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CHILD AND MAN

A MAGAZINE FOR
THE EDUCATION FOUNDED BY
RUDOLF STEINER

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NUMBER 1

EDITORIAL

Child and Man, in its post-war form, enters upon its fifth year with a summer number. The reason for this is that the Easter Conference of the Rudolf Steiner Educational Association*, the publishers of the magazine, is by far the most favourable opportunity for the newly-formed editorial board to meet and plan the content of the four numbers of the ensuing year. So from now on the year's issue will start with the Summer and conclude with the Easter number.

The formation of an editorial board, consisting of representatives of all eight schools in Great Britain, makes the magazine much more clearly than hitherto the expression of the Rudolf Steiner education in this country, and I hope that this will become evident in the content of the magazine during the year. I think it would be worth while to publish the names of the editorial board in this first number, so that readers can have an idea of the representation of schools on it.

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THE AWAKENING OF THOUGHT IN CHILDREN

Rudolf Steiner.

*From "Study of Man" (August—September, 1919) Lecture VI
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Switzerland.*

If you look at the matter in this way, from the educational point of view, you will not wonder that the children differ with regard to awakens of consciousness. For you will find that children in whom the feeling life predominates are dreamy children; if thought is not fully aroused in such children they will certainly incline to dreaminess. This must be an incentive to you to work upon such children through strong feeling. And you can reasonably hope that these strong feelings will awaken clear thought in them, for, following the rhythm of life, everything that is asleep has the tendency sometime to awaken. If we have a child who broods dreamily in its feeling life, and we approach him with strong feelings, after some time these feelings awaken of themselves as thoughts. Children who brood still more and are even dull in their feeling life, will reveal specially strong tendencies in their will life. By studying these things you bring knowledge to bear on many a problem in child life. You may get a child in school who behaves like a true dullard. If you were immediately to decide "That is a weak-minded, a stupid child," if you tested him with experimental psychology, with wonderful memory tests and all the other things which are done now in psychological pedagogical laboratories, and if you then said, "stupid child in his whole disposition; belongs to the school for the feeble-minded, or to the new popular schools for backward children," you would be very far from understanding the real nature of the child. It may be that the child has special powers in the region of the will; he may be one of those children who, out of his choleric nature will develop active energy in his later life. But at present the will is asleep. And if the thinking cognition in the child is destined not to appear until later, then he must be treated appropriately so that in his later life he may be able to work with active energy. At first he seems to be a veritable dullard, but it may be that he is not that at all. And you must know how to awaken the will in a child of this kind. That means that you must work into his waking sleep-condition in such a way that later on—because all sleeping has a tendency to change into waking—this sleep is gradually wakened up into conscious will, a will that is perhaps very strong, only it is at present overpowered by the sleeping element. You must treat a child of this kind by building as little as possible on his powers of knowing, on his understanding, but by "hammering" in some things which will work strongly on the will, by letting him *walk* while he *speaks*. You will not have many such children, but in a case of this kind you can call the child out from the class—which

will be stimulating to the other children, and educative for the child himself—and get him to say sentences and accompany his words by movements. Thus: "Man (step) is (step) good (step)." In this way you combine the whole human being in the will element with the merely intellectual element in cognition, and you can gradually bring it about that the will is awakened into thought in such a child. It is not until we realise that in the waking human being we have to do with different conditions of consciousness, with waking, dreaming, and sleeping, that we are brought to a true knowledge of our task with regard to the growing child.

THINKING AND IMAGINATION IN CHILDHOOD

A. C. Harwood.

The great change that has come over thinking in human history is the advance from pictorial thinking to abstract or pictureless thinking. The evidence for the change is abundant. The consciousness of early mankind expressed itself in myth and fairy tale and not in general statements. The early Hellenes did not say 'I had a thought' but 'Pallas Athene spoke to me.' Sleep was a god who came and closed the eyes. Spring was Persephone rising from the underworld. The most ordinary actions of life were expressed in pictures which were immensely real and concrete. Words 'escaped the barrier of the teeth.' A man did not say 'I was afraid,' but 'My dear knees were loosed.' Almost every word contained a picture of some concrete experience. 'Plenty' in Latin is either 'abundantia'—the overflowing of a river (unda) or 'ubertas' 'udderiness' where we almost experience the squirting of the rich milk into the pail. 'Triumph' has as its root 'ter' and 'pes'—the dance in three measure into which the foot involuntarily broke in moments of sudden joy. More than most European languages, English has lost the sense of the concrete picture experience both through the lost memory of Anglo-Saxon roots and through the large number of Latin words which have been incorporated in the language since the sixteenth century, words of whose pictorial origin we are for the most part no longer conscious. When we speak of 'insulation' or 'isolation' we do not form any picture of an island. 'Exaggeration' does not make us feel as though we were throwing more earth on a mound. In fact we are so used to the abstract non-pictorial word that we are apt to laugh at expressions in languages which have kept the pictorial element more apparent. 'Waffenstillstand'—weapon-stand-still—seems to us a clumsy expression for an 'armistice'—and yet 'armistice' contains precisely the same picture of the grounding of weapons. 'Fingerhut'—finger hat—seems slightly ludicrous for a thimble. Yet thimble—thumb instrument—contained much the same picture for our Anglo-Saxon ancestors who first used it. In the first dawn of language, whether some concrete thing had to be named, or an experience to be described, the word always evoked an image and the picture experience has left its trace in word, and story and myth.

