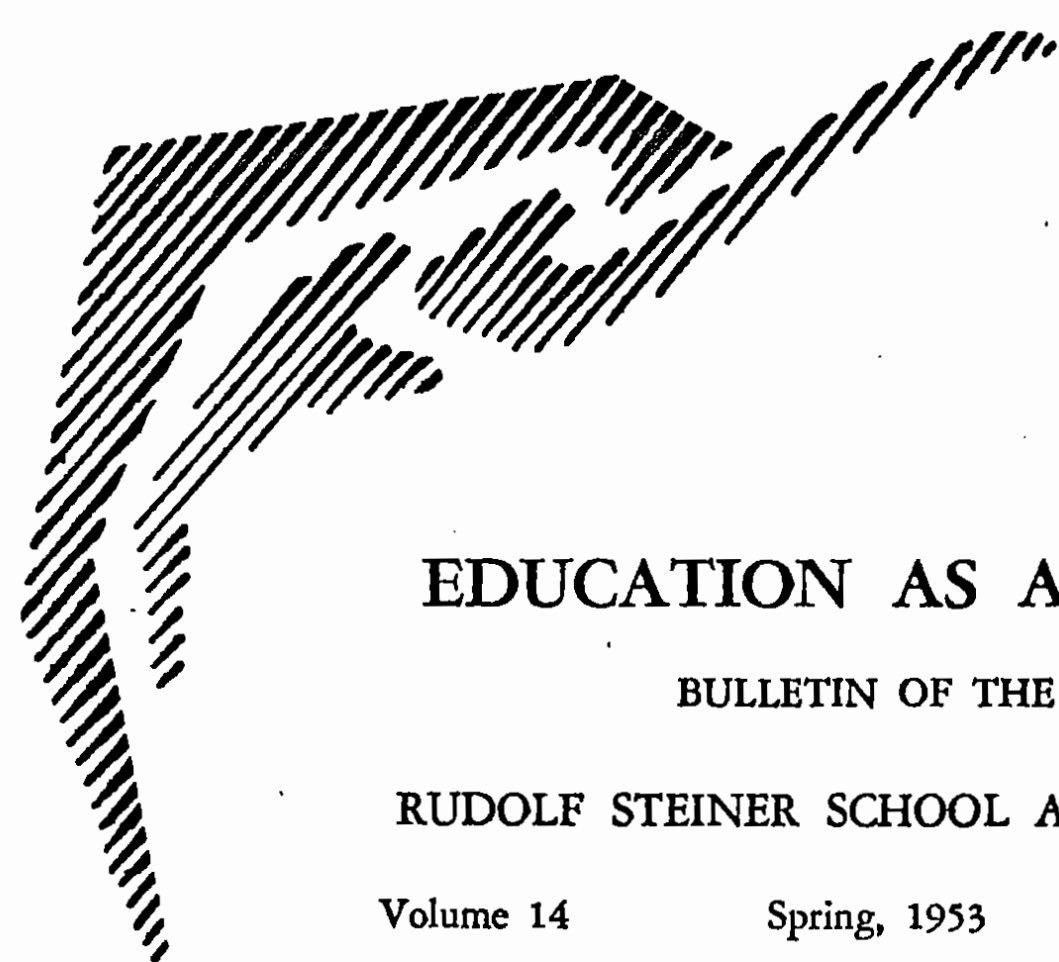




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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AUTHORITY AND INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT

A REPORT

The P.T.A. panel on *How Can the Right Kind of Authority in the Early Years Lead to Independent Judgment in the Adult?* opened the Spring Educational Conference of the Rudolf Steiner School. It was a highly stimulating and instructive evening for the P.T.A. and their guests. Mr. Paul Mulligan (parent) served as moderator.

Mr. Mulligan first introduced Dr. John Tietz, Professor of Psychology, School of Education, New York University, who opened the discussion by defining the word "authority." In the Rudolf Steiner sense, authority means a force which brings about growth, as opposed to the common meaning of authority as a dominating force, something to keep people down, to prevent them from growing. In education, authority should be beneficent, while controlling, and should be sensed by the child as something kindly. Children look for and will accept some controls; they seek leadership and want to feel that older persons know more than they do.

