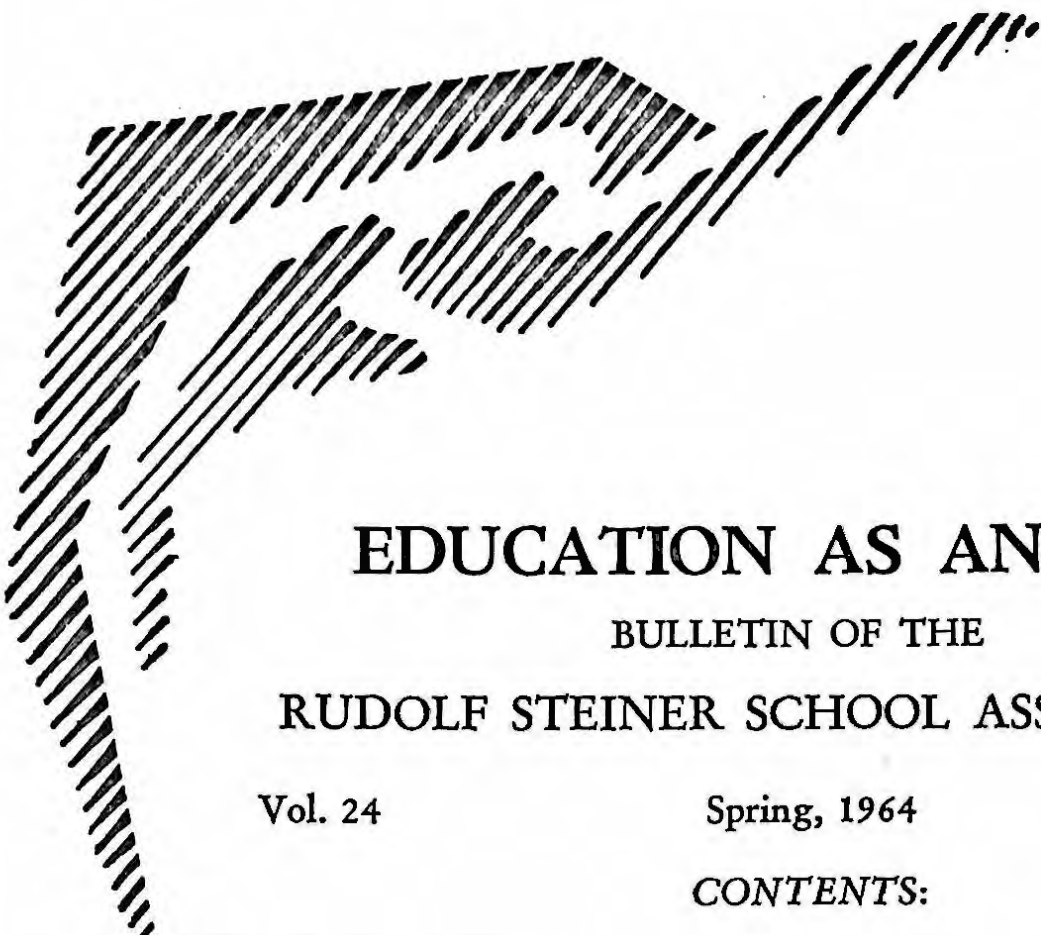




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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THE HUMAN SKULL (Adapted from Lessons with Grade 10)

To-day let us think especially about the human skull.

We have already considered the head in relation to the organism as a whole. We have seen how different it is structurally from the limbs; how it is raised into a position of comparative freedom from the rest of the organism; how it is more or less self-enclosed; how it is receptive in character, receiving through the portals of the senses impressions from the world around; how everything that streams towards it is brought to rest within it, so that, from within the silence of the head, there arise the answering thoughts.

Yet, though the head, in relation to the whole organism, represents one pole of human life and expression, viewed alone, it is remarkably complete. You may, perhaps, have seen, either in a picture or in sculpture, a headless human figure. However expressive the pose of the body or the silent gestures of the limbs, such a figure leaves one with a sense of disappointment and regret — we want the *whole* man. Yet it is quite common to see pictures or busts of the human head alone, and there is not the same feeling at all of missing the rest of the body.

Looking at a bust of Beethoven, we may commune with it and feel that we have before us all that the heart desires. Leonardo's Head of Christ is wonderfully perfect and complete.

Why is this? It is because in the human countenance we have indeed before us a whole man: thought, feeling, and will are all there, and in the balance of these three, in the detailed cast of feature, in the animation or dullness

that pervades the face, in the lightness or fixity of expression, something of the underlying character shines through to us, — we behold and we know the man.