But we can also take another path to the same discovery. We can examine the moments when our own intellectual consciousness of today is repressed and dimmed. Our dreams present our experiences and waking thoughts to us in the form of pictures. We return to something like the consciousness of earlier mankind. A bad conscience may be seen as a monster pursuing us. We may find ourselves rooted to the ground like Daphne, or flying through the air like Procne. All manner of pictures rise spontaneously once the restraining hand of intellectual consciousness has been withdrawn.

One of the many ways in which childhood presents us with a miniature of all human development is that it shows a similar progression from a pictorial to an abstract consciousness. We can see how the mind of the little child seizes on the suggestive form or gesture in any object and turns it into some related shape. A forked stick is a man, a leaf is a fish or a boat, pebbles are cakes or coins, and all things suggest something else, as they did to those earlier country folk who gave to flowers the names of Lady's Slipper, or Shepherd's Purse, or Cranesbill, or Day's Eye, or Dent du Lion. This kind of fantasy, based on inherent gesture, is one of the earliest forms of consciousness in childhood, and if it is not killed it furnishes the poet's eye with an ever new vision of familiar things. The poems of Andrew Young are shot through with fantasy of this order. We see a haystack with a new eye when we read:

"Too dense to have a door,
Window or fireplace or a floor,
They saw this cottage up,
Huge bricks of grass, clover and buttercup
Carting to byre and stable
Where cow and horse will eat wall, roof and gable."

We see an orchard in early summer all the more vividly because no one has previously presented it to us in quite this way:

"And dandelions flood
The orchards as though apple trees
Dropped in the grass ripe oranges."

It is in such poems as these that we can best recapture with our adult minds the consciousness of childhood when almost anything may turn into almost anything, and when (without the stimulus of fear) 'how easy is a bush supposed a bear.' The consciousness of little children is deeply dependent on the world around them and what they are doing with it, but it is not the world which we see. Our gaze is passive and receptive, the children's is active and creative. It is from the will activity in which they are immersed that the pictures of their fantasy spring. Never will you see a small child (as you will often see an older child or an adult) doing one thing and thinking about another. Will and thought are as one, and the concentration is complete. Happy is the man who can maintain such singleness of mind in his later years.

As the child advances towards the seventh year his thinking gradually becomes freed from the sphere of his immediate will activity. But it is still entirely pictorial and concrete. The child understands a king giving commands; he does not understand laws and governments. He appreciates what men do, not economic causes or the laws of probability. He lives in immediate experience and is not troubled by the unreal future or the unremembered past.

In our modern age, sometimes with extreme subtlety and sometimes with extraordinary crudity, the whole apparatus of education is directed to awaken the child as quickly as possible to abstract pictureless thinking. The process generally begins with the teaching of letters. These letters once represented something real. An 'S' was perhaps a hissing snake, an 'f' a fly or a darting fish. But all this has disappeared, and the letters are now complete abstractions quite unrelated to the sounds they represent. And once the letters have been learnt the floodgates are open to every kind of abstraction. Scientific laws, theories of evolution, astronomical hypotheses, all such things are explained to the children in simple terms but in such a way as to accustom them to a pictureless thinking. Remember only that until a few centuries ago it would have been impossible for any one to grasp anything so abstract as the 'law of gravity.' Nick Bottom, the weaver, would have observed that the eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, nor his heart to conceive what the law of gravity is. Yet we nowadays expound such things to our children when their mother's milk is scarcely out of them.

It is, however, one of the objects of a Rudolf Steiner education to preserve and fortify the picture-forming faculty of the mind as long as possible and to carry it forward to the age of maturity. There are many ways in which the attempt is made and many reasons for making the attempt, of which only a few characteristic examples can be given in the space of a short article. The reasons for doing it will essentially affect the method, and must therefore be taken first.

If a distinction is made between fantasy and imagination it may perhaps be profitably drawn on these lines, though any distinction will naturally not be a definite one when the two things merge so closely into each other. Fantasy is a new representation of something already familiar. Its root meaning is 'a making visible.' But this may be taken to mean not merely a making visible of the external object, but also of its inner qualities. And inner qualities are only revealed by pictures. That is why poets are always endeavouring to answer the question posed explicitly by Shelley in the 'Ode to a Skylark'—'What is most like thee?' Indeed this whole ode with its series of pictures, each revealing some new attribute of the skylark and its song, is a classical example of the exercise of fantasy.

Imagination, on the other hand, is the pure making of images. In the wonderful passage on imagination in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, this making of something, as it were, out of nothing is very clearly expressed.

"And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

In the sense of this distinction therefore it may be said that children progress through the stage of fantasy to that of imagination. Now, to begin at the most practical level, imagination in the sense of revealing the unknown is one of the most useful faculties for ordinary life, which is always presenting us with unforeseen situations. There is always a choice between foreseeing the unknown future by imagination or learning by experience, that is by the mistakes which are made through the lack of imagination. I remember the case of a very hard-headed business man who threatened to take his child away from Michael Hall because, although he was in general content with his child's progress, he could not agree with 'all this painting and imaginative nonsense'. Happily something had recently occurred in the neighbourhood, where the school then was, which enabled me to convince him that there might be something in imagination after all. It was in the days when London was going over from the pleasant old milkcans which rattled so agreeably in the milkmen's floats, to the bottle-and-factory method of distribution. In the very road where this man lived a large milkbottling centre (the children called it a milk factory) had been established with new machinery for sealing the bottles with a round cardboard stopper which snuggled nicely inside the rim of the bottle. It was a pretty device, but unfortunately the inventor had not used the eye of imagination to body forth the shapes of things unknown. He had not seen the bottle standing in the early hours on Mr. Smith's doorstep while the London traffic began rolling past, depositing a fine layer of dust in the hollow conveniently made for its reception. Nor had he visualised Mrs. Smith opening the bottle by pushing the cardboard stopper down into the milk with her thumb and licking the cream off while the dust settled gently into the milk. Experience brought all these things to light. Inspectors and Ministries entered on the scene. The machinery had to be scrapped and new machinery installed at a cost of I forget how many thousands of pounds. The idea that lack of imagination could be assessed at a definite number of pounds proved all-convincing to the hard-headed business man, and the child stayed at the school.