Miss Alston Lippincott (faculty) discussed authority in the classroom at the pre-school age level. She referred to the imitative faculty of children and to the psychological fact, as previously brought out by Dr. Linder, that children

identify themselves closely with parents and teachers up to the age of seven, imitating indiscriminately, good and bad, true and false. They also imitate the moods and temperaments of other children. The ideal relationship is one in which the teacher loves the children and has respect for the child as an individual. The child will respect the teacher if he feels strength and confidence in what the teacher offers. The child must not be over-controlled or dominated; the opportunity is given to carry out in imagination and play the essential social relationships. Asking a child to make a decision too soon calls for a faculty which is developed only from experience and education: a three-month old baby cannot learn to walk.

Mr. William Harrer (faculty) pointed out that a child is most happy, content and secure when he feels that he is trusted and can put his trust in someone else. In the early grades he will not follow the cleverest person or the authority in a specialized field but the one who takes a warm enthusiastic interest in him. He looks up to the adult with the greatest confidence; the adult becomes for him the vessel of truth.

That which we might call the kernel of the child's individuality looks and craves for an authority. He feels secure if the trusted adult says, "This is good . . . I like that." And it can fill the heart of a child with deep sorrow and pain if he is reprimanded. The deeper he trusts the chosen authority, the stronger will be the formative force or effect upon his character. It is this kind of authority which we try to establish in our classroom, an authority created through interest, enthusiasm and love. Once established one can work marvels with it.

The feeling of unquestioning trust in the adult begins to change slightly at about the age of nine or ten. Something new enters into this pure feeling of trust. It comes from the realm of thinking. A process of testing begins which is far from conscious, but the child looks at the adult with a somewhat critical eye. And in this process no one has greater hopes that the adult will pass the testing than the child himself. It would be a terrible blow if the adult let him down. As he grows older, powers of intellectual, logical thinking become ever more apparent and his relationship to the trusted authority undergoes a transformation. If up to now the truth, goodness and beauty of the world spoke to him through a trusted friend, after puberty these must speak to him through the subject matter which is taught him. During the period of transition the teacher must make a conscious effort to train the children to meet a new kind of authority, an authority which does not come from an individual but from knowledge itself. If he has looked up to the first kind of authority with his whole heart, he will now devote himself to the new authority in the same way and on the basis of knowledge and truth be ready to form his own, independent judgments.

Mrs. Bond Wheelwright (parent) brought out the advantages of having the same teacher remain with the child from the first through the eighth grade. In this way the parent and the teacher, in conference, can be aware of the obstacles in growth, of changing attitudes and relationships. The teacher's close and continuous observation is helpful to the parent, and the parent, with confidence in the school and the teacher, stands behind the teacher. In this method, parent, teacher and child must grow together. Moments of disharmony may occur, but the child will develop an essential self-discipline.

Mr. Richard Kroth (parent and faculty member) stressed the need for a deep understanding between parents and teachers, because sharply opposing views can upset the child. The child is not yet an adult, but in the process of becoming an adult. Authority is wisdom, based on experience; there are times when the parent must say no, out of his wisdom.

Mr. F. B. Van Avery (parent), defining the finished product, independent judgment, quoted Webster on "independent": not subject to bias or influence; and on "judgment": the power of arriving at wise decisions on the basis of probabilities, when the facts are not clearly known. This implies maturity, and Mr. Van Avery, as an employer, would require of his young employees that they possess judgment to execute orders, and independence to forget the rule book when emergencies arise.

Dr. Tietz concluded the discussion by citing evidences of intellectual maturity: the ability to make up one's mind, to carry out decisions, to be objective about self, to recognize values and shortcomings, to be a good loser, to accept compromise. This intellectual maturity is attained by assimilation: the child assimilates by identifying himself with parent or teacher. He defined discipline as a "process of learning" as coming from the word "disciple," follower of a teacher. The teacher communicates the "worths" of life to the child. This is the process of education.

Bert and Shirlee Clarke

THREE VIGNETTES FROM THE SECOND GRADE

Freedom

Before telling the fable of The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse, the teacher asked the children whether they would rather live in the country or in a city. The most intellectual of the girls said that she would rather live in the country because there was more freedom. After several other children had explained their preferences, an exuberant little boy exclaimed, "I like the country because I can run as far as I want to and shoot off fire-crackers and stuff!" Said the intellectual girl, with extreme scorn, "That's just what I said, silly!"

