prefer to watch or listen.

I very rarely do that. I don't listen to skeptic podcasts or anything else out there.

If I listen to something, or watch something, then I want it to be something I can't get any other way. Like, for example, the discussion between W Held, H Ullrich and H Zander that I listen to earlier today. It was long, and it does strain my ability to focus. But somehow it's worth it because you don't get to experience an exchange like that otherwise. If they had been reading from manuscripts, I'd said sod it and turned it off. I must be really interested in something to bother listening to it and there must be some merit to it being in the form of an audio or a video rather than as a text to read.

Like listening to Steffen talk. That was special.

I suppose other people may enjoy listening to someone read from a paper, but to me it's pointless, I'd rather read the stuff myself. It's much faster and less boring.

Thus, I don't have a clue what people say on such videos because generally I don't watch them. Which is a pity, because I'm sure they may have interesting things to say.

I also feel quite ashamed because everybody listens to these skeptic podcasts all the time and it's so fantastic... and I just don't see the point. I can't be bothered. Maybe there's lots of interesting stuff happening with these things, but it's like I don't *get* what the medium is about. I don't experience the benefits, because I don't see the point.

Did reading and writing become unfashionable?

I love pictures and I love text, but I'm not at all fond of moving pictures with speech and other sounds. Unless I have to, or (as I wrote) am really fanatically interested in something, it's not my thing.



6. [alicia h](#) · [February 27, 2011 - 7:33 pm](#) ·

Also, I feel like I don't care what's useful anymore; I haven't in a while, and I've probably said it already. I don't care about influencing or 'providing information', whatever that's supposed to be about. I'm so fed up with the entire question of — will this help to stop anthroposophists doing I-don't-know-what.

I know I *should* be thinking — oh modern parents like youtube and podcasts so I should be doing something on youtube or with podcasts because that's *useful*... But I'm not. If I considered usefulness at all, I wouldn't be doing anything. I would be paralyzed.

And I feel that all these parents and young people and teachers and politicians and everybody else who need something useful, something to influence their decisions, they're in such a different place than I am, and I can't tell them anything useful anyway, even if I wanted to.

I wish I didn't have this expectation hanging over me to be either pro or against all sorts of trivial things all the time. I wish it weren't always a question of promoting or opposing.



7. [falk](#) · [February 27, 2011 - 10:51 pm](#) ·

'I wish I didn't have this expectation hanging over me to be either pro or against all sorts of trivial things all the time. I wish it weren't always a question of promoting or opposing.'

Thoreau, in 'Walden' asks, 'must every[one] march to the same rhythm?'. I think you would like 'Walden'. It is about a man who 'marches' to his own rhythm, who decides what is right for himself and how he will live.

"I have a great deal of company in my house; especially in the morning, when nobody calls. Let me suggest a few comparisons, that some one may convey an idea of my situation. I am no more lonely than the loon in the pond that laughs so loud, or than Walden Pond itself. What company has that lonely lake, I pray? And yet it has not the blue devils, but the blue angels in it, in the azure tint of its waters..... I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a bumblebee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house."

<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden05.html>



8. [alicia h](#) · [February 27, 2011 - 11:15 pm](#) ·

falk — Oh, yes, it's a lovely book — I haven't read all of it, but bits and pieces here and there.

(all — Also, I'll just emphasize, for the record or something, that I didn't want to make it sound like I oppose youtube videos or audio files whatever others do. It's really good stuff, some of it. The little I know of. And I do think it's useful. Clearly, it must be, because people spend a lot of time watching video clips on the internet. I was merely, sort of, talking to myself as I was preparing supper earlier. About the problems adapting the old-fashioned steiner critic might have in an age of... I don't know... youtube? Everytime I hear stuff like, youtube, video clips, whatever multimedia-blaha, is the future... I shudder a bit.)



9. [Diana](#) · [February 28, 2011 - 1:47 pm](#) ·

I know what you mean, Alicia, though it's funny because I think of you as leading the way with the "new media" :) and here you are saying you don't really want to be bothered ... I know we're dinosaurs over on critics, talking mainly to each other because it's unlikely many Waldorf parents are actually reading that list.

As to the Steinermentary, I kind of wished I hadn't posted so enthusiastically about it without taking a closer look. I'm not at all keen on staged interviews. I think that's a questionable tactic, personally. I mean, there's nothing really wrong with it, since they're clear and upfront that it's staged, so it's not like it's deceptive. But I just don't think it's really a good thing. Compared to a real interview, a staged interview doesn't count for much, to me.



10. [alicia h](#) · [February 28, 2011 - 6:34 pm](#) ·

Yeah, the critics list is from an other era. It is a dinosaur. The skeleton of a dinosaur.

I suppose I'm into some things and not other. Like twitter, I really enjoy that. And blogging.

