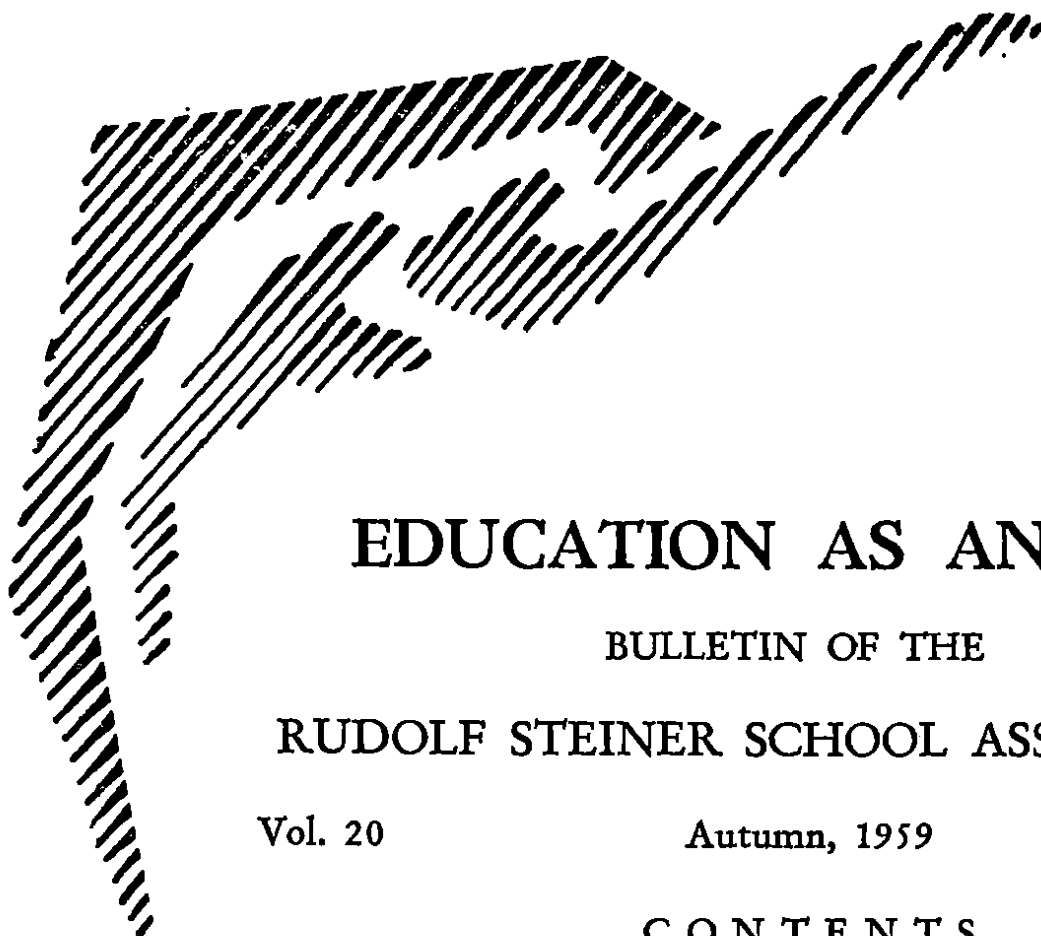




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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C O N T E N T S

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THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG CHILD

When we approach an adult whose co-operation we desire in a certain matter, we start out by explaining the issue, then we proceed to win his personal interest and finally we endeavour to obtain action. The procedure thus essentially consists of three steps:

1. Presenting concepts: an appeal to thinking.
2. Winning personal interest: an appeal to feeling.
3. Promoting action: an appeal to willing.

It is perhaps natural that a person who observes the success of such an approach among adults, should seek to apply it to children as well. Aiming, for example, to make a child behave in a certain manner, we first talk to him about the situation and give our reasons and then try to arouse his interest by persuasion or promises or threats and finally tell him how we expect him to act.

If this type of approach were successful, very few problems would remain as to the education of young children. Experience tells us, however, that the result is almost always disappointing even if such an approach is repeated again and again.