Who Is The Best Leader?

The simple rules of behaviour that arise from the necessity for learning to be thoughtful of others and to play fair, are often forgotten. One day, when it was important that these rules be remembered, the teacher asked the children to tell *her* what they were. The boy who could best do the telling was, of course, one of those who most often failed in practicing what he now, so ably, preached. This led the teacher to ask the class a question.

"Who is the better leader? Is it the one who knows that it isn't polite to interrupt someone who is already speaking, but who does it anyway? Or is it the one who waits and speaks after the other person has finished?"

Another little boy held up his hand and, when he was called on, gave his considered opinion.

"I think," he said sagaciously, pointing to the teacher, "that *you* are the best leader."

Up To God

We are learning to write and to read big numbers. It is the first time we have gone from the ones, through the tens and the hundreds, to the thousands, the tens of thousands, the hundreds of thousands, and the millions.

We see how, in the millions, we can begin again with 1-million and go on to 10-million, 100-million, 1000-million, 10,000-million, 100,000-million and 1-million-million.

There is a breathless realization that there is no end to numbers.

One child says, "There are so many numbers that they can take you all the way up to the moon."

"Yes," answers the teacher, "even beyond the moon to the farthest stars."

A little girl, who is not yet sure of her 3-table, smiles with all her heart and calls out, "The numbers take you all the way up to God."

Dorothy Harrer

ARTISTIC METHOD

A Report

In the panel held Saturday morning, March 21, the broad concept of artistic method was discussed by six teachers representing three schools based on Rudolf Steiner's educational principles. Five different themes or aspects of the central concept were presented in short talks by Mrs. Beulah Emmet of High Mowing School, Wilton, N. H., Miss Marjorie Spock, of the Waldorf School, Garden City, L. I., and Miss Virginia Paulsen, Mr. Karl Ege and Mr. Henry Barnes of the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City. Mr. John Gardner, of the Waldorf School in Garden City, served as moderator.

Although each panel member dealt with the subject in different specific terms, the fundamental idea woven throughout the discussion was that artistic method in a Rudolf Steiner school has to do with the manner in which a teacher presents all subject matter to the children, rather than the subject matter itself. The way in which the world is pictured in the classroom is of prime importance. It grows out of an understanding of a child's nature which leads the teacher to avoid abstract intellectual explanations. Instead, he paints word-pictures, vivid with color and rhythm, so that the world comes to life in the child's imagination, enabling him to respond in his feeling life rather than with thinking powers which come to full blossom only with adolescence.

That this artistic method permeates the teaching of every subject was made clear by Mr. Ege's description of the way he might present the phenomenon of sound in a physics lesson. (A full account of this by Mr. Ege appears elsewhere in this issue.) Miss Paulsen said that it is not necessary for a teacher to be an accomplished artist in all the various fields of art anymore than it is necessary for him to be a specialist in mathematics and history. He must, however, be an artist in the field of teaching. The art of telling a story and its importance for the child's imaginative feeling life was well expressed by Miss Paulsen's account of the reaction of one boy in her class who took pride in being tough and unemotional. He had listened intently throughout the story and she knew it had penetrated to his inmost being when, with tears in his eyes, he said: "Miss Paulsen, that was the *worst* story you ever told!"

The contrast between the concept of art in a Rudolf Steiner school and in progressive schools was discussed by Miss Spock and Mr. Barnes. Miss

Spock pointed out that a Steiner school was imbued throughout with an artistic feeling for beauty of form and color, whereas in a progressive school art is generally separate from the rest of the child's school work, and the creative activity is often stressed as a value in itself without particular regard to the result in terms of beauty and harmony of color and form. Mr. Barnes, in speaking specifically of the problem of "creative self-expression," explained why Rudolf Steiner's education is opposed to the view of progressive educators on this question. The divergence, he said, stems from different concepts of the child's nature. Those who encourage creative activity in the early grades hold that the child's nature is what appears to external observation, the physical being which thinks, feels and behaves more or less appropriately for its age. A teacher who understands Rudolf Steiner's principles knows that what can be seen externally, the physical body with its temperamental characteristics, is not the human being's true self but merely the vehicle through which the individuality lives in earthly life. The teacher further knows that calling extensively upon the creative powers of the child's true self before adolescence may indeed induce remarkable results, but the price will be a weakening of these powers, resulting in diminished creativity in adult life. Out of this understanding a Steiner school seeks to train the vehicle for the human being's inner self in an harmonious way and to preserve creative forces so that they may be of full service to the individuality in later years.

