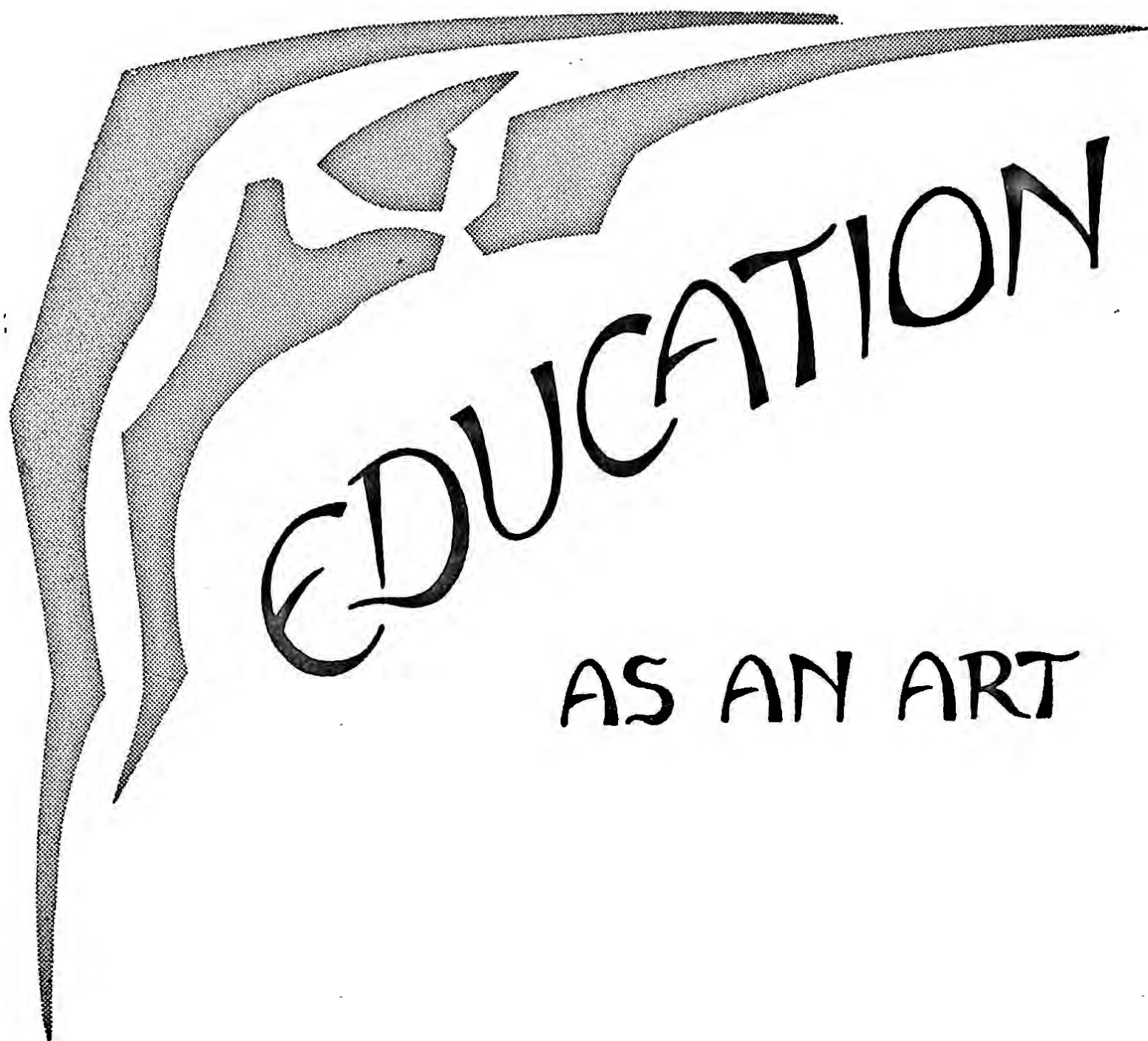




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IMAGINATION

Evening after evening, the little girl rocks her doll to sleep, hugging and kissing it until its nose is almost kissed away. What makes a doll so lovable?

In the polarity of the head's roundness and the pliable mobility of the long arms and legs, the doll bears the likeness of man, a likeness into which the little girl will grow only gradually. Whereas an adult in his "perfect" appearance often seems overpowering to the child, a soft, movable doll allows the fulfillment of her heart's desire. All her experiences with father, mother, little brother and older sister are moulded through imitation into the doll, now gently, now with firm energy. With this freedom of action, the child grows beyond herself. As the model of man is given in a bud-like form, the child's imagination can unfold and complete it at will.