How much of this 'wholeness' is revealed in the skull? Again with regard to the whole organism we may say, the underlying skeleton gives us the general structural plan, while in the boundary surface of the skin there are traced out for us the subtle delineations that mark out the particular man. Here, too, the skull differs from the rest of the skeleton. The bones of one man may be long and thin, those of another shorter and more compact, but the essential features are exactly the same; we know exactly what we are to look for, where each muscle finds its attachment, where the blood vessels enter, and so on. This is true of the skull also, but the skulls of human beings, unlike the other bones, show marked individual differences. Phrenologists speak of special bumps and they try to deduce from these bumps something of the character of the individual man. I do not think they are altogether right, but these individual differences are certainly there, and, whereas the skeleton as a whole can teach us secrets about man in general, the skull does contain secrets that apply to the individual.

Why do I think that phrenologists are not altogether right? They are not right if they try to judge a man from his bumps. Man is always something more, far more, than the eye can see. A man may have a so-called 'musical bump' but it does not follow therefore that he will become a famous musician, or that he will become a musician at all.

Another may have only the slightest indication of a 'musical bump' but patience and determination and hard work may carry him a good way further than his bump would lead us to suppose. And if this is true of the musical bump, it is equally true of any other bump or outer sign.

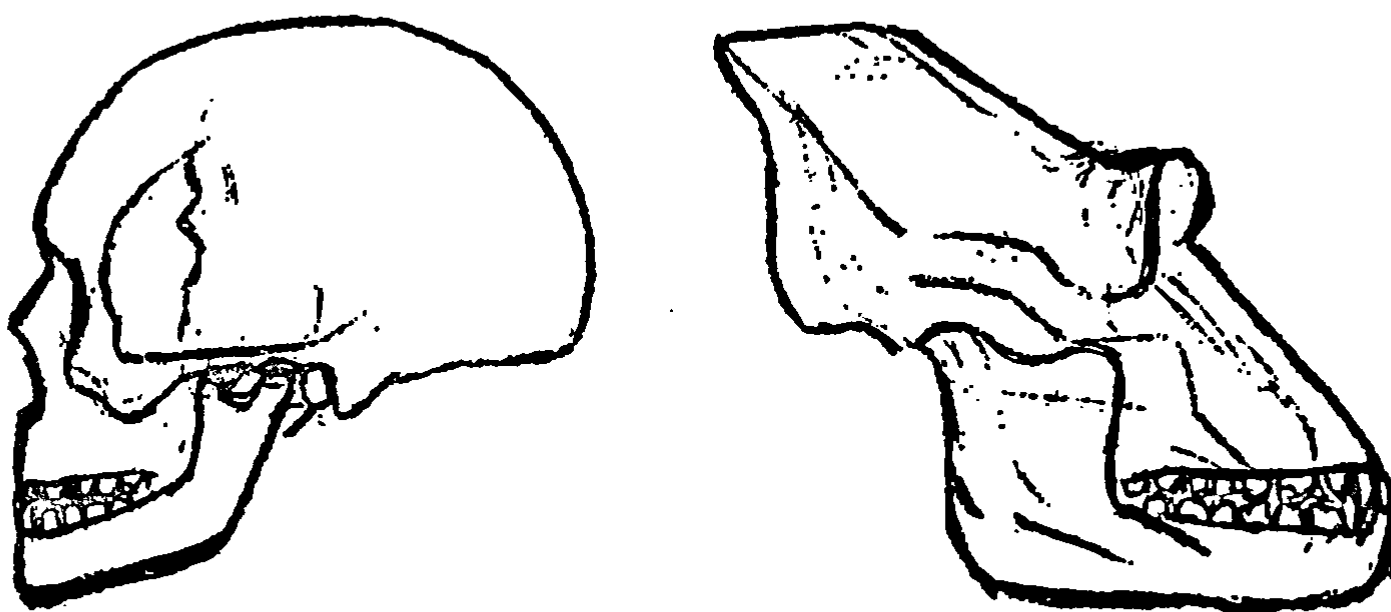
We all bring with us into life gifts in some directions and shortcomings in others but a man may fail in his gifts or he may conquer his shortcomings. We can never really assume anything from merely looking at the outside of a man. Nevertheless, the skull is unique in that it does certainly carry individual differences of form to a marked degree, and these differences must reflect something that belongs especially to the particular individual. This certainly adds to the feeling that when we are looking at a torso, a trunk, we see something that is more general, whereas in the head we see something that carries the general to particular completion.