But do we ever consider the possibility that this very approach, which is so perfectly adjusted to the adult, may need to be *reversed* when we deal with a young child? The adult approach starts from concepts and reasons which for us are the result of years of experience. What we call "good," "cooperative," "kind," etc., has very real meaning for us, being built up in the course of many both happy and bitter contacts with concrete situations and people. Our

concepts have taken shape through such experiences, and they constitute a potential springboard for our actions. The child lacks this background of experience, and for him such concepts have little meaning. When we realize this we are apt to get pessimistic, unless we learn to draw the right conclusion from observations of the children themselves.

Even a child who might show every sign of impatience and resistance when we try to educate him may at times be found standing, fully absorbed, watching a workman perform his job. For a long time he may be seen just standing there observing and for days afterward he may re-enact the movements he saw, playing "workman." The spontaneity and precision of this play show that his watching was no mere passive gazing, but rather an active process of identifying himself with the action going on before his eyes. Later on he may ask questions about the work and express thoughts about it. The sequence of events is as follows:

1. Watching an action: resonance of will.
2. Re-enacting the experience: manifesting a personal feeling with respect to the action.
3. Aiming to understand what has been seen: stimulating thinking, forming of concepts.

Children themselves seldom tell how they learn, but once a little girl surprised me when she said: "I can lace my shoes. You know how I learned it? I watched my sister. When I want to learn something, I do not have to be told. I just watch, and then I know how to do it."

In a similar manner a child learns to walk and to talk. How much more easily and effectively a child learns to speak his mother tongue than a second language later on becomes apparent to any one who tries to learn a new tongue. In all this learning the child follows actions which are performed in his presence, without the guidance of explanations, rules and concepts, and in time he recreates for himself the actions he has observed.

When a child, for example, watches a carpenter hammering a nail into a board and afterwards plays "carpenter" and hammers nails on his own account, we will find, if we are careful observers, that he not only reproduces the action of hammering a nail, but also that his movements reproduce the gestures of the specific carpenter whom the child was watching: the exact grip of the hammer, the same swing, the identical skill, even the precise degree of vigor or fatigue, of tension or relaxation of that workman's hammer stroke. The whole of the workman's gestures, including his human background, shines forth again in the child's play.

The child himself could not describe these details, but his play reproduces them. He has absorbed them partly subconsciously and they reappear in his play. This faculty of absorbing the actions of others to such an extent is a gift which only young children possess and which is lost already during the first school years.

In this gift lies the most adequate and effective potential for the child's education. Explanations, discussions, reasoning and arguments are relatively ineffective, as well as rewards and threats. Herein lies a fundamental law of education at this period of childhood. It might be summed up in a few words: "The child learns through imitation."

Practically everybody has experienced children's capacity for imitation, but there is a big step from occasional observation thereof to its use as the key to pre-school education. Imitation, as referred to here, by no means stands for

any passive dependency of the child or any authoritarian, dogmatic, stereotyped attitude on the part of the adult. Learning by imitation is the most creative, inspiring and at the same time free process of learning which could exist for a child.

For us as adults it is natural, when we witness something new, to place it spontaneously in its appropriate connection within our thoughts and concepts. Someone talks to us in a certain manner. We judge it, accepting it or disengaging ourselves from it. Such a treatment of an experience is not possible for the child. He cannot detach himself from his experience in the same way as an adult; whatever he experiences stands out for him in all its immediateness and with far greater suggestive power. Dr. Rudolf Steiner describes the child as a sense organ wide open to the impressions which pour in for better or for worse, without the possibility of his rising above them.

The little child is still very tender and also timid in his first approaches to the world. As adults we easily get too forceful in the way we handle children. We do not always realise that the child's ways are still very different from ours. Through a harsh objecting to the small child's behaviour, through a commanding tone of voice, through our quick reactions in negating and correcting a child, we may easily weaken his power to approach things in his own way. Repetitions of such occurrences may well tend to conceal and cover over the child's own nature. However, if we surround the child with sympathy and understanding, we open up the opportunity for him to unfold according to his own inherent laws of development.

If we refrain from interfering as far as possible, we shall observe that the child is indeed following the world surrounding him, in imitation. The same things that a child will resist and refuse to do when he is ordered to, he will take up himself and follow with his whole being out of his imitative impulses. Why should we object to the child following the approach to the mastery of life which is natural to him and his finding of his right place in it? Such an approach to the child surely requires patience and the ability to wait, but our efforts here will find themselves greatly rewarded.