The child's playing is of great importance to his whole life. Therefore the toys that are handed to him should be genuine and related to life. The naturalistic doll, aping man's movements and even his own voice by means of various mechanisms, cannot truly inspire the child's deep source of creativity. Such a "perfect doll" soon exhausts the possibilities of gestures and creative play, resulting in boredom. Modern toys are tainted by the intellectualism of the modern mind. Should we not protect the child's own world of play from the intrusion of technology? Their toys should be simple — a fallen leaf, a bit of cork that can float, a doll knotted from a few colorful rags. If something can be laid to rest, lifted up again and moved about, if it even can produce musical sounds, a child will reach out for it with pleasure.

The sense-perception that is full of vitality and activates the child into shaping and transforming the objects around him not only lends wings to the imagination but also influences the organic growth and character of the child. If you have ever watched a little fellow throwing all his strength against a heavy bookcase, trying to move it, you appreciate how such a force of intentional action deserves to be taken seriously.

Have you ever watched a small boy pretending to be a train conductor for hours, ticket-puncher in his hand, faithfully imitating every gesture of the grown man? What is behind such enthusiasm that he forgets everything outside of his play? Is it not a natural instinct, which in this way orients him to the world and in the future brings him a feeling of security in life?

For an adult, play or entertainment is a pleasure added to the ordinary pursuits of life, but for the child it is the main content of his life. With complete seriousness, he tries to put himself into the objects of the outer world in order to become part of them.

When the child is old enough for school, he turns inward, away from the world of objects in which he has lived with so much imagination and will-power. What has formerly been grasped outwardly with all his senses now becomes an inner experience, heart-felt. Slowly the child leaves behind the models for imitation, the doll and teddy-bear, and listens with a heightened devotion to stories and fairy tales whose beloved figures do not reveal their true being until freed from enchantment. What joy springs up in the child's heart when, in the story of Snow White and Rose Red, the wicked dwarf is knocked to the ground by the bear's heavy paw and when the bear, throwing off his clumsy fur, is changed into a prince!

This is merely a picture. But such a picture can live on in the heart of a young child who, some day, may find himself entangled in a similar "bear" adventure and who will struggle through it from dreamlike semi-consciousness into the light of his own personality. In true fairy tales the encounter with the forces of evil and the brave deeds of liberation are nothing less than miniature Faust dramas, giving a prophetic outline to the path of destiny. How pale or glowing the child's face becomes as he listens to the battles with dragons and giants! His pulse beats faster, he breathes more deeply as fear is subdued and a new consciousness emerges, although still dimly, that life proceeds according to great inner laws.

In early years, play was of utmost importance to the child while now the significance lies in his image of objective and human values. And it is best to begin with an image when subject matter has to be presented in the elementary grades, as the child has not yet begun intellectual development. Should one appeal to this undeveloped intelligence, his creative forces would be stunted and even his physical health might suffer. If true interest for a subject is to be kindled, the process of learning has to make a detour through the imaginative soul and the strong power of will. Such interest in turn will nourish the heart and make it receptive for learning.

A healthy child longs for images which are akin to him. When Goethe, as a boy, was to take piano lessons, he insisted on being taught by a certain master who had imaginative names for all the fingers and notes. The boy admired the "Däumerling" (Thumbling) and "Deuterling" (Pointerling) as the fingers were called and the "Fakchen" (Fiksy) and "Gakchen" (Giksy) which represented the "F" and "G" notes.

How do we find the right images for our lessons? Let us consider handwriting first. A relationship between image and sound is easily recognizable. The manuscript form of the letter W can be compared with a wave. Words like water, wind, worm, wing, whip and whirl evoke similar images in the mind when we trace their form with flowing movement, up and down, characteristic of the wave.

First we consider mainly the initial sounds of the word. A suitable background for this image of W is furnished by the tale of the Fisherman and his Wife with its dramatic description of water, from a smooth bright mirror to the threatening grays and blacks of the storm. Out of the play of lines in the wave the letter W is condensed into a symbol of writing.

In addition, the teacher might let the children shape the wave line of W on the floor, eurythmically, with their arms in the air, till finally it is painted or drawn on the board when they can step back to visualize it. So the child is guided carefully from the experience of elementary images to an understanding of abstract concepts. In this way the teacher meets the child's love of motion, providing him at the same time with an experience that will make the dry subject of learning a desirable and lovable one.

In arithmetic, also, one starts with the total experience because only from a view of the whole can an organism be truly comprehended. After this has been gained the child can proceed with a confidence which is nowhere more needed than in the area of numbers.

For example, the teacher might place a pile of big, red-cheeked apples on a table. He will ask the children to divide and arrange this whole into parts. Many

possibilities offer themselves and they are happily explored. The number seven can be divided into 3 plus 4, as well as 5 plus 2 or 6 plus 1. The process of traditional addition, $3 + 4 = 7$, leads only to the one solution which is later practiced. However if we first bring the children to the experience of the whole we lead them to a principle of life akin to the human being. The individual is also a totality, an organism that cannot be divided or sawed up like a piece of wood. Cell-division in an organ's life proceeds from the center and not by the outward addition of cell to cell. To arrive at a sum only by combining it out of fragments predisposes the young child to an atomistic way of thinking basic to materialistic philosophy.