The back of the head is rather like an egg, and it is as though out of this egg there were *born* the countenance. The back of the head is closed to us, it conceals something, whereas the countenance, by comparison, opens up to meet us. Can we ever imagine the face from looking at the back of the head? We cannot. The back of the head has untold possibilities, but the face is one single expression, one single possibility come to fulfilment. So we may say, the face we behold comes to meet us out of a past, a world that is hidden from us. Very much lies hidden in the countenance, too, — indeed much more than we can ever behold, but nevertheless, something of the hidden man is revealed to us, the hidden forces that have shaped the individual features flow out to us — the *character* of the man rests in no single feature but pervades them all. The countenance of a little child is hardly touched as yet by this hidden man, but, as the years go by, his writing becomes clearer.

But now, what are the essential characteristics of the human skull?

How does it differ from any other skull? First we perceive the beautifully rounded dome of the upper head. When we look at the dome of St. Paul's, or at the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, what are we reminded of? Each is like a miniature heaven resting upon the solid masonry that rises up to meet it from the earth below. And so it is too with the human head. In all nature it is man alone that has this beautifully rounded dome as the crown of his upright, physical form.

It is hardly an earthly form at all. Looking at this dome of the human head, above all the frontal part which is the special seat of human thinking, we may have the feeling: each man carries his own replica of heaven within him. And man alone possesses this, and possessing this, he is able to develop an inner life that carries him beyond mere physical existence — he is able to unfold a life of ideas and ideals within him.



In sharp contrast to this, behold the rectangular jaw below. An entirely different form! The same forces that fashioned the smooth upper dome could not have built this form as well. Other forces must come into play here. The clearly accentuated vertical line expresses something of the individual will. In it is expressed the force that raises man up from the horizontal position of the typical animal. The tiny child first raises its head, then its trunk, and finally lifts itself up on to its feet. It is the same force that lifts us up each morning — the force that makes us individually awake, so that we can take hold of our lives. In this vertical line of the jaw we may see how man gathers together that which is of heaven above and leads it down and concentrates it in his own individual will. And, in the horizontal line, we go forward with this individual will to meet life, we advance forward into life to carry out the tasks that we have to do. Thus the upper part of the head is expressive of the free range of thought, the lower part mirrors the human will; these forms are

by no means merely physical forms.

Between these two we have a most delicate structure, gently curved above and more articulated below, more head-like above, more limb-like below, expressing restfulness in the upper line and movement in the lower line, swelling forward into the cheekbone that swings upwards at the eye, tapering backwards and inwards towards the ear,—a wonderful bridge between the above and the below. This middle structure underlies that part of the face where the feeling life finds natural expression, the feeling that holds in balance the thinking and the willing.

In these three forms, the spherical form above that leads us back to the enclosed character of the back of the head, the rectangular form below that leads us down to the earth and forward into life, and the middle intermediary form that lends itself to both these, we have the essential character of the human skull.

We have but to glance from this to the ape to see the immeasurable loss. The frontal part of the skull, the dome in man, actually appears hollowed out, the rectangular jaw has lost its clean and concise angle and has become quite physical, and the delicate middle member has coarsened into a thick band of bony tissue from which all subtlety is excluded.

The human head, even in the rigid structure of the skull, is a true mirror of the higher soul forces that make man a kingdom apart and that distinguish him from all natural creation. Properly speaking, it is man alone that possesses a *head*.

— L. F. Edmunds

(Reprinted from THE MICHAEL HALL JOURNAL)

SPELLING LESSONS

The laws of spelling seem as unalterable to a despairing Second Grader as the law of gravity on the top of a shoulder-high rock. Must one always be watchful of -ei- and -ie-? To the adult there is a kind of dogmatic virtue in the fact that spelling — much more than punctuation or grammar — has frozen into rigid shapes. Our stiff minds accept soberly the “one and only way” — except for those aristocratic Briticisms, such as *dialogue* and *honour*. Plebeian commercialisms seem below notice until a child, describing an evening at the Drive-In, writes of a “lovely nite”, or after helping his mother scrub the bathtub, puts down a triumphant “kleen hands”.