An adult sees something and reacts with his thoughts; a young child sees it and reacts with his will. For a child, play occupies a position comparable to that occupied by thoughts and ideas for us. If we did not actively accompany our experiences with thoughts and concepts, they would pass us by. The child needs his will-reaction, his play, in order to assimilate his experiences and make them fully his own. He requires every possible opportunity to watch skilful actions around him, and on the other hand adequate time for free play.

When a young child works his way into the world, everything is new to him. He looks at things, touches them, plays with them and establishes his relationship to them. As we want our thoughts and concepts to conform with realities, so the child has a corresponding urge in regard to his will. To be active means for him to take a suitable part in the activities in his surroundings. As parents and teachers we do not have to mould him into the pattern of our lives, but we can count on his very urge to imitate this pattern and to thus identify himself with it. He will become part of a world of order and of consideration for others if such a world exists around him, but he will be on the defensive if order becomes a matter of concepts and rules, for they comprise an intellectual pattern in which he feels no part.

In setting up an education for pre-school children, we constantly have to translate matters from the realm of thought into the realm of will. If we wish, for example, to lay the first foundations for a child to develop logical,

clear thinking and purpose, we shall not encourage him to express himself in logical and clear thoughts, but shall rather take care that the actions he witnesses are permeated with these qualities. Observing, assimilating and reproducing such actions by imitation imbues the child with the elements of logic and clarity more effectively than could possibly be accomplished by means of words.

The pre-school child similarly imitates honesty and truthfulness in his surroundings. We do not have to explain these qualities to him; he absorbs their substance through imitating whatever manifestations of them prevail in his environment.

The principle of imitation also predominates in nursery and kindergarten. The initial approach to the various activities should arise from the child wanting to do or join in doing something which he has seen done in his presence. Before the child starts working with clay, he has an opportunity to watch how clay is handled. Before he starts painting, he sees an adult handle the brush, use the paints and bring the colours on to the paper. After a child has watched an activity, no explanations are necessary, and he will want to set to work.

When we raise a plant to produce flowers, we care for it through its preliminary stages and thus do our best to prepare for the flowers that are to come later on. If we want a child to develop an alert mind, it will unfold like the flower of the plant if we carefully nurture the preliminary stages out of which the alert mind ultimately develops. If we give him the opportunity to build up his own approach to life through his will, the cumulative effect of these experiences are later on transferred into the realm of imagination and ultimately into that of thinking and intellectual judgment. Concepts and judgments evolved in this complete sequence will show different qualities from those imparted in a ready-made form through premature intellectual appeals. Concepts which grow up within a child become a part of him; the others that are impressed upon him from outside are carried through life as a burden.

Herein are comprised the most important challenges for early childhood education. In a Rudolf Steiner School kindergarten we do not aim to achieve premature flowers of learning, much as these flowers might find appreciation. We rather forego such immediate satisfaction and focus our attention upon the child's ultimate good and upon the protection of his childhood.

In regard to difficulties of behaviour and also to destructive impulses, the most frequent underlying cause has been found to be premature intellectualism, which has lured the child away from his natural stage of development into an adult manner of reasoning, judging and criticizing. The child experiences an undercurrent of dissatisfaction within himself, and tries to cover it up by excessive demands for attention and all-too-familiar forms of naughtiness.

To combat such symptoms, we try to avoid intellectual overstimulation. Radio, movies and particularly television carry to a pre-school child strong impressions which can paralyze his own approaches to an understanding of the simple and fundamental realities of life.

Strengthening the child's initiative and his desire to play at his own level, either alone or with other children, in combination with activities of a truly artistic character, including story telling, etc., often achieves rapid progress in improving his behaviour pattern. A child remaining within his own, often still dream-like, world gains security and poise.

Early childhood education that follows the principle of imitation steers a middle course which neither interferes with the child nor permits him to run wild. The impulse to imitate comes from within the child himself.

— Elizabeth M. Grunelius

Elizabeth M. Grunelius is the founder of the first Kindergarten of the original Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany. She was thus the first teacher to carry out early childhood education on the basis of Dr. Steiner's pedagogy, following his personal instructions.

Miss Grunelius came to this country in 1940 and became the founding principal of Kimberton Farms School, near Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, with which she stayed for 6 years. Then she was called to Garden City, New York, to start the Waldorf School of Adelphi College. Since her 3 years there, Miss Grunelius has travelled to different Waldorf Schools in Europe at their invitation. This year brought her to Highland Hall School in North Hollywood, California, as one of the pioneers of the Waldorf Schools, both in Europe and America, and a leading authority in early childhood education.