The method of taking one's departure from the experience of the whole is of value in all subjects. How Japan is presented in a geography class can serve as an example. The mere listing of facts such as rivers, lakes and cities will not focus the attention of the student. Instead, let us all together climb Fujiyama up to its wreath of clouds in order to look down on the wide terraces of rice paddies with buffaloes wading in the mud and finally take off our shoes to enter the paper houses whose walls are sheltering a life of gracious dignity. Introduced in this way, the land of volcanoes and island beauty will open the pupil's heart and insure a ready and sympathetic attention even to the dry facts of its economic life.

An image leaves the soul free. It does not coerce, as a rigid thought does. An artistic utterance enriches and strengthens the recipient. A picture builds a bridge from man to man and also nurtures the individual development. There is a natural road from doing to knowing, from imaginative thinking to conceptual knowledge.

—ELISABETH ABRAHAM

Translated by Dora Kimmich, with the kind permission of the Mitteilungen der Freien Waldorfschule Marburg (No. 34).

AN EXPERIMENT IN THE TEACHING OF FRENCH: Nursery through Fourth Grade

Even the die-hards of the old traditional approach to the teaching of modern languages (that is, treating them like Latin or Greek) seem by now for the most part to have accepted the idea of a more direct way. "Audio-lingual" teaching, or "aural-oral," as it is sometimes called (though the latter expression has a Freudian ring, somehow), has indeed become a sort of fad, and in some cases has been launched into with such uncritical enthusiasm that one hears more and more frequent complaints that children are "parroting without understanding," and that the result is great confusion.

In continental Europe, where, of necessity, the teaching of languages has long been more thorough and more effective than here, the appeal to the ear is a matter of course. To inhabitants of such a linguistically crowded region, it is obvious that language is for the purpose of immediate communication and not just for the study of literature. Such a concept penetrated later over here, though we then went at it with a vengeance, even to calling upon mechanical aids. This language laboratory, of course, like most of the boons of our enlightened age, is a mixed blessing—certainly a device which needs careful supervision by human agents. Its function as a time-saver is unquestionable, as its value as a substitute for poorly qualified teachers. Yet for students below high

school level its value becomes increasingly suspect. In any case, the basic fact, the recognition that language is primarily carried on between tongue and ear, and only secondarily between paper and eye, remains on both sides of the water.

It is a question to what extent the new, less formal approach should be used, and under what circumstances it is advisable to supplement it with a more conscious study of language structure. The natural sequence of learning—either for small children learning their mother tongue or for people placed in a foreign milieu—appears to be first, listening; second, imitating; third, understanding; and last, reading and writing. The case of my own children, when they were little, comes to mind. Transported into a Spanish-speaking country, after an initial period of listening they began by making Spanish-sounding syllables and words. They were pretending to speak Spanish. At first these sounds meant nothing; they had the lilt only. But the sounds evolved gradually into meaning. A baby does the same thing in his crib.

What I propose to describe here is an experimental Lower School program now in its third year of use in a small country day school in the heart of New York's Westchester County. Given *carte blanche* by the headmaster, I was expected to teach French to children from nursery school through fourth grade. I was free to use whatever guidance I could find and to learn as I went along. As qualification for this task, I had long training and fluency in French, some training and experience in Rudolf Steiner's educational theory and its practice in Waldorf schools (where two foreign languages are begun in first grade) in various parts of the world. In addition to this, I had a lifetime of travel behind me, intimate contact with several languages, and musical training. For general insight into the psychology of the young child and the best pedagogical approaches in the field of language, I am deeply indebted to the writings and indications of Rudolf Steiner, which were a constant source of inspiration.

Modern science has recently corroborated what language educators have long known: that the brain of the small child is far better equipped for direct assimilation than at any other stage of life. Dr. Wilder Penfield has demonstrated this fact scientifically for the most skeptical reader in his fascinating article, "The Uncommitted Cortex," which was published in the Atlantic Monthly's controversial issue entitled "Our Disturbed Americans." In practice, the superiority of the small child's equipment means a maximum of flexibility, outwardly of the vocal apparatus and inwardly of responsiveness to the "spirit" of the language. It is interesting to note that Dr. Penfield says this period is over at the age of eight or nine—just the time when most of the "early" language programs are begun in school!