As we look back in time to the early Renaissance, however, we find a whimsical disregard of consistency. How cheering to be able to write “Shakespere” in 2 dozen different ways, all of them right! The early printers had the advantage of “know”, “knowe”, “kenowe”, whichever was the best length to fill out their line, and yet it was they, those “devils”, who began to insist on regularity, just as they set about standardizing punctuation. We can look back at the earlier manuscript writers with wonder and envy, for they not only possessed the will to form their letters in beauty, but also the complete freedom to write their words as they wished them to look and sound.

On the other hand, we know that in far distant ages, when writing itself was shrouded in mystic darkness, the letters were holy things: hiero-glyphs, sacred carving. The temple laid down the rules for the scribes, and these laws

derived from the gods themselves. The stars and their divinities helped man form his sounds, and cosmic laws were mirrored in earthly observances. A scribe who "made a mistake" was punished by death; a child today is immeasurably impressed by the wonder of this. It is hard for us to understand the acceptance of those unalterable gestures of cosmic wisdom which were later called the Logos. They worked into the moral-ethical sphere of men, not merely into the outer realm of intelligent language.

If the teacher today is not to be a pedant (and *pedagog* and *pedant* have come hand in hand to us from one Greek root), he must first of all respect the wisdom which remains in the sounds of our words, sometimes only as a breath. Take the clumsily spelled *night*: the eurythmic gesture of *CH*, of taking in blessing and refreshment in a wafting movement, a sound common to all Germanic languages and the Scots, still echoes there in the *GH*, half unheard. How utilitarian is the sleep of "nite", that has to do without such in-breathing! . . . The mouth that finds no delight in sound becomes one which bites the words it uses, as if they were parsnips.

But speech should be creative, not destructive. An affection for the sounds and rhythm of words in very young children will give them the ability to use and spell correctly (or freely!) a far wider vocabulary than the Sally and Sam readers provide. When First Graders in the Waldorf Schools paint a Big Brown Bear or a Bright Butterfly in learning the *B*, they follow the contours of the letter with such pleasure and expectancy that it becomes an imaginative friend for life. Letters have shapes; sounds live and move: children can hear in the word *Bird* how the delicate vowel and *R*'s impulsive motion lift the *B* — a rounded body — so that it swings out into a definite direction. It is true fairy-tale magic, accomplished by the miracle of human speech. The imagination has been involved, the eye looks with affectionate understanding at the "picture" of the word, and thus spelling is not a chore but partakes of that magic, too. Even a downright sly *B* that creeps on tiptoe into *comb* and *subtle* will be forgiven.

All teachers know that learning to spell well depends on careful looking. The method most used in studying spelling-lists is to fix the eyes on a single word, look away and see it in the mind, write it from memory, and then compare the printed and the written word. This is a proven method, if the child has enough concentration to pursue it. But we find less and less concentration: children need will-exercises as well as spelling-exercises. If the teacher will insist on correctness and systematic correction, spelling exercises *are* will exercises, not through self-righteous pedantry but because of a genuine desire to help the moral fault, or weakness, that lies far below the one of intelligence.

Lack of concentration may be in hearing, as well as in seeing. A training in careful listening is vitally important in this Age of the Eye, and this presupposes the teacher's attention to his own clear and pleasant speech habits! Rudolf Steiner regarded this attention as so necessary that he prefaced every faculty meeting, during the preparations for the first Waldorf School, with speech exercises for all the teachers.

The final task in connection with spelling is to bring a fresh, cheerful humor into a subject which too often, and unnecessarily, is deadly serious. A prose sentence can be more interesting than a mere list, and according to the specific class it can be gay, factual or didactic (You say you don't *fear* the

bear, you *sneaky hare*, but would you *dare* to climb the *stair* and knock on the door of his *lair*? The Indian *chief* would not *believe* his *niece's friend* could be a *thief* until he was *relieved* of his *meat-cleaver*. Do what's *right* with all your *might*!) Still better for the eye and the memory are rhymed verses, such as Lisa Monges has given us in the following pages.

Spelling lessons will never, perhaps, be pure fun, but the Big Brown Bear and the imaginative determination of the teacher can certainly make them Bearable.

— Ruth Pusch

MAKE SPELLING A LIVELY EXPERIENCE

Spelling, often a painful and, at best, abstract experience for little children, may become a living and joyful activity. Convinced of this, the author presents here some of the verses she wrote to this end at the request of a teacher who has put them to successful use in her teaching.

Let the children recite these verses over and over again, stressing the rhythm and the particular sound in question. Let them accompany the recitation with the characteristic movements of eurythmy for the various sounds emphasized, so that the whole being of the child becomes one with the sound. Now proceed to writing the verses, making clear to the children that "this is the way grownups write these words." Then let them read what they have written, and finally let them spell the words.