Her book on this subject, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND THE WALDORF SCHOOL PLAN, was published in 1950 by the Waldorf School of Adelphi College, and in England by New Knowledge Books, with the title, EDUCATING THE YOUNG CHILD. In 1955 it was translated into German and published in Freiburg, Germany, and in 1957 into French and published in Paris. A new reprint of the book by The Waldorf Schools Fund, Inc. will be ready soon. We have brought its first chapter and the basis for its further elaborations above, with the kind permission of the author.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

The Rudolf Steiner School movement in America has had many warm friends without whom it could not have prospered. It is always a pleasure to summon up a mental image of their kind faces.

The movement here has also an extraordinarily kind friend whose face we have never had the joy of seeing: Isabel Wyatt. She makes us more than ever believe in miracles and fairy godmothers. A well-known author of grown-up works of fiction, of the collection of poems published under the fitting title, *Stars Roundelay*, and of fairy tales for children and appreciative adults, this English woman had her heart and sensitive imagination stirred by a plea for Waldorf School grade readers, which reached her ears across the ocean. Since then she has poured from the Baucis-pitcher of her seemingly inexhaustible creative spirit a series of beautiful books attuned to the curricula of the various classes. They come so thick and fast that while we are opening one package the mail brings word of the completing of still further volumes. To date there are in use in the various American Waldorf Schools mimeographed copies of her fourth grade Nordic tales and a fifth grade Odyssey, and stencils have been cut for two second grade readers embodying some of Mrs. Wyatt's re-told Jataka Tales. The Waldorf School at Garden City may be envied for having single copies of several further collections of stories for the second and fourth grades, a biography of Schliemann, the re-discoverer of Troy, to accompany the Odyssey, and an original story in a sixth grade reader, called *Sir Fulk, the Outlaw*.

Besides this treasure, the Garden City school's remedial department has five full-length books of original Wyatt stories tailored for its special use, plus a round two dozen exquisitely turned out booklets, containing a story and two poems apiece. All are beautifully illustrated by Donald Foster, artist nephew of the author, who has also done some fine illustrations for the other books, accurately picturing the garments, furnishings and accoutrements of the period to which the tale belongs.

The children deeply love these books, which reveal in addition to the fascination of the story so much of the fascination of language and poetic imagery.

Publishers too know a good thing when they see it. The Follett Publishing Co. of Chicago, to whom the first volumes of Nordic tales were submitted, will soon bring out one of them. This company has taken an option on all further works from Mrs. Wyatt's pen.

The author is as self-effacing as she is prodigal in giving. She asks nothing but to serve a cause that has grown dear to her. With the publication of the first of her many gifts to the Waldorf Schools, other children will happily have a chance to share the bounty she has offered us. They too may join those children and teachers who have already written to express their pleasure in her books and to ask her for a snapshot of this unseen friend, whose warmth they have felt streaming to them from across the sea.

—*Marjorie Spock*

EDUCATION FOR LIVING

In the welter of human uncertainties in the world today, there is a growing uneasiness as to the adequacy of modern education. On the one hand the pressure of scientific discovery and technological precision demands a streamlined and specialized education that is continually thrusting its claims into ever earlier years of childhood. On the other hand, the question has increasingly forced itself upon thinking minds during the last twenty years as to whether man, in being educated to exploit to the full the world's material possibilities, is being taught how to use to the full the possibilities of being and living which are his primary heritage.

This challenge to modern education is taken up by A. C. Harwood in his new book, *THE RECOVERY OF MAN IN CHILDHOOD*,* and the answer to it is presented in detail in the exposition given of the educational methods of Rudolf Steiner, as they are now embodied in many schools here and in other countries. Moreover the theme is not presented as a theory, but out of the lifetime experience of the author at every level in that educational system. As he says in the introductory chapter to the book, "there never was an educational movement in which practice more closely embodies theory, in which the smallest part more accurately reflects the organic whole . . . for Steiner's ideas about childhood are not theories or hypotheses in the ordinary sense of modern science. They came to him with the force of immediate experience."

Every new educational system is based upon a fresh appraisal of the psychology of the child as a being of body and mind, but Steiner's method was the direct outcome of his direct perception of the true nature of Man as spirit,

**The Recovery of Man in Childhood*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1958, may be ordered from the Rudolf Steiner School, 15 East 79th St., New York City. The price is \$3.15 postpaid.

soul and body, and of the manifestation of the interplay of these elements in the evolving consciousness of the child and in the three seven-year stages of its growth.

