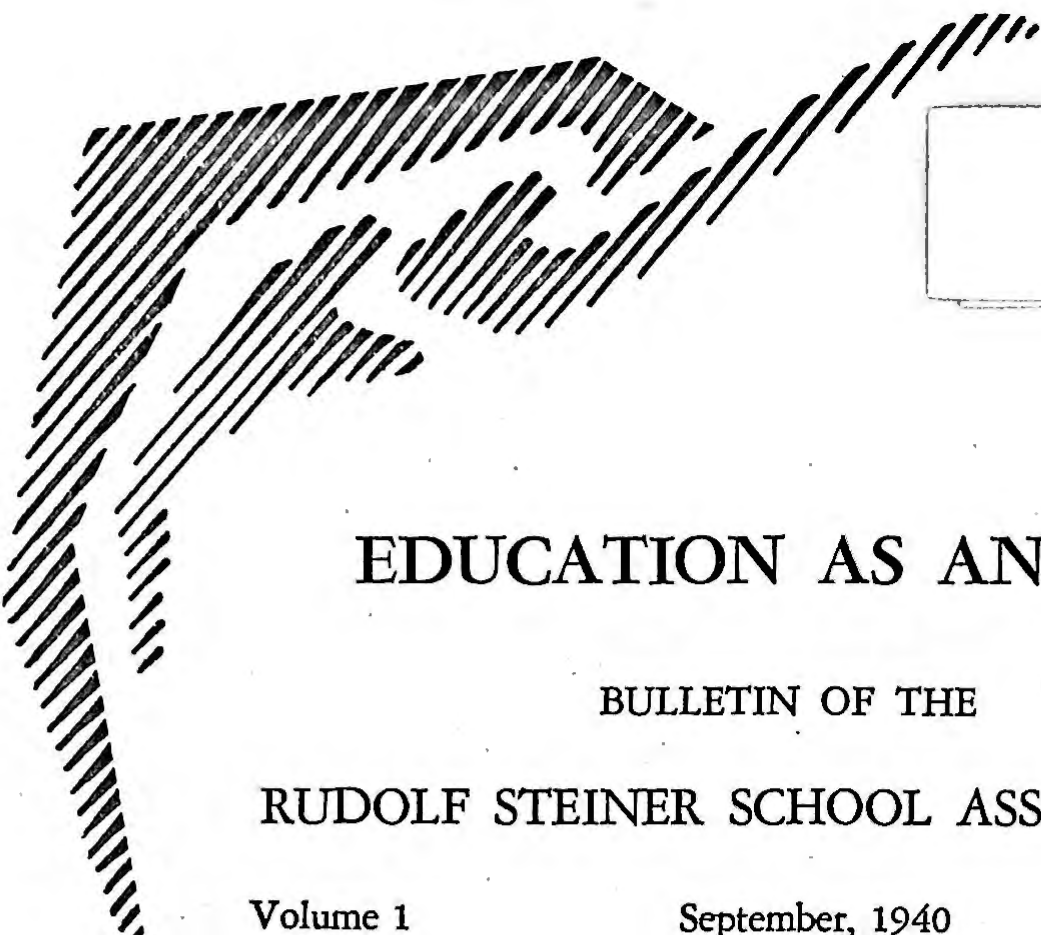




EDUCATION AS AN ART

BULLETIN OF THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Volume 1

September, 1940

No. 2

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QUESTION BOX

"Just how does your school differ from any other school?"

(Because of the fundamental nature of this question, so frequently put to us, we are starting the second number of the Bulletin with the Question Box. This is one person's answer, formulated to be as concise as possible. We believe it will bring forth further questions. *Ed.*)

WHAT IS A

HUMAN BEING?

The methods used in the Steiner Schools arise from a wholly different concept of the human being from that which has taken shape recently under the influence of natural science. A child is not regarded as a mere mechanism of nature, like a baby chick out of an egg that just happened to be fertilized. He is viewed as a spiritually endowed individual who passes in and out of the earth periodically in a wide span of development. The young was once mature, and the mature becomes young again under varying circumstances in order to further develop his capacities. In the present age we see him moving on from faith to knowledge, taking charge of his own soul, forming his own destiny. For this he requires more than a limited, traditional guidance.