In this way, the Word which has been experienced by the whole being of the child will not lead a mere shadow existence in his soul, but will become his friend, full of colorful life and vigor.

May these verses be of help and bring joy to many children!

I am poor,
Sighed the loon,
As he looked
At the moon.

The fish has a fin,
The thimble is thin,
The cricket is wicked,
It makes such a din.
It hid in the bin.
How did it get in?
Look there, over there!
No, it's not anywhere.

See! O see!
We are free!
Let darkness flee!
We're full of glee!

Far away, far
Twinkles the star.

Warm and cold,
Weak and bold,
Silver and gold,
Give and hold.

Bring me a stick,
I'll teach you a trick,
Quick, quick, quick!

What we say
When we pray
Helps us in our work and play,
Makes us happy, makes us gay,
Everywhere and all the day.

O wonderful O!
I love you so,
With your golden glow,
O glorious O!

Fast and slow,
High and low,
Arrow and bow,
Raven and crow,
Above and below,
To stop and to flow,
To puff and to blow,
To swim and to row,
To dig and to sow,
To live and to grow,
To toss and to throw,
To ask and to know.

Good luck!
Says the woodchuck.
I am big,
Says the pig.
Much too fat,
Says the cat.
How? How?
Asks the cow.
Too much beer,
Cries the steer.
Too many noodles,
Bark the poodles.
Too much jam,
Bleats the lamb.
Much too full,
Roars the bull.
Don't you dare,
Hops the hare.
He's a silly,
Neighs the filly.

Ever so tall,
Ever so small,
Ever so lazy,
Ever so crazy,
Ever so sad,
Ever so bad,
Ever so happy,
Ever so snappy,
Ever so bright,
Ever so light, —
Who are the creatures
Who have all these features?

Over the rubble
Over the stubble,
The roe-buck escapes
From the hunter's gun.

"I'll lull you to sleep with a lullaby,"
Hummed the bumblebee to the
butterfly,
"But first let us sup
From this flowery cup,
Ere the sun goes down
And the moon comes up."

Shimmering, spark on spark,
Stars shine through the dark.

Winter's deed
On the street
Is a sheet
Of ice and sleet.
Let your feet
Take good heed!

Now, now! said the cow to the sow,
Don't make such a row!
Just lift up your brow
And make a deep bow.
It's easy, I vow!
How, how? asked the sow of the cow.

The owl with a scowl and a frown
Asked, "Where is my golden crown?
Though the color is brown
Of my feathery gown,
I should be king of this town."

Then the wolf with a terrible howl,
And the fox with a nasty growl,
And the boar with its ugly jowl
Set out on their nightly prowl
And made reply to the owl:

"Although you may scowl and may
frown,
We never shall give you a crown,
For whose feathery gown
Is not purple but brown
Can never be king of this town!"

Awful, hateful, and frightful —
Joyful, grateful, delightful.
Sinful, mournful, and fearful —
Truthful, hopeful, and cheerful.
Scornful, shameful, and spiteful —
Healthful, wakeful, and rightful.

Each day we shall learn something
new.

Our teacher will know what to do.
I hope our mistakes will be few.

To purr and to purl,
To hurt and to hurl,
To burst and to furl,
To curve and to curl.

To knock at the door,
To turn the knob,
To tie a knot,
To knit a sweater,
To knead the dough,
To sharpen the knife,
To carry a knapsack,
To bend the knees,
Always we know what to do!

You need to be skillful
To skate on the lake,
To ski on the slope,
Not to skid on the ice,
To skip with the rope,
To sketch in the book,
To skim the cream,
And to skin the potatoes.

Listen to the bird!
It could not be heard
While the kitten purred.
Hush! Don't say a word!

To dazzle, to puzzle,
To fizzle, to muzzle,
To sizzle, to nuzzle.

The ship in the dock,
The hands on the clock,
The holes in the sock,
The cracks in the rock,
The frills on the frock,
The sleeves on the smock,
The key in the lock,
The milk in the crock,
The shape of the block,
The comb of the cock,
The harder you mock,
The louder you knock,
The greater the shock!

Whirling, whirring, and whizzing,
The whirlwind whisks up the
whitecaps.

We thank the Lord that he gave us
our head
To think the thoughts of a thousand
things,
That he lets us breathe the life-giving
breath,
That he gave us the strength to do
work on the earth.

—*Lisa Dreber Monges*

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