The learning of the small child, however, is a sub-conscious and intuitive thing. He can be thrown into the medium of the language as an animal is thrown into water, and he will swim. If the process is not associated in some way with stress, if he stands firmly in his mother tongue (and there are many indications that before the age of three he should not be disturbed in the acquisition of his mother tongue, synonymous as it is with the core of his personality)—if then he is sure of his ability to communicate, he can bear to be cut off from communication for limited periods. He will not mind the feeling, so distressing to many older students, of not having his feet on the bottom; he will enjoy swimming. This is the time, *par excellence*, for him to acquire a perfect accent; nor are the laryngeal patterns ever really forgotten. Anyone who has learned a language early, only to forget it and return to it much later, can attest to this fact! Above all, the small child can without effort acquire a feeling for the "essence" of the language, that subtle quality so difficult to grasp later: the

precision, delicacy, and *élan* of French, the emotional subtlety and plastic vigor of German, the clarity and musical verve of Italian. As a result, he can begin, in however limited a way, to think in the language; he can put himself, so to speak, in the skin of a Frenchman or a German or an Italian. This is the awakening of understanding, even of love, certainly of tolerance. Never can he be so deeply touched again.

Rudolf Steiner tells us to proceed, in teaching, from the whole to the parts, from synthesis to analysis. Alas, this is easier said than done! Obviously, textbooks at this early stage are not only impossible but undesirable. In a sense, the teacher needs to know the most to teach at this lowest level, for his subject must come as second nature. The child must be involved in some activity which incidentally happens to be conducted in a foreign language. If this activity is to his taste, if it is carried on in a playful, joyous way, and at the level of his interest, he will learn with his whole being, like the undersea creatures which change their color as they move about adapting endlessly to their environment.

It could be argued that a teacher of language in the nursery school is taking over work which in a more affluent age was delegated to the family governess. It is not so simple, however, for the governess lived with the child, while I was to have only twenty minutes twice a week. I should have to squeeze much into that little time; and concentration is not a three-or four-year-old's strong point. The class would have to be tightly structured; they would have to be enthralled every moment, if the time was to be used with maximum economy.

For me, folklore was the bottomless source material. Indeed, the folk song is the prototype for teaching, with its principle of variety within repetition. The mind holds on to the repetition, but is constantly surprised by the variety; in its delight, it learns. Nursery games and songs, the *chansons de la pouponniere*, and the *rondes* can keep one busy for years. They can be supplemented with simple, everyday conversation—strongly rhythmic, highly dramatic, and of course repetitive. As in music, the repetition need never be boring, need never be the same, if it is deeply lived each time. "Let's do it again!" the little ones will say. Or they may say, "You forgot something that time," so strong is their sense of ritual. In varying the repetitions, the teacher needs the soul of an artist; but never let him think that his art is unappreciated. Never let him underestimate the depth of a child's response, simply because it seems to be quickly forgotten. It is molding that child's very being.

In the nursery, we carried on most of our activity in chorus. While children at this age have little social sense, preferring to work beside, rather than with, each other, they could be united, so to speak, musically. To call on one was to lose the group, however. In kindergarten, on the other hand, this was changing. We recapitulated much of the material, more quickly this time, and we added much that was new, increasing the complexity of our play, bringing in activities which made greater demands upon the individual. The children were beginning to be able to listen to one another, to wait their turn, to compete. Where numbers had been a rhythmic sequence, they could now occasionally be isolated. They could be counted forwards and backwards. Antiphonal recitation began to be possible, and the beginnings of a dramatic role or two.

By the first grade, with four 20-minute periods a week, our program was too far developed to fit into any of the standard ones set out in manuals for this age group. These children were not fluent in French in the sense of being able to say anything they wished. How could they be, on such a short ration of time?

Yet they had considerable facility in fitting themselves into language structures, very much as they might skip to a turning rope. In limited situations, they could respond surely and deftly. By now it was time for harder work. At the same time, it was necessary to be careful lest too great demands be made on energies needed for the learning of reading and writing in the native tongue. My French program had to lag behind the English program. It had to be "child's play" still, but it did not dare to become boring. A foundation for writing could certainly be laid. What better or simpler preparation could there be than the French alphabet, which in the very reciting conjures up a Gallic realm? Why should French ever be spelt in the English alphabet? Is this not translating of the crassest kind, and as such self-defeating?

The children learned the French alphabet, then, and they began to learn a few simple things about spelling: what the first letters of their names were, how these names and numbers of other words and groups of words looked in French. This was not an attempt to open the door of reading, but was the merest chink through which we could glimpse a vista of future possibilities. Interspersed liberally through this was a great deal of drawing, which incidentally afforded a rich source of conversation. To this end the children learned the colors, as they would be constantly needed, and worked further with numbers. Numbers were clapped and walked, at first by ones, then by the various factors of whichever number we happened to have reached. These myriad variations of counting, however, with their games and competitions, did not yet touch upon the realm of calculation. We began to build up a vocabulary: days of the week, months, parts of the body, kinds of people and their occupations, animals, and plants. And of course the games and songs, now more involved, longer, and requiring a greater effort of memorization, continued apace. We planned two French assemblies a year, as we did with the older children: the first for Christmas carols, the second for some kind of rhythmical dramatic production. These emerged out of the classwork and afforded an opportunity for the parents to see what their children were doing.