A deeper observation of children and their effect on all the people about them, even from birth, reveals potentialities of a different order than either scientific or religious concepts attain. These are the forces which keep humanity on its course. These are the forces which have made and continue to make history. All the wisdom of past ages has recognized these spiritually human capacities. In an age threatened now with an inundation of materialism, it is essential to recognize these capacities afresh and enable children to make their real contribution to the life of their time.

Out of such a perspective has come knowledge of the distinct periods in which a child's spiritual powers unfold. A curriculum has accordingly been laid down in the light of these inner processes. They determine both the subjects of study and their time and methods of presentation. The ways of super-sensible life are allowed to make of education an art, in contrast to the ways of

physical-sense life which inevitably turn education into a regimented business. The difference in effect upon the children themselves, observed over a period of twenty years, is in itself proof of the rightness of such educational direction.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE TEACHER

Our teachers do not regard a child as merely an immature adult, with nothing of his own of value as yet. Such a view is a teacher's justification for imposing upon a child the earth-bound ideas and practices of the adult world. In contrast to this our teachers are on the alert for whatever spiritual powers a child may still possess. They consider these powers of primary value, knowing the sharp adjustments that children have to make to find place for such powers in their new life. While guiding them, the teachers in turn are guided by them, in mutual respect and devotion.

Disciplines, for both teacher and pupil, arise not from tradition nor outward convenience, but from the inner necessity of true human development. The young child is given the benefit of the authority he craves as security in a strange world. Because his teacher has first won it through moral understanding and self-discipline, the child trusts this authority, he respects it, and thereby absorbs eagerly the creative forces with which he is surrounded. He naturally develops "character" and the qualities that are valuable for life.

FEELING AND WILL

In our school a child is not regarded as a physical brain to be fitted into the prevailing material patterns. His life of feeling and will is recognized as of highest importance. Therefore his early education is carried on wholly by artistic means, which provide the only possible nourishment for these powers.

It has been found that from this side of his nature come the formative forces for his whole organism, which only later bring forth the organ of the intellect. The organ of thought is actually injured when ideas are presented in an intellectual way before the age of twelve. As a result the grown child is incapable of mature development in any but a physical direction.

Our teachers therefore teach imaginatively, rather than intellectually.

ONE MAIN LESSON

Fitting the natural rhythm of learning into the living course of each day brings changes in the curriculum. No chopped up class periods—kept short so as not to tire the brain—but a main lesson for the first two hours of each day, and the same subject carried on for weeks so the child may live deeply into it. In this way he is saved from constant distraction and the mental confusion arising from it.

NO TEXT-BOOKS

There are no text-books for the child to study and lug back and forth each day. He makes his own notebooks on each main subject, illustrated, and in color, and has no home work at all in the early years.

LANGUAGES AND SPEAKING

Every child from the age of seven learns two languages besides his own. He simply hears and imitates, and gradually associates meanings with words in a natural way. Translating back and forth is thus largely avoided. By this means he also comes into a finer feeling for his native tongue.

This feeling is further enhanced by daily exercises in speech. With the young children these consist in reciting suitable bits of poetry with sturdy rhythm and clean enunciation. The older ones have in addition various exercises—tongue-twisters and the like—by which they enter more vigorously into the forming of sounds. When one considers how intensively the act of speaking works upon a child's whole organism—even into his physical body—it is clear that he is vitally affected by the way language comes to expression in him. The different languages, moreover, work upon different parts of his

nature, the one more upon feeling, another upon thought, a third calls up particularly the forces of will.

For this reason several languages are set going in the child's speech from the first year of school. The living quality of oral instruction supplants the deadening influence of instruction from books. Daily practice of teacher and pupil together in giving the sounds of speech their full value, strengthens the child's inner forces of mind and soul in a surprising way.

