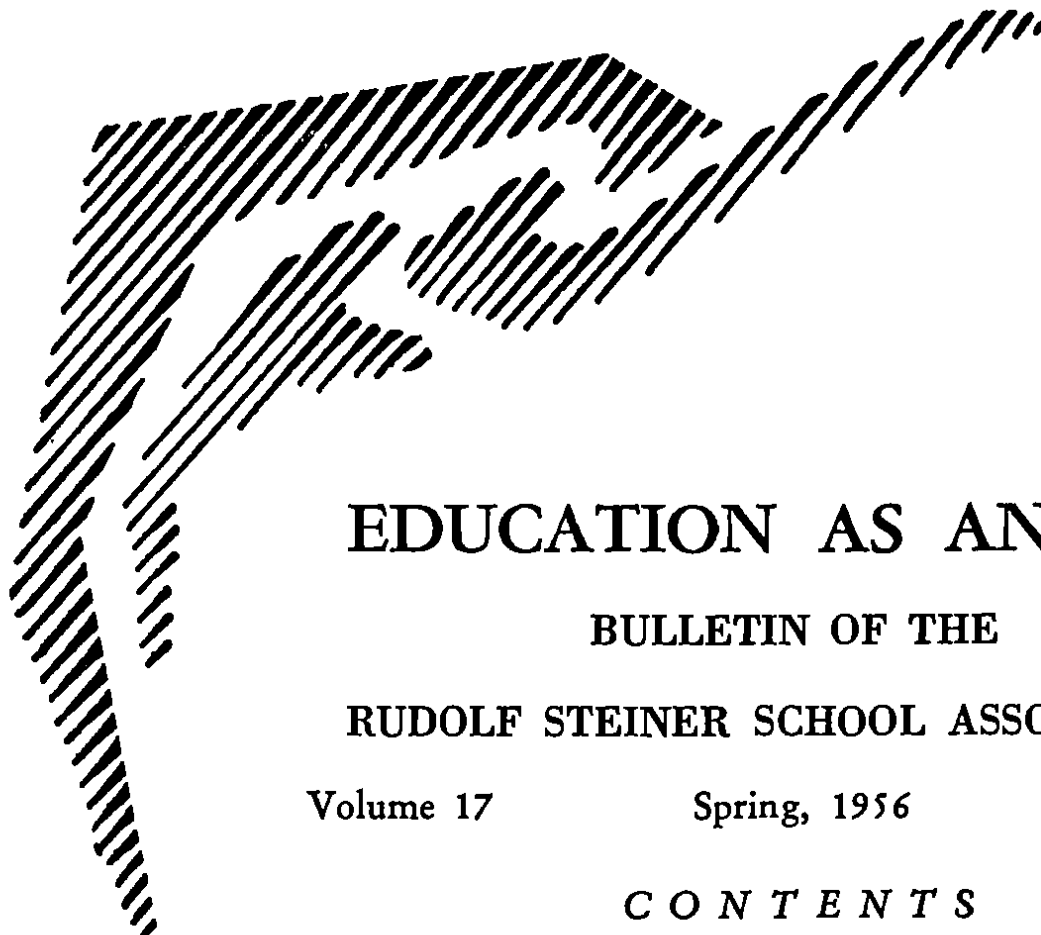




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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EURYTHMY DEMONSTRATION PERFORMANCE OF RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL CHILDREN

Outdoors spring had burst out of a foggy morning and on the stage at 211 Madison Avenue, spring was enacted by a hundred and five children of the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City who had come to demonstrate Eurythmy to an expectant crowd of adults.

As in nature we stand in wonder when we see blooming and blossoming spring forth and yet to the knowing eye every bud or shoot falls within a secret lawfulness which directs and shapes all this cheerful array; so here the children bloomed freely, each in his own way, yet swinging, and stepping, within the law of a wisely forming hand. It was a unique experience to witness this ordered liveliness, so different from either one of two evils so alarmingly prevalent in the young today: drilled, deadening perfectionism or wildness and vitality "in the rough". There was no showing off nor shyness. One and all they were completely given to the task at hand, these happy and yet disciplined children between seven and twelve years of age. The little ones blew with the wind, galloped as horses, changed into this and that, as they moved ever aware of an invisible center around which they swung and heeded each other in the animated space. As the age groups grew more mature the mastery of increasingly complicated forms grew more impressive.