There is, however, a much deeper reason why the picture-forming element should be preserved and fostered in childhood. Since the dawn of the scientific age knowledge of the world has been sought

in the realms of what can be numbered, measured and weighed. This quantitative approach, however, is fundamentally only capable of exploring the mechanical and chemical world. The processes of life elude it. Even in the plant kingdom modern botanical research cannot approach the forces which create the form and colour of the plant. No botanist, holding a seed in his hand, can explain how that seed will attract to itself the forces which create a flower with a certain number and arrangement of petals, of a certain colour and texture, and possessing its own peculiar fragrance. Ruskin expressed this failure of knowledge a hundred years ago when he said that science can explain how the apple falls from the tree but not how it gets up on to it. Modern chemical treatment of the soil produces diseases in plants for which the only remedy is increasing sprays of poison, and diseases in animals for which we have no resource but wholesale slaughter. In the higher kingdoms of life the failure becomes even more marked. The human soul, its origin and destiny, and the nature of its relation with the body, elude quantitative research. Our abstract pictureless thinking of today has presented us with a world built up of mathematical constructs. But nobody in his heart of hearts really accepts this view. Nobody really believes that his home, his friend, his dog and the plants in his garden are composed of mathematical constructs. But most people have no alternative picture with which to confound this mathematical conception of the world. Yet we have reached the nadir of this kind of thinking, and we shall either be overwhelmed by the forces it has released, or we must awaken in ourselves a new kind of consciousness capable of understanding life. But life reveals itself through qualitative media, and these again are only apprehensible through the pictures they present. In his general philosophy—to which he gave the name of Anthroposophy because knowledge of man stands at its centre—Rudolf Steiner strove to introduce to this century a new knowledge of the living world to which the picture element of imagination is the door. In his work for education he strove to foster this picture element in childhood so that it might form later on the basis for a new philosophy and a new science.

The question of how this is achieved properly belongs to future more specialised articles in 'Child and Man,' and only a few general indications can here be given. To begin with it is interesting to see that Rudolf Steiner transformed that chapter of instruction which he often described as the beginning of abstraction—the teaching of the letters of the alphabet. He insisted again and again that these should be presented to the child as pictures so that the picture consciousness should be maintained even in this initiation to abstraction. How hungry children are for such pictures I can testify from the experience of teaching Greek letters to much older children. They long to see a phi (ϕ) represented as a phulax or guard with his round shield and upright spear; or a gamma (γ) as a geranos or crane, alighting with his long legs and wings about to be folded on some

rooftop. When I have told the children, after a few such pictorially presented letters, that there is no time to do the same with the rest, they have clamoured to have a whole pictorial alphabet.

Naturally, fairy tales, myths and sagas, which are the very stuff of imagination, play an immense part in the life of the younger children. It is perhaps more significant to call attention to the way in which over many years the children are introduced to the kingdoms of nature. At about the tenth year—when the age of fairy-tale and fable, but not of myth, is passing—the beginning is made not with plant or animal but with the kingdom of man himself. This would not have been so surprising to the Greek or Medieval mind, because in older times people still recognised the image of man as built in the likeness of God and therefore capable of revealing many secrets. The upright position of man, the fact that his hands are free to serve his neighbour, that he can unite his hands in prayer, or extend them in blessing—the very form of man was held to reveal his spiritual origin. It was this kind of study of man—not anatomy and physiology—that Rudolf Steiner wanted to be the prelude to the child's first conscious grasp of the natural world: then he should be slowly led from the animal to the plant kingdom, and to the mineral and the beginning of the sciences in their modern sense. But even here the children are first of all to experience the picture of what they see with their eyes. How many children know the Copernican theory but cannot recognise the constellations, and have never gazed with reverence at the galaxy? How many have learnt the Newtonian theory of light waves, but do not know the effect of one colour on another, or what is the response of the eye when it gazes on red or green or yellow, or what they really see when they look through a prism? This is the last integrity of picture-consciousness—to know what one really sees; and even this has largely been taken away from modern science which studies the products of instruments not the things themselves. This also has to be restored both in the school and in the world at large. The beginning of scientific thinking must also be the picture.

THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT AND IMAGINATION IN THE CLASSROOM

F. R. Woolfs

It is a marvellous thing to be present when a little child first begins to use that capacity of the human soul which we call thinking—when he puts two and two together, as we say, and is able to call to mind something previously experienced and use it in a given situation. I remember seeing a little fair-haired boy, whom I knew very well, toddle fresh from sleep, into the kitchen where his mother was cake-making. He had a great desire to see what was going on and kept trying to peer over the table, but it was no good—he was too tiny! Then suddenly without uttering a sound, he went away quickly and

came back in triumph with a small stool. This he placed on the floor near the table and stood upon it with solemn satisfaction, able to see clearly all the interesting processes of cake-making. In another household there lived a small boy of three and a half, who was used daily to watch a very efficient charwoman at work. The charwoman was called Mrs. Clegg and was a great friend of Timothy's. One day another charwoman was engaged called Mrs. Lynn. At lunch that same day Timothy's mother spoke of Mrs. Lynn by name and a surprised father asked, "Who on earth is Mrs. Lynn?" "She's part of Mrs. Clegg," said Timothy, before his mother had time to answer. To observe these beginnings of thinking with small children is a delight, but one has to know the child intimately to be able to judge whether it is the first time that a particular piece of thinking is being done.