HAND-WORK Boys do sewing, knitting and crochet, and like it. The girls do shop work. The point is that all should develop finger dexterity and resourcefulness in every direction, with no false notions of pride. For such enlivening of will by the skillful use of fingers acts to stimulate the processes of thought.

A NEW ART OF MOVEMENT Every child does "Eurythmy"—an art of movement which is not a devised gymnastics for his physical body but an experience in dynamics for his whole being. Under the guidance of a special teacher the child learns how to release the impulses behind tone and speech. Because these impulses are the essence of creativeness in the human organism, all the parts of a child's nature are harmonized through moving in accordance with them. He even experiences in Eurythmy the forms which he later learns abstractly as geometry.

In thus coming alive in forms and movements the child feels a connection with the space about him. He finds balance and poise within it. There comes to him an harmonious relation between his body, soul and spirit. This leads him to make fruitful connections with the people and circumstances of his life, and to have a better understanding of the events that play into his life from the outer world.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION A significant subject offered in the Steiner Schools may be called "religious education" though it has nothing of dogma nor sectarianism. It has always aroused the children's deepest interest. This class is given only if parents desire and request it. From the fairy tales, legends and Bible stories told to the youngest, to the free study of significant art and literature carried on with the oldest children, everything is handled artistically so as to provide the surest foundation for mature thought later on. There is no "teaching of religion" but an imparting of the materials of religion, by which the noblest feelings are called into play. Such exercises naturally bring about a feeling for the historical development of human values throughout the ages.

CULTURE A SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY We recognize the difference between "culture" and "civilization," between creating for soul enrichment and manipulating for material satisfaction, which have such vastly different effects upon humanity. It is our endeavor to give to children the advantages of true spiritual culture, that they may be free and self-determining in a difficult chapter of destiny.

Doris Bugbey

EURYTHMY—AN ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Artistic and human values are inseparable. Emerson expressed the mission of art with clarity and simplicity when he said that, "There is higher work for Art than the arts. Nothing less than the creation of man and nature is its end. A man should find in it an outlet for his whole energy—and its highest effect is to produce new artists."

Many educators take into account these noble ideals. They may recognize that artistic activity is essential to the healthy development of the human being. However, they do not realize that the older art forms are no longer capable

of offering substantial nourishment to the individual, until they become permeated with new spiritual impulses. Educators point to the necessity of penetrating more deeply into a study of man and art, but their limitations do not permit them to go further and show *how* we are to grasp the nature of man and the nature of art. Due to a lack of understanding for that of which man's "whole energy" consists, they frequently voice ideals which become isolated phrases bearing little relation to the methods they so ardently support.

Rudolf Steiner, through his profound understanding of the human being, was able to bring us the means of fulfilling these lofty artistic ideals of Emerson. In addition to bringing fresh spiritual impulses to all the arts, he has created a new art form known as EURYTHMY. This art of movement makes use of the human body as its instrument of expression. It therefore provides a direct approach toward penetrating into the innermost being of man.

Architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry have each sprung forth from a particular period of human development. Eurythmy is that art which has arisen out of an inner necessity of our present age to restore the balance lost through over-emphasis on technical achievements. This technical direction has not only been unfavorable to artistic development, it has had a paralyzing effect on the arts and has often led to their complete mechanization. The result is a dulling rather than an activating influence on man's consciousness.

In eurythmy we are given an art form which calls man's entire being into active participation. It offers a medium for introducing a more flowing and living quality into the other forms of art which are tending to become ever more rigid and static. In thus revitalizing the older arts, eurythmy makes a contribution of inestimable value. In its essence, however, eurythmy should be considered as an independent art.

Based on the inner forces underlying speech and tone, eurythmy adds a visual experience to what would otherwise be a purely auditory one. Through movements of a single performer, or a group of performers, speech and tone become visible to the audience simultaneously with the reading of a poem or the playing of a musical composition. The pure sound content rather than the sense content is stressed. There is a characteristic gesture for each sound. These visible gestures are the transformation of certain invisible forms projected into the air when a sound is spoken. They arise out of the inner laws and nature of the human being and are in no way arbitrary.