Many an adult has experienced with amazement and horror what happens to him on venturing his steps into some of the most elementary eurythmy exercises. His mature head all of a sudden ceases to function, he loses his sense of orientation, confuses right and left, and runs with a crash into his fellowmen who are just as helpless and awkward as he is. These children, however, move through space with assurance and in full awareness of what goes on in back of them or on the sides. They don't have to stop and think, they don't have to look. How much more easily will they find their way into the more abstract realms of arithmetic and geometry after having experienced the laws of numbers and forms in their metamorphosis in space in their entire bodies, right into their feet. How much more humanly will they assume their places in the social life of men, able as they are to move and swing together or run criss cross without turning into stumbling blocks for each other. They will seek true beauty in later life, for in their early years they have not been cut to a rigid pattern of aesthetics which would lead to unnatural affectation only, yet they have learned to experience the qualities of lightness and weight, of rhythm, form and color within the very motion of their own limbs.

As the third grade swung easily, and with the natural grace of that early stage, to the music or poetry that carried their motion as the water carries the swimmer, so the sixth grade were able to establish their own rhythm in chorus without any external support, silently and yet musically. True concentration was thus demonstrated, concentration deep inside which needs no fist supporting a wrinkled forehead. The fourth and fifth grades made into real pictures the lovely verses of Rossetti, Longfellow and other great poets. In the "Witch Fest" and in the Chippewa War Dance real dramatic effects were reached by the seventh graders. When finally the teacher, who had made all these seedlings sprout and had been tending them right there in front of the audience with a forming, wisely directing hand, when Mrs. van Oordt concluded the program with her "Babushka" who is visited by the Three Kings (girls from the eighth and ninth grades,) the possibilities of eurythmy came to full expression through the grace of the human body. Then—what a surprise—"The Naughty Boy" by John Keats ran and skipped about the stage in green pants and a red cap, every inch a child that discovers the world! Here Mrs. van Oordt demonstrated that in a real teacher for the young, the wellspring of childhood is still flowing richly.

A refreshed and yet thoughtful audience left the Anthroposophical Society while the young were gradually clearing the building in good order and with just enough chatting and laughter to make one feel that spring was really here.

Elly Simons

APPROACH TO REALITY*

On the last page of E. M. Forster's "A Passage to India," Fielding, the Englishman, and Aziz, the Indian Moslem, ride together, brothers in feeling, wondering why they cannot be friends. But the earth says "No, not yet", and the sky says "No, not there." United in feeling, they are divided by thought. Viewing the same universe through the different-hued glasses of West and East, they will perceive its true nature only, Forster implies, in heaven.

*Reprinted from *The Weather Vane*, published by High Mowing School, Wilton, N. H.

In today's world, when the polar clash of interests increasingly gives rise to fear and hate, few are the common grounds of thought upon which all men can stand in full agreement. Concepts, the results of mankind's history-long search for truth, are in our age passionately voiced to bolster the claims of self-interest, to justify the preservation or destruction of social patterns. But truth, thus used, withers and dies, becomes a lie. The task of education is not to corrupt thought to the service of national propaganda or the devising of deadlier bombs.

Our task is to prepare young people to find the reality of their own selfhood and of the universe whence comes their being. But the question arises, what is reality and how is it to be recognized? It exists, independent of our wishes concerning its nature, but how do we know our judgment for truth is sure, not warped by our niche in place and time? In art, literature, history, philosophy, there can be almost unlimited interpretation. Even in natural science the nature of reality is largely hypothesis. But in mathematics, the "pure science," all men can agree just because the substance is of thought, independent of sense perception and physical phenomena. We perhaps approach nearest the reality we seek in the pure forms of geometry. It is true that the triangles drawn by you and me are not the same, no matter how eagerly we conspire to make them so. The finest measurements will disagree. But the *idea* "triangle" exists and once discovered its reflection varies not at all from mind to mind. Hence the term "pure form." The drawing is merely a representation in physical substance of a concept in the realm of thought, where a parabola always emerges from a certain arrangement of circles no matter what the political, social or scientific convictions of the thinker.