It is obvious that the thinking of the growing child will be greatly influenced by the events going on around it and will be the outcome of connecting together observations with the memory of things experienced. Only, of course, every child is different in its capacity for observation, in its ability to remember and above all in its ability to connect what it observes with what it remembers. The environment of children is of the utmost importance to them, including even the thoughts of the people around them at home and at school. They should, wherever possible, be protected from mechanical noises and from mechanised art in the form of the gramophone, the wireless and television. Children need to receive art in the form of stories and music and songs through the medium of real people—through their parents, teachers and friends who can make a living connection with them and guide them in their appreciation of the beautiful. Thus they receive the thoughts together with the sounds of the human voice, which is not possible in the case of the wireless etc. The child's thinking develops from its experiences—from its many and varied "meetings" with the stones, the plants and the animals, and from its daily contact with human beings, who are engaged in so many arts and skilled activities which call forth the deepest interest. True observation is of the greatest help to clear thinking. We should take great pains to help the child to observe the things around him in detail and be on our guard against adding theories of how this or that comes about. Abstract thinking, in the shape of theories or scientific explanations or intellectually thought out problems to be solved, have no place in the true development of the child before the thirteenth or fourteenth year. Moreover, one can even cause harm to young children by teaching them subjects in an intellectual, abstract way. The consciousness of a young child is very different from that of an adult and only after the age of puberty ought one to begin to teach them in a way comparable to that in which one would teach an adult, that is calling upon purely intellectual powers of thinking.

In a school run on the principles of Rudolf Steiner it is at the age of six plus that formal teaching begins. Then the children are introduced to writing, number work and reading in an artistic way, so that their powers of imagination are nurtured at the same time as their thinking develops. There is no doubt that those experiences of the child which engage its whole being help the thinking process, so that it is good, for example, if when the children learn their tables, they say them rhythmically to the accompaniment of clapping or walking or jumping, arranged in a variety of ways. Thus one brings the will activity into the number work. It is right to use the fingers and toes for counting and to take shells or nuts to work with when introducing the four rules of arithmetic. "Here is a heap of nuts, children. Let us divide them into three lots"—and let the children count the actual nuts. Later on they will need to be able to divide a number by three "in their heads", but the experience of number should precede the abstract mental process of being able to calculate without having recourse to actual things. As every teacher knows, some children need actual things to count with for a much longer time than others and one should always let these children have them and never make them feel ashamed of not being able to calculate "in their heads," for they will come to this process in time. The skill which children acquire when learning to knit is also an aid to thinking and both boys and girls should be taught knitting in the handwork lessons. When one comes to teach writing it is also good to give children as much experience as possible of the forms of the letters, by allowing them to run or walk in the shape of a letter 'B' for example as well as paint or draw it. Not before the age of nine or ten need they come to small writing with ink.

At about this age of nine or ten the tables of length and weight etc. will be introduced and every effort should be made to teach these first in a practical way. When in the same year one begins grammar with the children, one should first try to awaken in them a sense of awe and wonder for the majesty and creative power of language, and then take them to the most active part of speech—the verb. They will delight in telling and acting some of the many things that man can do. They will notice how much less animals can do, and still less the plants. By doing many things in the lesson one can lead them to an active experience of the verb. I remember one boy of nine who would not be content with writing a few examples of man's activities, but covered some three pages with verbs, and the humour was not missing! Nouns, adjectives and adverbs demand a different approach but the teacher should aim at helping the children to experience the different functions of the various parts of speech. One knows how just the subject of grammar reveals each child's capacity for thought, but the teacher can do a great deal to tend that capacity so that the child's thinking grows strong and clear. When in other connections one needs to explain the meaning of words, it is often most helpful to give a graphic picture of the derivation; for example, take the word

aegis. It was Jupiter's shield that was called Aegis. What better protection than being under Jupiter's shield!

Hand in hand with allowing the child to gain an experience of the world, whose content will form the basis of his thinking, we as parents and teachers need to know intimately all the processes that take place in the consciousness of the growing child and for this knowledge we are greatly indebted to Rudolf Steiner. It often happens that the teaching of history is begun too early, and then children will make the most wonderful howlers, for they can have no sense of history as such much before the age of twelve. They have no faculty developed before this age to appreciate events happening in the course of time. About the age of thirteen the history of the discoverers—of Vasco da Gama, Columbus, Magellan and others make a great appeal to their thirst for adventure and they will also be able to understand the historical importance of these people who by their discoveries laid the foundations for our modern era. If in teaching one can kindle enthusiasm one immediately enhances the child's possibility of understanding, and this is as true in the history lesson as in science or language teaching. It is also of the greatest importance to give the children ideas that are capable of metamorphosis, that is ideas which can change and grow during the time that lies ahead of them, when they gradually come to maturity. They can, for instance, at the age of thirteen to fourteen understand something of the marvellous forces and varying conditions which bring about the formation of the clouds; one's own enthusiasm may stimulate them to observe the ever changing countenance of the sky and to ponder on the majesty of the thunder storm; one can describe to them the characteristics of Howard's four basic types of cloud, cirrus, cumulus, stratus and nimbus, and discuss the findings of science with regard to the variations of temperature and pressure in the atmosphere, and perhaps tell something of the discoveries of Heaviside and Appleton, but if one clamps these things into rigid definitions, which are incapable of growth, one tends to paralyse the children's thinking and stultify their imagination, so that in adult life they cannot think creatively.