The structural and rhythmic elements come to expression in space patterns. The dancer is mainly concerned with the carrying out of movement in attitudes of the body itself. The eurythmist, on the other hand, by means of plastic movement experiences space as a living, mobile element which may be formed in a truly sculptural way. The performer strives to translate a poem or musical composition back into that inner movement which was the initial inspiration of the poet or composer.

Even from these few indications it may be seen that in this art no one-sided emphasis is placed on bodily activity in a gymnastic sense. Nor do the movements arise only from subjective feeling or intellectual thought processes. Eurythmy engages the thinking, feeling and willing powers of the human being and brings them into harmonious activity.

"The element of real art," Rudolf Steiner emphasized, "must be introduced into schools, not an intellectual substitute for art. And with eurythmy it is indeed possible to again infuse art into human culture."

In its pedagogical aspect eurythmy contributes an important part in helping the child make even more living the experience gained in his other classes. A poem he has learned in his own or a foreign language becomes more real if

he can move to its rhythms and sounds. Geometrical forms lose their rigidity when he moves in a group through various space patterns. Astronomy touches him more deeply when he realizes that he can perform movements which carry out here on earth a reflection of the movements of the heavenly bodies. And so, because it is an expression of life itself, eurythmy finds an intimate relationship to all activities of the school.

Since the eurythmy gestures arise out of an inner necessity, the children experience their genuineness and enter into wholehearted and spontaneous participation, becoming one with the movements instead of showing-off through them. The light which Dr. Steiner has thrown on the nature of the child makes it possible to stress those elements which best help him to unfold at each particular stage of his development. In making the eurythmy movements the child vividly reveals his inner characteristics. Once perceived, these same movements may in turn be used to correct and control undesirable traits in his nature.

It is not possible to understand the artistic significance of eurythmy from seeing it performed by children. Pedagogically, one is more concerned with helping the child unfold harmoniously and with a balancing of the various temperaments. Some exercises are designed to produce a quieting effect on children of excitable natures; others tend to stimulate children inclined to dullness and inactivity.

Eurythmy is in the initial stages of its development. It is not merely a new art, but an art which will come to full flower only at some future time. An important beginning has been made. The seeds have taken root and many sprouts have already made their appearance. This young art has attained its highest artistic achievement today in the visualizations of symphonies by Mozart, Beethoven, Bruckner, and of the great poetical works of Goethe and Shakespeare as performed at Dornach, Switzerland.

There are many other important aspects of eurythmy. It has been mainly my purpose at this time to make known its existence as a vital force able to meet our present day pedagogical problems. One feels a description of any art to be highly inadequate. It must be seen and experienced. Therefore it is my hope that the reader will be stimulated to seek such opportunities.

Rudolf Steiner has shown us *how* to reawaken these artistic ideals and through them attain to a deeper understanding of the nature of man. We have been shown a way. It now remains for us to practice our ideals.

Genevieve De Vall

IMPORTANCE OF FAIRY TALES IN A RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL

Fairy tales form the foundation for the teaching in the kindergarten, first and second grades, of a Rudolf Steiner School. The folk fairy tales of various nations and of ancient times, such as the two Grimms collected, are considered as basic education. Out of them grow the other subjects—painting, drawing, writing, counting, eurythmy, as taught in the elementary grades.

We are well aware that this is a departure from present-day practice, for in our modern times fairy tales have come to be lightly regarded. The questions are often asked: why should fairy stories be told at all? Do they not develop in our children a sense of the unpractical, of idle fantasy? Some people do tell fairy stories to young children, but they regard them only as poetic entertainment, as a reward for good behavior or a means of quieting at bed-time.