These geometric forms have a life of their own, perhaps more life than we commonly realize. The infinite variety of form arising from combination of point, line and plane is available to any healthy human consciousness. If we will to make the journey, we discover regions where earth-bound partisan aims lose urgency and meaning where passions are irrelevant and men can see and think as friends.

Swain Pratt



WHY DO WE TEACH EURYTHMY IN SCHOOL?

(continued from preceding number)

Through Eurythmy or visible speech as we described it in the last issue of the bulletin, we can help the child to find harmony and an inner balance between two opposite elements; the individuality and the physical body. But to be able to achieve this we need a third element—an element which, indeed, is very important in eurythmy—the rhythmic element. This has its physical expression in the lungs and the heart where the rhythmical breathing and heart-beat take place—where there is a constant change between contraction and expansion. This rhythm renews and keeps the organism going, incessantly, continuously, untiringly. We may grow physically tired of bodily work and mentally weary of intense thinking, but heart and lungs never tire—until the very end when they stop, and life is gone. Without rhythm there is no life.

In nature, also, rhythm is a sign of life and is ever present as, for instance, in the course of the year, summer changes into winter, day into night. This changing from light to darkness, from closed to open, furred to unfolded, from short to long, up and down appears everywhere where there is life. But we must not confuse rhythm with beat or measure which are the repetition of the same thing over and over and have a deadening effect. The characteristic of true rhythm is a constant swinging between two opposites.

Everything has its own rhythm; the ocean's breathing and the bird's flight, the crawling snail and the swaying tree. Everything moves in its own way, according to its own rhythm. We can awaken these different rhythms in the children when we let them swing and move to melodies and verses, not only by letting them follow the various moods inwardly, but by having them swing and run as they change their steps from short to long, their gestures contracting and unfolding, now tight, now free. Thereby just that element is awakened which can swing between the two opposite poles within ourselves; the forces active in the head, our thinking, and the forces activated in our limbs, the force which leads to action, the will force. We can imagine the one coming from above, as it were, the other from below, and in the middle, in the heart lives the rhythmic element, the feeling, which alternates so easily between sympathy and antipathy, warmth and cold, softness and hardness, laughing and weeping. This feeling life with its flexible, changeable nature can connect thought and deed, helping the measured exactitude of the head to carry its order into the more unconscious dynamic activity of the limbs.

We see that in this way the whole human being with its feeling, thinking and will is called into activity and expressed through movement. This is not done in a conscious way, of course, with small children, but is brought more and more into consciousness as the child grows older.

The approach to eurythmy and the way it is taught is different for the different class levels. In kindergarten we keep within the realm of the fairy-tale and in the lower grades we lead the eurythmy gradually into clearer form. A very definite step is taken when the children come from kindergarten into first grade. In kindergarten they have been kept in a playing group, following their teacher about. From the first grade on they form a circle and work as much as possible from their equally spaced places in this circle.

The circle plays a very important part in our work and we start every lesson in a circle, keeping strictly to it the whole lesson through until we come to the fourth or fifth grades. The children then awaken to greater independence and self-consciousness. They become more aware of themselves and we come gradually to a different approach. Now we depart from the circle and turn so that we all face in one direction, towards the front. Thus we experience the directions of front, back, left and right in a new way. At this stage we can, for the first time, actually *form space*.

Forming space is one of the big differences, technical differences, we may say, between eurythmy and modern dance. As speech and music sound out into space, so eurythmy also must sound out through space and this sounding out must become visible. In eurythmy the body is the instrument and space the medium in which it works.