"The contents of our thoughts," says Rudolf Steiner, "form in a certain sense our inner destiny. Yet within the life of thoughts one thing is entirely our own—the way in which we connect our thoughts with one another and separate them again. The will in our thought life is our own." When the children are grown-up we hope that they will be able to play a full part in the civilisation of their time. For this they will need to be able to think clearly, appraising the circumstances around them with all their faculties, and not depending on definitions or ready made opinions when they have to make judgments and draw conclusions. The world in which we live is very complex, bristling with enormous problems, which demand for their solution thinking that is comprehensive, creative and clear.

MIDSUMMER

H. L. Hetherington

A paradox of our times lies in the fact that a materialistic age is becoming ever less acquainted with the real world, but builds, both outwardly and inwardly, an artificial environment for itself. In the education of children one of the most natural, and rewarding, counter-influences to this tendency is a close study and deep experience of the four seasons of the year. By being made conscious of the season in which they live, by being reminded day by day of the passing of the year in the steady grandeur of its repetition, children learn a deeper rhythm, a mightier pulse-beat of the world, which steadies their own and brings perspective and proportion into their often over-hurried and circumscribed lives.

The four Christian Festivals which mark the turning points of the seasons are thus high moments in the school year at a Rudolf Steiner School. Where the actual day falls outside the school term, preparation is made nevertheless during the term for an event which will fall on a day in the holidays. Michaelmas Day (September 29th), Christmas Day, Easter Sunday and St. John's Day (June 24th) mark moments of joyous solemnity in the year and are carefully prepared at school during the preceding weeks.

In this number of CHILD AND MAN it is my task to speak of the St. John's Day Festival at midsummer. Rudolf Steiner has often spoken of the spiritual connections of the seasons and illuminates much for us. The change from season to season is a change of the relationship of earth to sky. (It is not forgotten that what is said here applies only to the northern hemisphere. If one is realistic, one should celebrate the Christian Festivals at the opposite times of the year in Australia). As the spring days lengthen and the power of the sun grows stronger, the warmth and light draw up the plants out of the dark recesses of the soil, where they have lain as seeds. The sky calls to the earth, the earth stirs and rises in the tree sap, in the budding plants, in the exhalation of water vapour, so that earth and sky mingle and dream. The subtle and more volatile elements of scent, the gentle communication of pollen wafted on light airs from stem to stem, the ceaseless humming of myriad insects, this is a life conjured forth by the sun and lived out above the earth's surface. Earth and sky in the region of air have met and mingled and the earth dreams the meeting through.

If this is the natural state of summer, one has now to ask, what relationship to all this does the Christian Festival of midsummer bear? St. John the Baptist, the mighty forerunner of One even

mightier in his sun-like majesty, has as his festival the summer solstice. From that moment onward the days shorten and the sun rises ever more southward on the eastern horizon. The power of the sun declines until the winter solstice, celebrated as the birth of the Christ Child. The prophet of whom Our Lord said that there was none mightier than he, nevertheless pointed to Jesus in whom the Christ lived and said: "I must decrease and He must increase." The mightiest of human figures had nevertheless to point to the Christ and gladly and humbly confess that the new had been born and the old, however mighty and grandiose the eminence it had attained, must give ground to it.

In the passage of the year this truth is enacted ever and again at the midsummer festival of St. John. The natural sun must steadily give way to the new sun-birth, the spiritual sunlight born at Christmastime in the grotto at Bethlehem. The mighty power of the physical sun begins at the summer solstice to give place to the spiritual sun which will ray forth with intimate yet kingly radiance at Christmastide. The St. John's Fire, which symbolises at the Midsummer Festival at so many of the English Rudolf Steiner Schools the outward glory of the natural sun, must at last die away to a low heap of glowing embers and the warm shadows of the summer night creep back again among the circle of watchers about the fire. With the return of the darkness comes a thought and a picture which lives in the hearts of all those present. It is this: At that moment all those present face another, a second growing darkness, but one which at its deepest moment, will be lit by a great and a supernal light, irradiating a manger filled with hay.

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOLS AT HOME AND ABROAD

No. 4. Elmfield School, Stourbridge, Worcs.

Eileen Hutchins

Elmfield School first arose in Birmingham as a branch of the Sunfield Children's Homes, but owing to the war it was unable to continue and many of the children went to other Rudolf Steiner Schools. In 1945 however there was once more a demand for a School. The children of some of the first teachers of Elmfield and even of one of the first pupils were now of school age and their parents were anxious for them to have a Rudolf Steiner education. A little Nursery Class was started in a room at Clent Grove lent for the purpose but for the work to grow and become established some kind of permanent premises had to be found. At this time buildings were very difficult to acquire and although huts and work shops, parish halls and vacant houses were all searched in turn, no place seemed suitable.