The discussion was vividly illuminated by Mrs. Emmet, who, as director of High Mowing School, which takes boys and girls from the eighth grade through high school, has been for many years in an excellent position to observe the later effects of different methods in the elementary grades. Her experience with adolescents from a variety of social, economic and educational backgrounds has been that they fall into three rough categories with regard to the trend of their development and their attitudes toward school and the world. Some are apathetic and dull, uninterested in work, bored with school. Those from progressive schools are marked by intellectual brilliance, prematurely adult attitudes, a desire to set forth immediately to reform the world. The third group, composed of those coming from the Rudolf Steiner School, differs markedly in certain respects from the other two, according to Mrs. Emmet. By and large they are interested and enthusiastic to learn, with a healthy view of the world and of themselves. They seem to have greater inner resources, livelier imaginations, the attitude that the adult is a friend and not an enemy. They are more cooperative and less of a problem at school. Mrs. Emmet attributed these differences to the fact that at the Rudolf Steiner School these children were fed, as she expressed it, "the rich material of pictures." Their elementary education had been a process of growth in an "art gallery" or "garden" which nourished the life of feeling and imagination and took care not to force abstract thinking prematurely. This experience had given them an inner richness to aid them in dealing with the disturbing problems of adolescence. For these children, high school was an exciting, expanding educational experience, whereas for those already dulled or over-stimulated it all too often was necessarily a curative process, to give the starved child what he should have been getting in the elementary years. Mrs. Emmet pointed out that the facts, upon which modern educators place such stress, are always present and will always fall into place. What is important in education are the pictures which make the world a living reality to the child.

HOW TO PRESENT THE DRAMA OF SOUND TO TWELVE YEAR OLDS

Put yourselves for a moment in the position of a teacher who must prepare to teach a class in physics. Let us assume that as an introduction to physics he has to acquaint his twelve-year-old boys and girls with acoustics, the world of sound.

He gets out his physics book and from all the pigeon holes of his memory gathers together what he once learned and experienced at the university concerning the phenomena of sound.

It is really a brilliant sum of knowledge that he has stored away in his head concerning sound waves, vibrating bodies, velocity of sound, reflection and refraction of sound waves, echo, intensity and pitch, the Doppler principle, quality, analysis, propagation of sound, interference and beats!

If the teacher were to be satisfied with this, he would have only to make clear to his children that all sound arises through the vibrations of either a gaseous, watery or solid medium, that the sound is identical with these vibrations and that the whole phenomenon of sound is based upon purely mechanical principles. But now he tries to put himself in the place of these twelve-year olds, and after some quiet pondering it may seem to him as if a roughish yet earnest little spirit were to pull him by the sleeve and whisper in his ear, —but how is it with music and all the beauty and wonder which it opens up to us? What is left of the human voice, its speech and song, the singing of the birds, the babbling of the brook?

Sound is surely infinitely more than the mathematics and mechanics of vibrations. It tells us something, it is the revelation of something. Do we not recognize by the sound of a piece of metal or wood whether it is hollow or solid, whether the motor of our automobile is running rightly? And yet sound discloses its true being to us only when we look still more thoroughly into its relationship to man. The human being entrusts, through the instrument of his larynx, his deepest and most banal thoughts, his joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, in short all that stirs within his soul to the element of the air. By this means he communicates to other human beings what he wishes to impart to them. Through the element of sound he reveals his own inner being and makes the unheard audible. In the same way the animal presses its well-being or pain through the organ of the larynx and causes the medium of the air to vibrate and to sound.

Does not something sound and sing and speak best within our inmost being? Do we not hear these voices of the silence best when we close our outer ears to the noise of the world? Did not Beethoven write his greatest master works after he had become physically deaf?

Yes, sound owes its existence to the fact that something which is inward turns itself outward. It is primarily a message, and the vibrations of the medium are only the bearers, the transmitters of the revelation of an inner reality.