The second-graders were already more sophisticated and needed a greater challenge. By this time, spelling in the French alphabet was becoming a habit, and short sequences of words were being written at regular intervals, and words pointed out. As in the previous year, we embarked on writing only after the words in question had been gone over thoroughly orally; the great preponderance of the work was still completely spoken. We continued the numbers, with a semblance of the learning of tables and a greater isolation of single numbers from their context. By this time it began to be interesting to point out objects and name them—an activity which I found too analytical for the younger children—and simple expressions began to be consciously used. Nor were the songs and poems neglected. The vocabulary, too, went on expanding.

By the third grade, with 40-minute periods, we had reached the point where the children's minds were clamoring for something solid to take hold of. They really wanted a certain amount of analytical work, and French is just the language to develop exactness and clarity. It is interesting to see how the work of such a third grade differs from that of a grade that is just beginning the language. A purely oral approach, in the case of these children, would not offer enough challenge. We undertook the writing out of whole poems—a little at a time, of course. With the alphabet firmly in hand, we made a beginning with French phonics through the study of syllables. In the case of children prepared in this way, a use of phonetic symbols at a later date would be not only confusing but downright superfluous. Why take two steps when one is sufficient? If the letters and syllables have come to have a French sound in the mind, the spelling itself

already indicates the sound. We made a conscious study of time—the course of the year, its seasons, months, weeks, as well as the portions of the day and the hours. We began to grapple with “tongue-twisters,” an occupation which the children found highly entertaining. Calculation got under way, with addition and subtraction in the foreground. Dramatic play continued, and the class began to manipulate easy sentence structures, questions and answers, and so on, more or less consciously. This activity I began later than indicated in most of the manuals, for in my experience it requires a relatively high degree of independence and a fairly long attention span. It was in the third grade that we began to make notebooks; they were our textbooks, in fact: textbooks which the children had made themselves, and illustrated, and which were constantly referred to. They were the record of our labors.

The fourth grade was at the apex of my program. The children at this stage were ready for quite complicated songs and poems, among them one of the *Fables de la Fontaine*. Numbers had to be mastered up to 100, and the children were able to carry on the four operations in the form of easy mental arithmetic. In addition to the recapitulation and broadening of the syllable study, they learned some metrical rules, and scanned and examined poems or songs for “Liaison” and “elision.” We began to touch upon grammar, with the parts of speech identified and used. We did grammatical analysis by assigning a color to each part of speech. We learned the times of day in all their intricacies. We did simple French geography. Our tongue-twisters grew formidable and amused us very much. The two auxiliary verbs, *etre* and *avoir*, we conjugated in the present. By the end of this year, the children were fully prepared to embark upon reading and to tackle any textbook within their range of interest.

In looking back over this curriculum, I might do well to draw a few general conclusions. Throughout our program there was no formal reading, in the sense of word recognition, or of embarking upon completely new material. After absorbing something orally, we went on to draw it, to write it, and finally to read what we had written. In keeping with certain indications of Rudolf Steiner, we were going from the larger, more vigorous activities to the smaller, more controlled ones. Thus, dancing, clapping, and stamping, together with singing, would be the first step, as the whole body is involved. After this would come the more focused business of drawing, and hard upon it writing—a writing still not entirely divorced from drawing, still closely connected with color and form, but writing nevertheless. The most exacting and minute of our activities was the reading of what we had written—still reading aloud, for reading in silence would be the final stage, and this we were as yet far from reaching. Our aim, then, for the following year, would be for the children to be able to read unfamiliar material, as well as to begin to express themselves orally to some extent independently of set structures.

Throughout the six years of this program, there were to my mind three currents moving along side by side. On the one hand, the children were learning “patterns” in the sense of most “audio-lingual” programs. These patterns at the beginning would make little sense, but would be clarified through familiarity and the use of analogy and inductive thinking as time went on. Together with this went a more conscious study of structure, together with linguistic manipulations requiring creative effort and independence of mind. The third stream contained material of artistic and literary value which might not be entirely understood, but which, because of its beauty, rhythmic interest, or whatever, had the power of stretching the mind beyond its usual limits. Through the coordination of these three aspects of the program, we hoped to evoke a living feeling for the language—and an abiding love for it.

ALICIA S. BUSSER

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Twenty-four years ago Rudolf Steiner's most important educational course was published in English. It had been given to the first teachers of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany, in the late summer of 1919, just a few weeks before that great pioneering venture opened its doors to the children of the workers in the Waldorf Cigarette factory.