At last a house was found near Stourbridge which offered what was required. Park Hill was a very large private house standing on a slope overlooking the wide countryside and surrounded by gardens and a field of its own. There were many light airy rooms and the house could accommodate a school of at least six or seven classes. There was one difficulty which nevertheless in the end turned out to be a great blessing. The house had been taken over by the military authorities during the war and had been occupied by both English and American troops who had left their trade marks. Windows were broken, boards ripped up and electric wiring torn out. The garden was equally desolate, for lorries had ploughed up the lawn and everywhere was a wilderness of thistles and long grass. Yet the whole place had an atmosphere of peace and among the weeds there bloomed red and white roses.

The house offered wonderful possibilities, but how could it be bought and repaired? What supporter, however interested, could raise several thousand pounds for the purchase of such an estate. And who would risk such a venture when the number of certain pupils was less than twenty? It was at this moment that the father of one of the original teachers came upon the scene and bought the house for the school to start its work. The wrecked condition of the building now proved an asset for it scared away other would-be purchasers.

Next came the long process of obtaining permits to repair the damage, and by the time each department had forwarded the forms to another the summer was well advanced. Armies of workers carried on their improvements at top speed, but the opening day of the school drew near before the work was nearly finished. The school furniture was carried in under ladders and scaffolding and the pioneer teachers had to sleep in empty attics and cook over a solitary electric toaster which broke under the strain. But no words can describe the enthusiasm of those early times.

With a great deal of help from generous friends and supporters a sufficient part of the building was at last in good order for the opening to take place. On October 16th 1946 parents, teachers and children gathered together and thought with gratitude of the great teacher Rudolf Steiner through whom they had come together to found this work.

The first group of teachers owed a great deal to the experience they had gained in their connection with Clent Grove.

In its first term Elmfield had 32 children and 5 full time teachers.

Difficulties were by no means over. The first winter was very severe and coke was in short supply so that more than once the school was on the point of having to close for lack of fuel. But each time the

situation was saved by some kind friend giving timely aid. The garden was also at first a heavy burden, as it was entirely overgrown with weeds and the first gardeners proved incompetent. However in spite of all these difficulties the school grew steadily. Equipment and accommodation soon became a problem. The largest room in the school was no longer adequate for Gym and Eurhythmy and was crowded out at end-of-term Assemblies. In the second year a Parents Association was formed, and has since given the most generous and valuable help. This Association has erected a large army hut in the grounds to serve as an Assembly Hall and Gym. Although it does not yet look very beautiful from the outside, visitors on entering are agreeably surprised to find a most attractive hall with a splendid floor and stage.

Parents and teachers worked together painting and distempering the walls and ceiling. To meet the cost of the building the parents themselves have given many social functions.

Elmfield School has journeyed a long way since that first morning in October, 1946. Two hostels have been opened in the neighbourhood, every available space in the school is now in use and the teachers' room is so small that not all the staff can be there together. A hut has been procured and plans drawn up to provide for three new classrooms but owing to the present restrictions on building we are still waiting for the final permit to erect them.

There are now 150 pupils (eight classes and a Nursery Class) and in September, 1951 the eldest group entered the Upper School. Although the classes are relatively small there is a regular flow of new pupils of all ages including three from America.

Every Rudolf Steiner school has its own particular difficulties in the struggle to acquire premises and staff and to win understanding from the parents. The increasing anxiety caused by the world situation and by the rising cost of living, offers little encouragement to a work of free enterprise. Nevertheless there is a quality of growth in a work which is founded on an understanding of man. In the words of Florence Nightingale "The small still beginning, the simple hardship, the silent and gradual struggle upwards; these are the climate in which an enterprise really thrives and grows."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *Should my child go to the cinema and watch television?*

(These two articles are reprinted from the Michael Hall Letter, by kind permission).

A. C. Harwood.

There are many levels on which the mechanical reproduction of pictures, music and the human voice can be discussed in their relation to the lives of children. Their most obvious danger is that, especially with wireless and television, children are inevitably subjected to things which are quite unsuitable for them. I do not suppose that there is a house in the country with a wireless set or television where children are not fairly constantly hearing or seeing things which are unsuitable for them to hear or see. It is one of the tragedies of our times also to witness the number of children present in the cinema when unsuitable and even objectionable films are being shown.

There are, however, many other aspects of the matter to be taken into consideration as well. Especially with regard to the wireless the very fact that it is so often left on when there is nothing suitable or interesting for children to hear, breeds habits of half attention which are extremely difficult to eradicate. At Michael Hall we are convinced from our twenty-seven years of teaching that children today have not the same power of attention as they had a quarter of a century ago, and we have found that this conviction is supported by teachers in other schools. To many people and to not a few children the presence of something going on in the background, to which only scattered attention is paid, has become a necessity of life. Children, who are accustomed to listen to a voice to which no special attention or respect need be paid and which is often switched off in an arbitrary manner, lose their natural respect for a voice of a real person telling them things which it is important for them to hear. The wireless is already breeding a generation who cannot listen, and there is a real danger that television will make a generation which cannot see.