The teachers in a Rudolf Steiner School have an entirely different attitude toward this fairy lore. Their feeling about it and understanding of it is

inspired by Rudolf Steiner's research into the cosmic order which has made possible a new observation of children. Anyone who watches a child in the midst of unaffected play sees that he is building a world for himself which is like a paradise. Play is a sort of dream, and the dreaming is a manifestation of artistic union with the world about him.

Naturally, as a human being, a child has his own individuality. But he must leave this dream state before he can gradually awaken himself to his own self-hood. This inner self is hidden behind many screens, or shell-like layers, as is suggested by the seven mountains enclosing Snow-White's dwelling place.

While the soul of the child plays in this dreaming-artistic state he meets no temptations or dangers. Adults with the right spiritual understanding of the child's inner life know that, to him, the whole world seems bewitched and enchanted. But at the moment when his soul begins to awaken to his inner consciousness, he loses his paradise. Then a new period begins—a period of struggle with those adversaries which hinder his discovery of his own personality. The child longs to discover his own self-hood. And the telling of fairy stories meets this longing as nothing else can do. It helps him to unfold to the realities of the world about him, gently, without shock.

In most fairy stories we find a prince and princess as the central figures. Do we not see in them the more masculine element of the "ego" and the more feminine element of the soul? Remember in what a variety of ways the bewitched prince or enchanted princess is finally set free. The ultimate marriage pictures the conscious union of the two, (soul and "ego") after many trials. It is the happy discovery of the awakened human self—at last freed from its enchantment.

From this point of view let us look at "The Frog Prince," one of the well known tales of Grimm. Once upon a time (which means it can happen any day to anybody) there was a princess, the youngest daughter of an old king. (The old king represents the ancient state of man, the past which offers no glimpse of the future.) The princess played every day with a golden ball. (This symbolizes the wonderful paradise in which the true game of childhood is always played.) One day the ball did not drop back into the hand of the princess but fell to the ground and rolled down the well. At once an ugly frog appeared and asked the princess why she was crying.

"I can fetch your ball," said the frog, "but if I do, what will you give me?" It is made plain that he did not want pearls or gold or even a golden crown; he wished only to participate in the personality of the little princess. This is very significant. "Let me sit at your table," he said, "eat out of your plate, drink from your cup and sleep in your bed." The princess promised all this, took her ball and joyously ran off with it.

Next day when the king's family sat at dinner, the frog appeared at the castle and called out, "Youngest daughter of the king, you must let me in." The princess did not want to do so but when the old king heard what had happened he said, "What you have promised you must perform." So the princess opened the door and the frog hopped in. He sat at her table and ate and drank. All at once the princess could no longer stand the sight of the ugly frog. She flung him with all her might against the wall. But it was not the frog which picked himself up. A handsome prince stood there before her, free of his bewitchment. And so the prince and the princess were married and lived happily ever after.

In the art and fantasy of these old fairy tales is hidden a deep wisdom which has the power to awaken children from the sleep of ordinary earthly life. But only if the teller is able to believe in the reality of such stories will

they have the desired effect. According to the principles of biogenetic law, children pass briefly through all stages of mankind's evolution. Fairy tales have their origin in the period of humanity's own childhood, those far-distant times when people lived in a naive, dreamlike state of soul before the unfolding of intellectual capacity. Fairy tales, then, lead the child's soul by the shortest and most direct way through these stages of human development. Unhappily this is far from true of the usual modern books for children.

If we tell such stories in the right mood and believe in their higher content, they will inspire children to draw and paint, to recite and act, to write and count, to trust and think in the right way.

Forces of healing are also hidden in each fairy tale. As the child listens and remembers, he passes through fear and compassion and astonishment to a feeling of awe and devotion toward the invisible world. This may be considered the most important result of telling fairy tales. They stimulate the feeling that man is a being of development, of struggle, of metamorphosis, and that behind all the adverse forces of giants and dwarfs, witches and demons there lies the good world of the true genius of man.

Between the ages of four or five to eight or nine, the child plays in the meadows of paradise much as the princess in the Grimm fairy tale. After that age the child must lose paradise in order to awaken. Such fairy tales provide the best nourishment for the child's soul during this period and give him the right help in awakening into earthly reality.