The first nine chapters of the book are concerned with the exposition of the main principles of the system, the true conceptions of Man as spirit incarnating in matter, the relation of growth to consciousness, the threefold relation of body and mind, and the gradual awakening of ego-consciousness. These fundamental principles are not presented in an abstract way, but are vividly illustrated from specific reactions in the child which all will recognize. One of the most important points made is that in the earliest years of childhood, school and teacher can never be a substitute for home and mother — a principle which militates against an early age of compulsory school attendance and also against the increasing demand of industry for married women-workers. Another point is that the continuing need for the security and continuity of the home is met in the earlier years of school life by one of the most original features of the Steiner education, the Class Teacher who remains with the same children as they travel up through the years from 8 to 14. Emphasis is also laid on the training of the feeling-life of the child, especially in the second seven-year period of its life, to which end an artistic presentation is essential at every stage of teaching.

The second half of the book consists of an exposition of the twelve successive yearly classes, from the ages of 7 to 18. In these chapters is given a wealth of practical and picturesque illustration in the teaching of all subjects, making even those usually regarded as dry and abstract glow with life and interest. Special attention is given to the problems of puberty, but they are considered, not only as arising from physical changes, but also as expressed in a divergence of mental approach between girls and boys, "the boys understanding objectively by the process of logic, and the girls apprehending subjectively by the process of intuition."

Another subject which is given detailed consideration is one which to a large extent is almost disregarded in conventional thinking, but on which Dr. Steiner gave the most specific teaching, namely the question of the temperaments. Steiner did not merely revive a mediaeval interest which to modern minds seems unreal, but he showed how these differences in temperaments are caused by the preponderance of forces in one of the four constituent elements in the human being, a preponderance that can easily become a complete mental unbalance, and which therefore needs to be consciously realized and taken into account in the education of the child.

Mr. Harwood has written an invaluable book. To all educationalists it is a challenge to rethink, not only the methods, but the fundamental principles of education. Some of these principles, as expounded in this book, are unfamiliar and even startling, for they question some of the generally accepted concepts of the whole make-up of the child. This must needs be so, for it is not the learning content of our education, but its results in human character and capacity for living, that seem to be inadequate, and therefore the remedy must go to the roots of human nature. This will require courage and open-mindedness. But the issue at stake is large, and there is no time to lose. School generations follow each other swiftly, but upon each of them depends the thinking and living of a whole lifetime of a people.

— A. P. Shepherd

Arthur Pearce Shepherd, D.D. Oxon., is the author of "A Scientist of the Invisible," a distinguished introduction to the life and work of Rudolf Steiner. He is Canon and Vice-Dean of Worcester Cathedral, formerly Arch-deacon of Dudley in the Diocese of Worcester, is a member of the Convocation of Canterbury and of the Church Assembly of the Church of England. Besides the book mentioned above, which was published in 1954 by Hodder and Stoughton, London, Canon Shepherd has published "Tucker of Uganda," "Sin, Suffering and God," "The Eternity of Time," and "Marriage was Made for Man."



A. Cecil Harwood was born in London and educated in the liberal arts at Highgate School and Christ Church, Oxford. After leaving Oxford he was beginning a career of writing and publishing when he met Rudolf Steiner, who had come to England to give a series of lectures at a Summer School in Torquay. The impact of Steiner's philosophy and practice of life changed his career, and he joined a small group of teachers who were about to found the first Waldorf School in London.

From that moment he devoted his energies to the development of this school, which is now in Sussex and called Michael Hall. He has taught children of all ages (in addition to bringing up five of his own), and has served for a number of years as Faculty Chairman.

His knowledge of the Waldorf Schools abroad led to Mr. Harwood's being asked by the Allied Control Commission after World War II to tour Germany and report on the re-opening of the Schools there, all of which had been closed by the Nazi Party.

He has four times visited the United States to assist the Waldorf Schools in this country, and has lectured here as well as in England on educational and other subjects. An earlier book, "The Way of A Child," is now in its third edition.

CORRECTION

An unfortunate printer's error occurred in the last Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 1, on page 7, line 14: "I cannot serve Him thus, indeed," should appear on page 6, following the line reading, "Of sleep's refreshing force I stand in need."

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