Thus none of the facts in the physics books is either false or unnecessary. But by themselves they do not really represent the whole. They can only

instruct us concerning the physical instrumentality. The human body, for instance, also has its existence and meaning only because it is the physical instrument for the soul and spirit. To no other physical phenomenon has man so intimate and close a relationship as to sound. We ourselves are able to produce it, whereas our relationship to outer light and warmth, to magnetism and electricity is only a more indirect and perceptive one.

Through such ideas and considerations the teacher may be able to survey as a whole the subject which he is to teach. The phenomenon of sound then stands before his mind's eye as an actual being with its own special characteristics, behaving according to its own particular nature.

Let us look at the human individuality, for instance. You cannot define its essential nature. But describe some character—how he behaves in certain situations in life, how he acts, reacts, suffers, and so forth, and you have a living picture of his being. This is the technique of the poet when he lets his heroes appear before us in dramas or novels.

The physics teacher seeks, through the experiments which he performs before his pupils, to present the drama of sound, of light, of warmth, magnetism or electricity. He orders and arranges the single scenes into a complete picture and lets the actor and poet "sound" act his own role. In this way science takes on life. And only what is living speaks to the soul of the child.

So let the scientific expert in the schoolroom not forget that his listeners are twelve- and thirteen-year-old boys and girls full of bubbling life, expectation and awe whom he must help to establish a living, unspoiled relationship to the world, so that they can better understand themselves and their place within nature and the cosmos.

Karl Ege

FRACTIONS

With ordinary numbers we stand on solid ground,
Dealing with whole numbers is fun, so we have found.
But when it comes to fractions it is different indeed,
They are the strangest creatures within the number creed.
In a family of whole numbers you are quite secure,
You see at once when they are tall or small, or rich or poor.
But looking at a fraction, take $1/64$,
You think it has great value, but what's it really worth?
Compare it with $1/2$; $1/64$ seems tall,
But the truth of the matter is, it is extremely small.
Maybe you'll believe it and maybe you will not,
 $1/2$ is 32 times what $1/64$ has got.
If that is not most strange! At least it was for me,
Until I understood the fraction personality.
It is indeed a tragic story when you come to think of it,
Such wholesome numbers as one or two are often sadly split.
Split personalities they have become, oh dear, oh dear,
Divided by a fraction bar they separately appear.
What is above the dividing line we call the numerator,
And that below—strange name indeed—the true demoninator.
Which names the fraction, so I'm told,
While the numerator tells how many it shall hold.

Thus fractions that struck me at first with chilling fear,
 I seem to grasp with courage now, and they become quite clear.
 But how am I to join them in addition or subtraction?
 Do fractions, for each other, have any real affection?
 When joined in matrimony a woman gives up her name
 But *both* fractions in addition have to do the same.
 It is easy to determine what the common name should be,
 If both the fractions come from the same family.
 Adding fifth and fifth, you will always have more fifths,
 But joining different families, you will have many ifs.
 Suppose that Mr. Half joins Miss Third in addition,
 They must give up their names to pay for their admission.
 Mr. $1/2$ plus Miss $1/3$;—Now we are in a fix.
 Will they be Mr. and Mrs. Half? Oh no, their name is sixth.
 Nothing seems common in $1/2$ and $1/3$ to an investigator,
 Until he discovers the common denominator.
 The 2 in $1/2$ and the 3 in $1/3$ are both factors of six.
 And $1/2$ as $3/6$ and $1/3$ as $2/6$ gladly join hands and mix.
 Such are but a few of the many complications
 In the lives of broken numbers that live in separations.
 When we have learned to add some easy fractions
 We can part them in like manner when we do subtraction.
 But now suppose the halves and thirds join hands in multiplication,
 We then have to consider an entirely new implication.
 You'd think if they became $5/6$ when joining in addition
 They'd have to change to many more sixths under this condition
 But no, there is involved a strange complication,
 Instead of growing larger, they shrink in this separation.
 The numerators multiply each one with all the others,
 Completely disregarding their denominator brothers
 Who now stand up together and also claim their right
 While joining hands they multiply in ever friendly spite.
 And now you'll come to see in the result of this brave action
 The answer is, most strangely a so much smaller fraction.
 The division of fractions is an upside down affair
 About this we could tell you, but it would not be fair
 For we fear to tire you with more knowledge of the fractions
 When there are in store so many other wholesome actions.
 So we want to say just this, and then at last we'll end
 To work with fractions is lots of fun,—once you understand.

William Harrer

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