That we are able to think at all about these problems or to understand the importance of fairy tales is because Rudolf Steiner has given us a new feeling for education and for the child as a human being. His inexhaustible wisdom concerning the child's development led straight to the realm of the fairy tales. They inspire teachers themselves, more and more, as they learn to grasp their inner meaning. They reveal themselves differently to every individual teacher, for the truth contained in each one of them is neither one-sided nor narrow-minded. Fairy tales constitute a world of enormous space and varying perspective.

Frederick Hiebel

SUMMER COURSES

on

The RUDOLF STEINER APPROACH TO EDUCATION

PROGRAM The classes held every day were—Anthropology, Knowledge of the Human Being, by Dr. Hermann Poppelbaum—Eurythmy, by Miss Marjorie Spock—Speech Formation, by Mrs. Henry Barnes—How to Teach Painting to Children, by Miss Arvia MacKaye. In the evenings three general lectures were given and also demonstrations on The Teaching of School Subjects by Mrs. Virginia Field Birdsall and Mr. Henry Barnes of the Rudolf Steiner School, New York, and by Dr. von Baravalle of the Edgewood School, Greenwich, Connecticut.

Even a week of cold weather and steady rain failed to interrupt either the enthusiasm of the participants or the rhythm of the program at the Association's first conference. These summer courses were held, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Birdsall, from August 26th to September 7th at the Threefold Farm, Spring Valley, New York. Many people who attended the Threefold Summer School remained for the educational courses and a number came from various parts of the country especially for it. Between forty and fifty people followed Dr. Poppelbaum's course and the evening lectures. The classes

ranged from an attendance of twelve to twenty five. Speech Formation, originally announced as a subject for which private lessons could be arranged, was soon forced to take its place as a regular class.

One of the points which most impressed the teachers who followed both lectures and classes was the way in which each subject was fitted into an actual pattern. Dr. Poppelbaum, for instance, would speak of a certain point in the morning lecture. Then one phase of it would be interpreted as applied to the teaching of Eurythmy. It was further touched upon in Speech Formation, illustrated in another way in the painting class and, finally, the application of it would be brought out in the evening demonstration of the teaching of other school subjects. In this way these teachers were able to experience one of the fundamental facts of Dr. Steiner's pedagogy—where no subject is ever "separated off" from all other subjects or from life itself.

The Association is happy about this first Summer Course. It feels that if the manifest interest in and enthusiasm for Dr. Steiner's way of education can carry over into the Winter Courses, its hope of starting a teachers' training school is not far from realization.

NOTICES

The New York Rudolf Steiner School is happy to announce its enlarged Music Department, under the direction of Mr. Robert Scholz, the concert pianist. Every child from the third grade up will have classes in music appreciation, and for the higher grades "theory" in its most living aspect will be included. At no additional fee above the regular tuition, private instrumental lessons will be available for all children who qualify. For further information, address Mrs. Hazel Lassauer, Executive Secretary, Rudolf Steiner School, 20 West 73rd Street.

The Rudolf Steiner School, New York, will welcome three new teachers this Fall. Mr. Henry Barnes will be a class teacher, Mrs. Barnes will teach English and Madame Marcelle de Poincet, French.

The first of the Winter Courses on the Rudolf Steiner Approach to Education will begin on Saturday morning, November 2nd, and continue for six weeks. Saturday and Sunday mornings have been chosen for these courses, to enable teachers to attend. The general plan of the Summer Courses will be followed. The Association can offer these courses at a very reasonable fee, because they are being underwritten by a friend of the school who is impressed with the growing desire of teachers to learn more about this way of education. For details please write Miss Luttmann.

Membership in the Rudolf Steiner School Association, including the quarterly Bulletin, is \$2.00 per year. Single copies of the Bulletin, ten cents each, post paid.

Address Miss Hélène Luttmann, secretary Rudolf Steiner School Association, 20 West 73rd Street, New York.