There is, however, a still deeper aspect of the matter which was touched upon by the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he recently opposed the idea of bringing television into the schools because it cuts across the human relationship between teacher and pupil. Not the teacher who knows the children, but a Corporation who knows them not, decides what they shall see and hear and when they shall see and hear it. For a child there is an immense difference between hearing something told them by a person whom they know, respect and love, and hearing even the same thing uttered by an impersonal

voice. This difference is one of the many points which brings to light the attack made in our time on the human soul. There is little in our modern civilisation to stimulate the finer qualities of love and devotion in the intercourse between human souls. Many people today hardly distinguish between the real voice, which is the product of living breath and living soul, and the dead mechanical reproduction which comes from the vibration of dead substance in the wireless. Nor do they distinguish between real movement in its rhythmical flow and the series of static pictures which make the illusion of movement on the cinema. It is true that the consciousness is not able to move fast enough to detect the series of jerks which make up the movement of a film. The unconscious, however, the deeper part of the soul, experiences such things so that people of finer perceptions feel jangled and wearied after a film in a way they do not after a play. All who have studied Rudolf Steiner's work would appreciate how much more this means for children who receive impressions of the outer world right into their physical body than it does for the adult. It builds into them something of a mechanical quality at a time when the life-body and the soul need nourishment from what is richly natural and richly human.

A similar mechanical illusion is found on the television screen, which also shares with the films one eminently bad quality which is typical of the modern age. In the modern theory of sense perception the senses are purely passive. The eye, for instance, is a sensitive camera receiving different vibrations of light on the retina. Rudolf Steiner always attacked this one-sided view of sense perception; for he always regarded the senses as active entities embracing also the energy of the will. In the eye there is the meeting place of nerve activity, the bearer of pure sensitiveness, and blood activity, the bearer of the will. Everyone who looks at a painting feels instinctively that he must not stand in one fixed position in front of it. He will move backwards and forwards, to left and to right, to get different aspects. This not only brings his whole body into motion, but it also brings into play the fine muscles and activity of the eye. In a theatre, also, the interest in the acting is an interest in depth. An actor speaking from the back of the stage makes an entirely different impression from one who speaks from the footlights. The eye is always travelling from background to foreground, and to background again. At the films, however, or before the television screen, the focus of the eye is always constant. The activity of sense perception is dimmed and a purely passive attitude is adopted in the sense itself to what is placed before it. This is a subtle difference, but one of immense importance. It can be illustrated by this difference. Sometimes one goes for a country walk with a man whose senses are really active, and then it is astonishing how much there is to be seen, what fine distinctions of colour and form are perceived,

At other times, one has the company of a man whose senses are passive, and then even a beautiful piece of country becomes somehow flat and uninteresting. The television will certainly develop the latter kind of man rather than the former.

I was recently in America where television is almost universal, and everywhere between the two coasts teachers told me of the bad effects it was having on children. When a child is accustomed to having everything presented to him in ready made pictures, he loses the faculty of making his own pictures, in imagination. Normally, when one tells a story to a class of young children, one can see plainly, far more plainly than with adults, that, listening to your words, they are painting a wonderful picture in the mind's eye of castles and forests and giants and heroes. This ability to make pictures in the mind is one of the most precious capacities of childhood and one of the most valuable and practical gifts which childhood can make to adulthood. I would beg all parents to think very carefully before they introduce into their homes a modern mechanical device which possesses an immense fascination for children but which tends to destroy in the child one of the most childlike and beautiful qualities of the mind.

And with regard to the wireless, I would say, keep it from your children as long as you can. They will be far better employed when themselves engaged in active occupations. It is, indeed, one of the results of modern, easy, mechanical means of amusement that children today often do not know what to do with themselves unless some entertainment is provided for them. When the children are older, perhaps over fourteen, and there may be something important and valuable for them to hear, let them go to the wireless with the same expectation and concentration as they would go to hear a real man really speaking or real music being played by real musicians. Then, out of the powers of their own soul, they may be able to make good something of that soul quality which is essentially lacking in all means of mechanical reproduction. If parents and teachers combine together in such an attitude, they will really be fighting a battle for the human soul which so many powers and influences are attacking at the present time.

H. Gebert.

If we want to understand the most pernicious effects of wireless, cinema and television on the development of children it will be necessary to study more closely the functioning of these apparatuses on the one hand, and of our sense organs on the other. The effort involved in this will be well rewarded because it may enable us to understand the causes of many deleterious effects which have been observed by educators and parents.

I want, first of all, to draw attention to one aspect of the functioning of our eyes and ears, which is usually overlooked. We often think that they are just passive in receiving light and sound impressions which are then conducted to the brain by the nerves. A few very simple observations will convince us that this is not the whole story.

If we look at a very bright light, such as an electric bulb or the sun and shut our eyes afterwards we can see a brightly coloured image of the light. The colours of that image change continuously and rhythmically and the picture only fades away very gradually. Careful observation can convince one that the colours which appear follow a definite pattern depending on the brightness of the source and its general appearance, they are not at all fortuitous.

Another very beautiful and interesting phenomenon can be observed every day and is a more delicate variant of the one described above. Look at any object whatsoever, preferably one with strong contrasts of light and shade and having well defined colour. After about one minute's concentrated observation turn your eyes to any neutral surface such as a grey or cream wall. You will see an exact image of the object only with dark and light reversed and every colour giving rise to its opposite or complementary colour.

Once this phenomenon has been consciously observed it will be noticed everywhere. Dark objects seen against a light background often appear to be surrounded by a bright halo, which is nothing but such an after image conjured up by slight movements of the eye. These effects do therefore take place all the time whether we observe them or not.

Similar effects can be observed in the case of hearing, though they are not so immediately obvious. Everyone will, however, have experienced how a very rhythmical tune urges them to march or dance, or how a sharp sudden noise 'makes them jump.' In children and primitive peoples the conscious control which civilised adults have over their reactions, is not there, and it will often be observed how they burst into dance spontaneously on hearing music. Starting from these crude and gross effects we can train our observation and we shall finally be able to convince ourselves that every sound stimulus is followed by an inner reaction of movement just as a light stimulus from outside gives rise to colour reaction from inside the organism.