Cecil Harwood, himself one of the first teachers of the first Waldorf school in Great Britain, wrote the following report for Vol. 1, No. 2 (January, 1948) of "Child and Man", a magazine for Rudolf Steiner education published in England. We are grateful for permission to reprint 'a brief gloss' that reminds us how challenging the ideas of this Study of Man were and still are.

STUDY OF MAN

RUDOLF STEINER'S lectures to the teachers of the Waldorf School at its foundation have just been published in English under the above title. They deal with man as a threefold being of body, soul and spirit, and the being of man is considered in turn from these three aspects. The lectures begin with a survey of man from the aspect of the soul, and I think that Dr. Steiner chose this entry both because childhood is essentially an experience of the soul, and because the soul, standing between the other two and drawing its experiences partly from the body and partly from the spirit, is the best gateway to an understanding of the trinity in human nature. The first lecture alone will convince anyone who reads it that there is here a psychology quite unlike anything which is taught in the modern world. In one sense the first lecture especially may be said to answer the question, What is education for? You may think of all the answers that might be given to that question by educators to-day; to make good citizens; or to make good men; or to fit a child to earn his living; or to teach him to appreciate the cultural inheritance to which he is born. But when you have thought of them all (and they are very numerous) you will come nowhere near the answer which Dr. Steiner gave to the group of teachers who were about to receive the children into his first school. It is: to teach the children how to breathe properly. It is indeed an answer to take the breath away.

There are perhaps two interpretations of this advice which might be found in the world to-day. From the West would come the physical interpretation of such breathing exercises as are sometimes given even to quite young children; from the East would come the mystical interpretation of Yogi, by which the soul overcomes the body and wins spiritual experiences. Dr. Steiner does not mean either of these. He leads you instead into what might almost be called a meditation on breathing. Nor does this mean that you are to observe the process of breathing, though meditation might certainly include that. But observation takes you only through a series of processes. If you observe a leaf falling you follow its course from the tree to the ground, you notice the nature of its flight in the air, its colour, texture, etc. But if you meditate on a falling leaf your mind will take you to all other experiences which have the same gesture or quality as the leaf in its fall. So it is with breathing. There are many processes in life which we do not call breathing, but which, in their essence, are as much breathing as the systole and diastole of the lung. For instance, joy and sorrow, laughing and weeping are a breathing of the soul—and become even a breathing of the body. We breathe out in joy, we go into an ecstasy, we stand outside ourselves. In sorrow we are contracted, we go into ourselves, we lose our connection with the outer world. Laughing empties our lungs, we laugh on the outbreath; but we cry on the inbreath; though it comes painfully and brokenly, we are always drawing

our breath into our own lungs in the act of weeping. The children in the Bible complained to their companions that they had pined for them and they had not danced, and they had mourned with them and they had not wept. They could not understand those who did not enjoy the healthy breathing of the soul. The children who learn this breathing will draw their physical breath rightly as well. For the whole rhythmical system in man is the expression of the life of soul. In ancient times the soul could properly be approached through the body. It is one of the great changes in evolution that the body should now be approached through the soul.

Then there is the larger rhythm of night and day, which is a breathing both of the earth and of the soul. In the daytime children are breathing in their experiences; even sense perception is a form of breathing. But when they are asleep at night they take those experiences into the spiritual world where they breathe them out again. But the spiritual world cannot receive all experiences, and if the children bring into sleep things that it cannot accept, then comes something like a congestion of the outbreath. In waking life the physical body and the life forces are sustained and strengthened by high spiritual Powers—those which in Christian terms are called the Archai and Archangels—but at night, when the soul leaves the body, this support is withdrawn. It is then a question of whether the Angel can sustain the thoughts and experiences which the soul takes with it into sleep. The old habit of saying a prayer before sleeping was meant to prepare the soul to bring the right thoughts into the spiritual world. But the most important thing is whether the children have gained during the day thoughts and pictures of the world which are acceptable to the spiritual powers who receive the soul in sleep. This form of outbreathing is conditioned by their parents and teachers.

A still greater rhythm of breathing is that of birth and death. Birth is incarnation, breathing in; death is excarnation, breathing out. Even physically the first breath we take is a breathing in, while the spirit leaves the body at death on the outbreath. It is natural, then, for a child to cry at birth, because it is an inbreathing process. If life is rightly lived, death should be the opposite. We should leave the body, not perhaps laughing, but at least with joy in our hearts. Sir William Jones, one of the early orientalists of the eighteenth century, has given the perfect expression to this double polarity of birth and tears, joy and death.

On parent knees, a naked new-born child,
Weeping thou sat'st, while all around thee smiled,
So live, that sinking to thy life's last sleep
Calm thou may'st smile, while all around thee weep.