But I never understood, and never used, 'chats' and IRC and whatever that all was. I don't use my computer to make phone calls or play games on facebook and whatever is fashionable. I just don't have a clue, and figure there's enough to do anyway, so I stick to what I know...

I agree with you about the staged interviews, but I can't really object to it, since there's no deception going on. I think they're reading transcripts of real interviews, but still — I'd rather read the transcripts then. Or articles written based upon the interviews. I suppose the fake interview situation is going to be more persuasive than the transcripts would be (published as text), so there is some minor element of 'deceptive influence' right there.

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'Perhaps humankind can't bear too much reality, but neither can it bear too much unreality, too much abuse of the truth.' (Saul Bellow)
 '448 OMAR KHAYYĀM Omar had a personality; I, for better or worse, have none. In an hour I'll have strayed from what I am at this moment; tomorrow I'll have forgotten what I am today. Those who are who they are, like Omar, live in just one world, the external one. Those who aren't

who they are, like me, live not only in the external world but also in a diversified, ever-changing inner world. Try as we might, we could never have the same philosophy as Omar's. I harbour in me, like unwanted souls, the very philosophies I criticize. Omar could reject them all, for they were all external to him, but I can't reject them, because they're me.' (F Pessoa)

'Mrs Glass looked over, abstractedly, at the blue bathmat, across the tiled floor. Zooney stood as still as possible, in order not to break her mood.

"You can't live in the world with such strong likes and dislikes," Mrs Glass said to the bathmat, then turned again toward Zooney and gave him a long look, with very little, if any, morality in it. "Regardless of what you may think, young man," she said.' (JD Salinger)

'Art only begins where imitation ends.' (Oscar Wilde)

"I like zooney's blog," Steiner would say, "It's the only internet site with a foyer. Saul and I often meet there, by the ethereal kiosk. The ice-cream is splendid.'" (ThetisMercurio)

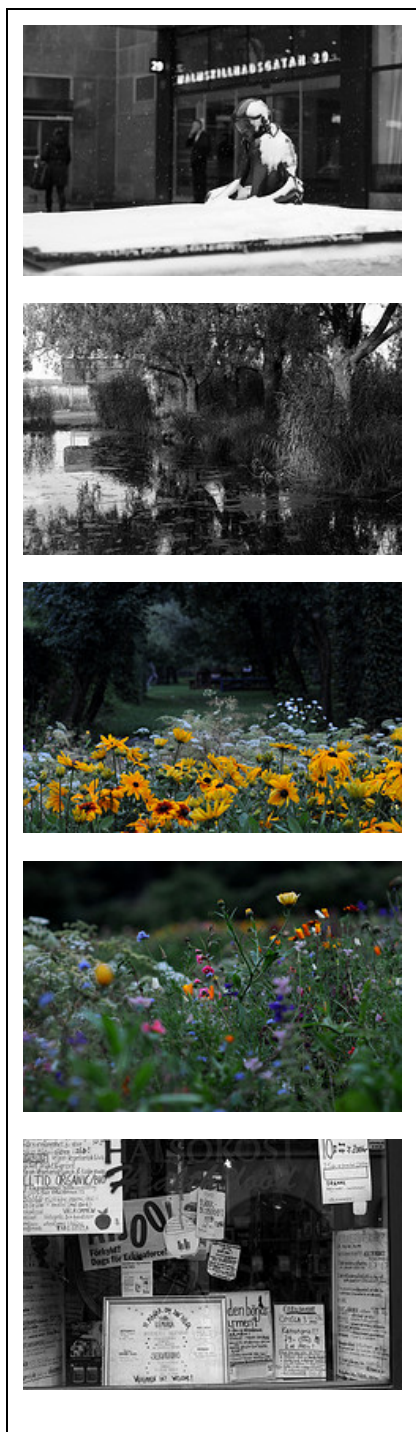
'What is the use of telling people repeatedly that the Society is not a sect and then behave as if it were one?' (Steiner)

'Laughter means distance. Where laughter is absent, madness begins. The moment one takes the world with complete seriousness one is potentially insane.' (Jens Bjerneboe)

'If you want to tell people the truth, make them laugh, otherwise they'll kill you.' (Oscar Wilde)

'Let's act like sphinxes, however falsely, until we reach the point of no longer knowing who we are. For we are, in fact, false sphinxes, with no idea of what we are in reality. The only way to be in agreement with life is to disagree with ourselves. Absurdity is divine.' (F Pessoa)

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the basics

the posts on this blog are written by alicia hamberg, with the guidance of mr dog, the canineosophist, and with inspiration from rudolf steiner, the anthroposophist, and the rest of our friends, people, dogs and strange beings who hang out with us in this remarkable ethereal kiosk



comments & discussion

comments in swedish, norwegian, danish, english, german are very welcome and much appreciated; and even though I do understand some french, spanish, dutch and italian, I prefer the aforementioned five languages. As a side-note: I eat food, not anthroposophists. And I'm not half as evil as you might think.

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