From the fourth grade on we can learn to model in space, how to form and shape space as a sculptor forms and shapes clay. We also move more and more consciously now in the four main directions. How different moving forward is from moving backward, to the left or to the right. How differently we use our bodies when in movement we form a straight line, a circle or a square in space.

We can now start as a group to build up various forms in space: geometrical forms, simple at first and then more and more complicated, but always forming an harmonious whole. This gives us inner and outer form and awakens a social feeling in each child.

When we begin to form the circle in the first grade, we really have to work hard until we are all in our places in an even circle facing the center with equal spaces between us. Gradually we bring the circle into motion and even in this simple movement the children must learn to adjust themselves to the whole group. They have to adjust their steps and their speed to the steps of the others, otherwise the circle would be uneven with a big opening in one place, crowded together in other places. We can also let the circle, or rather the space inside the circle grow smaller or widen out. In this way we can make a variety of different forms as we move in space. With two different circles, one inside the other, we can make flower forms or stars or other figures. But this will not work if one child or another dreams the time away and does not start at the right time, or if one is too fast or too slow as he moves in his form.

When we do a simple form, a square, for instance, every one of the four children has to come to the corner at the same time. This is even more important in a five pointed star where the crossings of the five ways have to be exact. More and more concentration is necessary as we come up into the higher grades and move in more complicated forms. Each person in the group may have different movements, a different form in which he moves but he must always be in the right relationship to the others. The group is then like an orchestra in which each one plays on his instrument but all together produce a harmonious composition.

A form like the snail's house, the spiral for instance, is used very often. This form can be varied and combined in an endless variety of different designs for a moving group formation, simple and easy patterns, as well as more complicated ones. This spiral form always has a harmonizing effect. If a child is too outgoing, too fluttery or distracted, it may help him to creep deep in and muffle himself up in the ingoing spiral. For someone who is too ingoing, too closed up and concerned with himself, it is good to move gently from the center of the spiral, opening himself up more and more. In ways such as these eurythmy helps to strengthen the inner and outer being of the child.

If it has been possible to give you an idea of what we try to achieve with eurythmy, that through the movements of the vowels and consonants we can bring the divine nature forces to flow in a life-giving way through the body and that by working with the movements of the rhythms and forming space in this way we can help the child to become more harmonious, then you may perhaps share our conviction that the children may be able to go through the difficult years of adolescence in a different way from what it

would have been without eurythmy. We see the time of adolescence today as a state of disconnection between mind and action plus an absolute lack of feeling for ones fellow men, for a social wholeness. Eurythmy gives us the possibility of connecting the mind with action and bringing harmony between the thinking, the feeling and the will elements in the child. That is the reason why we teach eurythmy in our school.

Kari van Oordt



THE ROYAL GATES

An Arithmetic Play for the Second Grade

Scene: Entrance to Palace of the Number King, guarded by the Twelve Royal Gates.

Gate: The palace of the Number King,
All golden and shining and bright,
Lies within three mighty mountains
Which protect it by day and by night.
Twelve Royal Gates the entrance guard
And no one may pass through!

Gnome: Except we little Number Gnomes
Who know just what to do.

Gate: We take our names according to
The gnome who wishes to go through.
For Number Gnome Two, we are numbered in twos.

Gnome 2: Royal Gate Eight, may I pass through?

Gate 8: Halt! Pray tell me, who are you?

Gnome 2: I am Number Two, what shall I do?

Gate 8: Bow four times, then you may pass through.

Gnome bows four times.

All: Eight is four times two.

Gate opens; gnome goes through.

Gate: For Number Gnome Three, we are numbered in threes.

Gnome 3: Royal Gate Thirty, may I pass through?

Gate 30: Halt! Pray tell me, who are you?

Gnome 3: I am Number Three, what shall it be?

Gate 30: Bow ten times, then you may pass through.

Gnome bows ten times.