If space permitted it would be possible to enlarge on these observations but everyone can make them for himself. I am here only concerned to show that these and similar phenomena make it clear how any act of perception is always the result of an outer stimulus and a reaction of the organism which in the case of sound goes very deep indeed, so far in fact that it can move the limbs.

Once one takes these conclusions seriously one will have to be very much more careful about the sense impressions to which one exposes children. It is well known that all organs in the body are shaped and maintained by the work they do. An athlete develops his muscles by constant use. If a change in habits makes the services of any organ superfluous the organ will atrophy in due course. People who have had their legs in plaster for a long time have to learn to walk again when the plaster is taken off. Everybody is very careful to give young children healthy exercises for their limbs so that bone and muscle should grow rightly. We are most concerned with with the diet of babies, so that their digestion may have a proper development. We are not, however, so conscious that what a child sees or hears forms the sense organs in the same way as movement forms the limbs. That does not apply only to what is consciously perceived but to everything that makes an impression on eye and ear.

Now we must turn to the actual functioning of wireless, cinema and television.

It is well known that every sounding object vibrates. The air around it vibrates and these vibrations are carried to the ear of the listener and stimulate it. In the wireless studio a very light object such as a flexible metal plate or a paper cone are substituted for the ear of the listener. These light objects are made to vibrate by the vibrating air and these vibrations are turned into electrical oscillations which are sent out by the transmitter. They are collected by the aerial of the receiver and activate a light object similar to that in the studio which in its turn will set up air vibrations to stimulate the listener's ear. The air vibrations in the listener's room will be very similar to those in the studio and the same sounds will therefore be heard in both places. This is a rough outline of what happens. Again we must take the trouble to look at it in more detail.

Every tone has its characteristic vibration. The speed of the vibrations depends on the pitch of the note. The same note played on different instruments has quite a different quality and this difference is expressed in the shape of the vibrations. This shape can be rendered visible if the sound is allowed to impinge on a very sensitive gasflame, the positions of which can be recorded by high speed photography. Pictures obtained in this way show that there is not only a difference in shape if the same note is produced by different instruments but even a difference in skill of the performers can be detected. Once one has seen the complicated shapes produced even by one instrument as by a single vowel sound well articulated one will start to wonder whether any membrane, however light and sensitive, can ever truly reproduce the vibrations of an orchestra or

of human speech. It is in fact well known that this is impossible. Every solid body when set vibrating will naturally emit only a very few notes. The tone of a dropping coin for instance has often been used to test its genuineness, so characteristic is it. When set vibrating artificially every membrane will therefore favour its own characteristic tones and if a wireless engineer wants to produce an instrument with good reproduction he installs two loudspeakers one for the higher and one for the lower notes.

If we consider all this it is obvious that the actual sounds produced by the wireless are poor imitations only of the original. Adults can supply out of their experience what is missing and that is why the deficiencies may pass unnoticed.

It is clear however that an ear formed under the influence of such crude sounds will be much inferior to one which has not been exposed to that influence. The ear of an adult is finished, it has hardened and will therefore not be so very much affected by listening to the wireless. A child's ear however is still soft and pliable and any sound which it receives leaves its mark. Moreover, we have seen that the response to sound penetrates right into the deepest regions of the organism and may help or hinder its proper development. In view of this one may like to consider how much of the crudity pervading our whole civilisation, how much of the lack of attention and sensitivity which many teachers, not only in Rudolf Steiner Schools, have noticed, can be explained by the fact that a large number of children have to grow up to the constant accompaniment of radio.

Now let us turn to cinema and television. Both these instruments reckon with a physiological phenomenon called 'persistence of vision' If impressions follow each other at the rate of more than fifteen or sixteen a second the eyes cannot distinguish them as separate images, they all merge into one blur. In the cinema we are really presented with separate pictures which differ only very little from each other. They are made to follow at the rate of about twenty per second. The illusion of movement is brought about because one picture is still present in the eye while the next slightly different one is already being received. In television the same is the case, only the situation is worse because each picture is not a whole but is drawn by a spot of light which moves over the screen with incredible speed. The coating on the screen is responsible for keeping the first bit visible while the next is being produced rather like the coating of the figures and hands of a watch makes them luminous after the real source of light has been extinguished.

In the light of the previous discussion it will be clear what the 'persistence of vision,' that time of one-sixteenth or so of a second, really is. It is the time which the organism requires to respond to light stimulus entering the eye. If you therefore want to picture the condition of an eye when it watches cinema or television you must imagine yourself having to do something at such a speed that you cannot really do it. Trying to read the advertisements along a fast moving escalator would be something in that direction. It goes without saying what the effect of such treatment is on eyes which are still in their formative period. It will at once explain the headaches which some sensitive children and also adults get in the cinema and in front of the television screen and it will account for the nervousness which can be observed at school in those children who regularly suffer from these amusements.

When they read of the way in which the feet of Chinese girls are mutilated when they are young for the sake of beauty, most people are rightly indignant, but the same people might easily, for lack of knowledge of the real facts, expose their own children to a more subtle but just as pernicious mutilation. A mutilation moreover which does not only affect the life of the child but the life of the whole of society. It is through our sense organs that we stand in conscious communication with other men and with the rest of the world. Stunted senses cut men off from the world and from each other, they lead directly to the ideas which cannot cope with reality and to the antisocial behaviour from which our economic life is suffering.

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