It is perhaps significant that it was an orientalist who wrote these lines, in which birth and death are united in such exquisite contrast. In the ancient East, and even into the age of the Greeks, birth was as much considered as death, and the incarnation of the soul was no less a part of common philosophy than its departure at death. Reincarnation was the foundation-stone of the Hindu conception of the soul, and Plato allows it to appear at the end of his greatest work, the *Republic*, in the culminating myth of Er, the soldier who was left for dead on the field of battle and on his recovery could describe how he had seen the journey of souls after death, and their choice of a new lot in life for their rebirth. It was one of the necessities of evolution that for many hundreds of years the thought of man about the soul should centre itself only on the life after death, while life before birth was almost entirely disregarded. From the time of Christ this was true of pagan and Christian alike. The Emperor Hadrian

did not speculate as to where his little wandering soul had come from; he was interested in where it was going to.

Animula vagula blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis. . .

(Vital spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, Oh quit this mortal frame. . .

(A. Pope)

But the Christian preoccupation with death rather than birth became more and more marked. By the fifteenth century men were giving all their wealth to endow chantries where mass might be said in perpetuity for the good of their souls; and though in the new age there were some sensitive spirits who experienced their own birth and childhood as a process of “coming down”—the mystics and poets like Traherne and Vaughan—the great preoccupation with death continued, and every other hymn of the nineteenth century ended with a reference to death (*piano*) and (*fortissimo*) to the entry of the soul into Heaven.

This was a necessity in the age when man was finding his ego through the experience of life on earth. But there was a real egotism in thinking that my duty on earth is to prepare myself for eternal happiness in heaven. Philosophically also the preoccupation with death lent strength to the view that the mind at birth is a *tabula rasa*, that man is born out of nothing and acquires all his experiences through sense perception—a view which lies behind the method of all modern natural science. But if birth is looked on as the high moment of incarnation and reincarnation (though this is in itself a gradual process) quite other views will be taken of life. You live in order to make good past misdeeds, to pay back to others what you owe, you share in the responsibility for the conditions of life which you find on the earth. And it will make a great difference, not only to you, but to the whole spiritual world what thoughts and impulses you take with you through the gate of death no less than through the gate of sleep. You make the balance between past, present and future.

Then from a right consideration of birth and death you will come to a new psychology, where the dimensions of time reveal themselves in their true relation to the soul. Most people imagine that they live only in the present, that the past is something which has disappeared and the future is something which does not exist. It is true that certain schools of thought are questioning this view to-day, but their speculations have not yet had much influence on practical psychology. But the truth is that powers from the past and from the future are always flowing into the soul at every moment of our lives. Every time we *think*, we are using powers which flow into our life from before birth. If we are not really able to think about the future at all except (as we all do) in terms of the past, it is because the forces of thinking itself flow in from the world before birth. But every time we *will* we are calling into ourselves forces from the future. That is why our deeds of will carry their effects so far beyond themselves. *Thinking* has an image character, it is reflection, it is something which we breathe in from before birth. *Willing* has a seed character, it draws the future into itself, as the seed draws the forces which will build and form the flower. When we will we commit ourselves to the stream which flows on beyond our death. Between the two poles lies the realm of *feeling*, the essential kingdom of the soul. So that in each moment of life the soul breathes in and breathes out the past and the future. It is a rich experience.

With such thoughts as these Rudolf Steiner inaugurated the Study of Man for the teachers of his first school. Perhaps this brief gloss on the breathing of

man will encourage some readers to study the lectures for themselves. They will discover what it is to conceive of man again as a microcosm reflecting in himself all the forces and powers of the universe—"in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a God, the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals."
A. C. HARWOOD.

NEWS OF THE SCHOOLS

Kimberton Farms School

Early in the year we were blessed with gifts from friends of the school. The third grade class came into possession of one hundred bricks and seven pounds of sheep's wool. We didn't have bricks enough to build a house, by any means, but we were able to construct a ventilated chimney to be used as a sawdust kiln. This involved delight in symmetry and numbers.

With low fire clay each child made an Indian corn bowl out of coils. When they were thoroughly dry, which meant each bowl was in its most delicate state, we made a bit of a trek out to the kiln for the loading process, without a single crack or breakage occurring. Sawdust had been collected from the wood working shop, and we alternated layers of sawdust and bowls clear up to the top of the chimney. The last layer was paper balls made from our re-cycling box. Lighting the fire was a truly spontaneous ceremony! One child said, "Let's say a prayer!" which we did. Eighteen hours later the sawdust had all slowly burned away, and we found little bowls that looked as if they were a thousand years old! Our silence was like the space inside of the bowls.

These "house-bound" months we have been teasing, carding, and spinning the sheep's wool into yarn (which has a highly textured—bumpy, that is—appearance). When we have enough yarn we will dye it with the pokeberries we collected and boiled last fall, and finally we'll be ready for some simple weaving experiences.