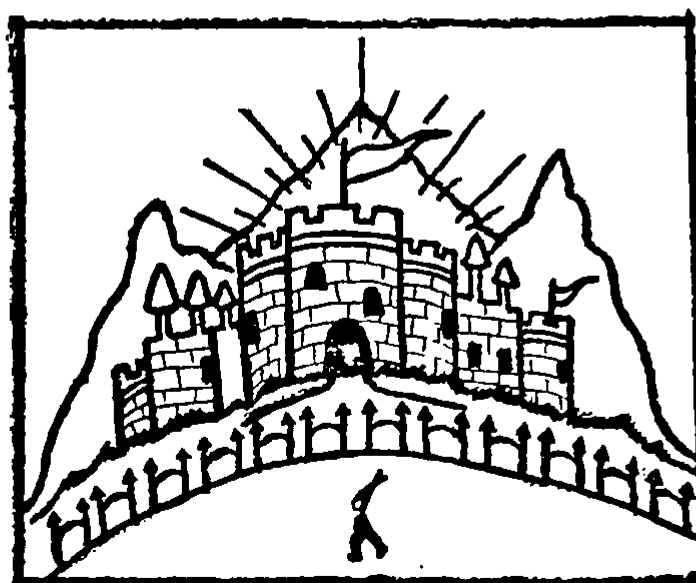
All: Thirty is ten times three.

Gate opens; gnome goes through.

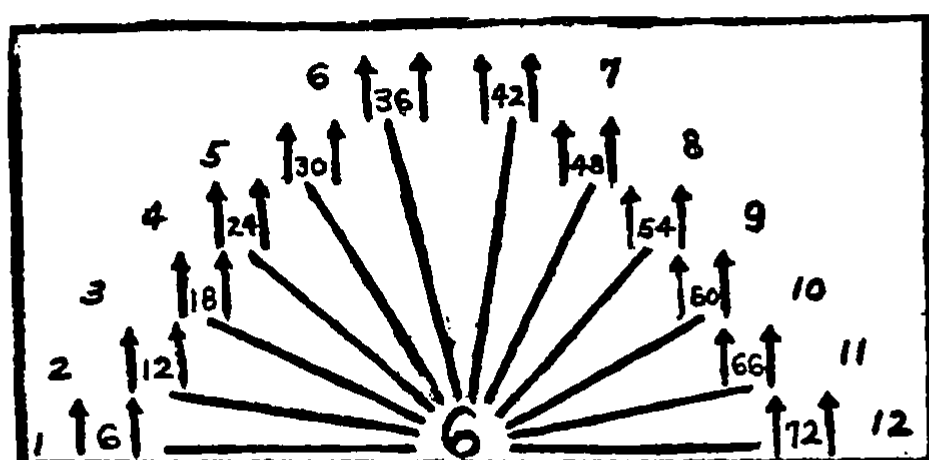
Gate: For Number Gnome Four; we are numbered in fours.

Gnome 4: Royal Gate Four, may I pass through?

Gate 4: Halt! Pray tell me, who are you?
Gnome 4: I am Number Four, what is my chore?
Gate 4: Bow one time, then you may pass through.
Gnome bows once
All: Four is one times four.
Gate opens; gnome goes through.
Repeat for all gnomes.



The story of the Royal Gates
 We show in picture here,
 But to draw it for each gnome's visit
 Would take us many a year.



Here is Number Gnome Six
 With the Royal Gates around;
 In this way we show our game.
 WAIT! a shorter way we've found!

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 2 \overline{) 2} \\ 2 = 1 \times 2 \end{array}$$

Here is Number Gnome Two.

Here is Royal Gate Two.

When Number Gnome Two comes to Royal Gate Two

He bows one time, then passes through.

Two is one times two.

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ 11 \overline{) 44} \\ 44 = 11 \times 4 \end{array}$$

The Number Gnome tells us which table to use.

The Royal Gate tells us how far we must count.

11, 22, 33, 44

Four is the proper amount.

Eleven goes into forty-four four times.

Forty-four is four times eleven.

Now that we know the grown-up way,

We've come to this decision:

Instead of the game of the Royal Gates,

We call it SHORT DIVISION!

Nanette Grimm



THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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