Our letters containing thanks and descriptions could not convey the fullness of what we received from these gifts!

JEAN MACKAY

A beginning in Mexico City

. . . A few words about the history of the venture: After initial attempts in various directions, I came to the conclusion about three years ago that the place to start was with teacher training; once the teachers are there, the rest (parents, students, buildings, money, permission) will come. And so it happened. In March, 1968, we began with introductory courses for public school teachers who spoke only Spanish. Over the next three years local friends were supplemented by twelve guest lecturers from Europe, as well as some from the United States and Argentina. We believe that after fully taking into account the sum of fifty years of European experience, it became possible for a native Waldorf pedagogy to emerge which can take root and not be felt as a foreign import. Everything else fell into place: a year ago the government offered us, unrequested, a newly

built school; on February 18, 1971, the Mexican Minister of Education, in company with almost all his federal staff, held a reception for Mr. Edmunds, head of the British teacher training center at Emerson College; in May, the Minister signed a decree by which the above-mentioned building was to be used for a government experimental school for Waldorf pedagogy, with the state paying the salaries, however modest. . .

Our school opened its doors on October 18, 1971. It now houses 215 students who are divided among eight first grades: one for six-year-olds, six for seven-year-olds, and one for children over eight years old. It was right and necessary to begin with so many parallel classes; it would, however, be wrong if next year that would mean eight second grades. Ideally, we hope to proceed in such a way that in six years (1976) there will be two grades each for grades one through six. This should be made easier by the fact that in this first year we took in a great many children from the immediate neighborhood of the school, whose parents are in no way particularly interested in our pedagogy, although they dutifully signed a document agreeing to the proposal that with us their children will learn to read rather more slowly than elsewhere, etc. Next year we count on having more children of really interested parents. At the moment, our composition is about seven-eighths proletariat and one-eighth middle class — much like the proportion of my own class in Stuttgart in the Twenties. So I feel right at home.

Our faculty consists initially of eight class teachers and one director — all of whom have gone through the Mexican Waldorf training course. The director has the task of representing the school to the government, and the government to the school. The actual running of the school lies in the hands of the faculty. In addition to the class teachers, we have added as specialists an Anglo-Chilean teacher graduated from Emerson College in England, for English; a Colombian with a pronounced natural gift for crafts (she had the children make their own knitting needles with doweling and sandpaper during the first three weeks); my wife is teaching eurythmy at the moment, until we can find the right Mexican successor who can one day take over; I myself teach English to one of the eight classes in order to be properly in touch with children rather than only theorize about pedagogy. The musical education is still in dire straits. . . It is fortunate that all the grade teachers have two to twenty years of experience in teaching behind them; they are skilled in handling children. The fact that not everything they have learned in their methods courses has become second nature is understandable, but this will improve, since, as the children go home at noon, we have a daily seminar from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. when we do eurythmy for teachers, speech, Study of Man, etc. It is particularly gratifying that the new teachers are already waiting in the wings for the day, in the fall of 1972, when the school will begin its second year.

—HANS BERLIN
(Translated by Susanne Berlin from a News Letter)

THE WALDORF SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICA

Detroit Waldorf School

2555 Burns Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48214

Green Meadow School

Hungry Hollow Road, Spring Valley, New York 10977

High Mowing School

Wilton, New Hampshire 03086

Highland Hall

17100 Superior Street, Northridge, California 91324

Kimberton Farms School

Phoenixville, R.D. # 2, Pennsylvania 19460

Mohala Pua School

Niu Estates, 350 Ulua Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96821

Rudolf Steiner School

15 East 79th Street, New York City, New York 10021

Rudolf Steiner School

3241 Brush Drive, Falls Church, Virginia 22042

Toronto Waldorf School

1087 Lillian Street, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada

Sacramento Waldorf School

3600 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Sacramento, California 95825

Vancouver Waldorf School

6410 Rosebery Avenue, West Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Waldorf School, Adelphi University

Cambridge Avenue, Garden City, New York 11530

Washington Waldorf School

**Hearst Hall, Wisconsin Avenue and Woodley Road, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20016**

BOOKS ON EDUCATION BY RUDOLF STEINER

Essentials of Education

The Roots of Education

The Education of the Child

The Four Temperaments

Discussions with Teachers

The Study of Man

Education as a Social Problem

The Younger Generation

Human Values in Education

BY OTHER AUTHORS

John F. Gardner, The Experience of Knowledge

A. C. Harwood, The Way of a Child

A. C. Harwood, The Recovery of Man in Childhood

Elisabeth Grunelius, Early Childhood Education and the
Waldorf School Plan

Karl König, The First Three Years of Childhood

H. von Baravalle, Rudolf Steiner as Educator

C. von Heydebrand, Childhood, a Study of the Growing Soul

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Please ask for further information.