

Rudolf Steiner

TEACHING

LANGUAGE ARTS

IN THE

WALDORF

SCHOOL

A Compendium of Excerpts from the
Foundations of Waldorf Education Series

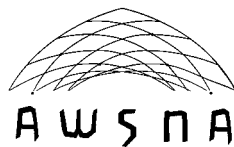
COMPILED BY ROBERTO TROSTLI

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The Foundations of Waldorf Education Series
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INTRODUCTION

With the publication of the *Foundations of Waldorf Education*, all of Rudolf Steiner's educational lectures, addresses, and conferences will be available in English for the first time. This series allows teachers, parents, and researchers to explore more broadly and delve more deeply into Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy and the Waldorf curriculum and methods. It also makes it possible to trace the development of Rudolf Steiner's educational ideas from 1906 to 1924.

Such a large treasure trove presents a challenge to anyone wishing to research specific themes or topics. If one wants to read all of Rudolf Steiner's indications about teaching grammar, for instance, one has to delve into a half dozen different volumes. Indications on a more general topic such as teaching writing are found in more than two dozen sources, creating a burden for anyone wishing to read them all.

This compendium was created to ease that burden, for it contains all of Rudolf Steiner's statements regarding the teaching of language arts—writing, reading, literature, grammar, spelling, handwriting, and recitation. Rudolf Steiner's indications are always fruitful when taken in context; a compendium such as this allows one to develop a different perspective by considering his various statements in relation to one another. To facilitate reference, each chapter contains a list of excerpts and the pages where they may be found in this volume. Unless otherwise noted, the page numbers and titles in this compendium are from books in the Foundations of Waldorf Education series. Those references that list the title and date are from books that were not yet retranslated or reissued when this edition was being compiled. Readers might notice that a few texts appear more than once. Because Rudolf Steiner sometimes spoke about several subjects in the same lecture, it seemed prudent to include the relevant selection in the all of the appropriate sections of this compendium.

During the past 80 years, Waldorf teachers have followed certain educational practices, some of which have become traditions. For instance, most teachers follow Rudolf Steiner's suggestion to introduce the consonants in first grade by deriving them from pictures. Few teachers know, however, that Rudolf Steiner also suggested that consonants could be introduced by their sounds, or from their gestures, or through movement. He even suggested that one could also derive the letters by introducing an entire sentence, identifying the words in the sentence, and finally analyzing the letters and sounds in the words.

As this compendium shows, Rudolf Steiner considered each pedagogical situation and question afresh. Amid calls to re-invent Waldorf education or to make it more relevant, we might feel tempted to seek new sources of inspiration or guidance for our pedagogical work. We need not abandon or reject Rudolf Steiner's indications, however, for we will find new inspiration for our work when we realize how few of Rudolf Steiner's radical educational ideas have even been attempted.

This compendium was one of the projects I undertook during my tenure as Director of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education. The work of that institute has been made possible by the vision and generosity of Robin Dulaney and the Louisville Community Foundation, who have supported the publication of the Foundations of Waldorf Education series, the Waldorf Curriculum Project, and the Online Waldorf Library. Many thanks also to the Steiner (Anthroposophic) Press for permission to reprint these excerpts from The Foundations of Waldorf Education series.

Roberto Trostli
The Hartsbrook School
Hadley, Massachusetts
Advent, 2004

THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM IN GRADES 1–8

First Lecture on the Curriculum

The first thing we need to consider when we welcome children into the first grade is to find appropriate stories to tell them and for them to tell back to us. In the telling and retelling of fairy tales, legends, and accounts of outer realities, we are cultivating the children's speech, forming a bridge between the local dialect and educated conversational speech. By making sure the children speak correctly, we are also laying a foundation for correct writing.

Parallel to such telling and retelling, we introduce the children to a certain visual language of forms. We have them draw simple round and angular shapes simply for the sake of the forms. As already mentioned, we do not do this for the sake of imitating some external object, but simply for the sake of the forms themselves. Also, we do not hesitate to link this drawing to simple painting, placing the colors next to each other so that the children get a feeling for what it means to place red next to green, next to yellow, and so on.

On the basis of what we achieve through this, we will be able to introduce the children to writing in the way that we have already considered from the perspective of educational theory. The natural way to go about it would be to make a gradual transition from form drawing to the Latin alphabet. Whenever we are in a position to introduce the Latin alphabet first, we should certainly do so, and then proceed from the Latin alphabet to German script. After the children have learned to read and write simple handwritten words, we make the transition to printed letters, taking the Latin alphabet first, of course, and following it up with the German. [Steiner is referring here to the fact that the German language at that time was written

in Fraktur, a specifically Germanic style of print and handwriting, rather than in the Latin, or Roman, alphabet now universally used for Western European languages. Trans.]

If we proceed rationally, we will get far enough in the first grade so that the children will be able to write simple things that we say to them or that they compose themselves. If we stick to simple things, the children will also be able to read them. Of course we don't need to aim at having the children achieve any degree of accomplishment in this first year. It would be completely wrong to expect that. The point is simply that, during the first grade, we should get the children to the point where they no longer confront the printed word as a total unknown, so to speak, and are able to take the initiative to write some simple things. This should be our goal with regard to language instruction, if I may put it like that.

We will be helped in this by what we are going to consider next—namely the elasticity and adaptability that the children's speech organs can gain from instruction in singing. Without our making a special point of it, they will develop a greater sensitivity to long and short vowels, voiced or voiceless sounds, and so on. Even though this may not be our intention in teaching music, the children will be introduced nonetheless to an auditory understanding of what the instrument of the voice produces in music—in a simple way at first, so that they can get . . . well, of course it's impossible to get an *overview* of sounds, so I would actually have to invent a word and say: so that they can get an "*overhearing*" of it. By "*overhearing*" I mean that they really experience inwardly the single thing among the many, so that they are not overwhelmed by things as they perceive them. In addition to this we must add something that can stimulate the children's thinking when we tell them about things that are close at hand, things that will later appear in a more structured form in geography and science. We explain such things and introduce them to the children's understanding by relating them to things that are already familiar—to familiar animals, plants, and soil formations, or to local mountains, creeks, or meadows. Schools call this "*local history*," but the purpose is to bring about a certain awakening in the children with regard to their surroundings; a soul awakening, so that they learn to really connect with their surroundings.

At the beginning of the second grade, we will continue with the telling and retelling of stories and try to develop this further. Then the children can be brought gradually to the point of writing down the stories we tell them. After they have had some space to digest the stories, have them write short descriptions of what we've told them about the animals, plants, meadows, and woods in the surroundings.

During the first grade it would be important not to touch on issues of grammar, and so on, to any great extent. In the second grade, however, we should teach the children the concepts of what a noun is, what an adjective is, and what a verb is. We should then connect this simply and graphically to a discussion of how sentences are constructed. With regard to descriptions, to thoughtfully describing their surroundings, we continue with what the children began in the first grade.

The third grade is essentially a continuation of the second with regard to speaking, reading, writing, and many other things. We will continue to increase the children's ability to write about what they see and read. Now we also try to summon up in them a conscious feeling for sounds that are short, long, drawn out, and so on. It is good to cultivate a feeling for articulating speech and for the general structure of language when the children are in third grade—that is, around the age of eight. [The German translates literally as “in their eighth or ninth year” and is sometimes mistranslated in English as “eight or nine years old”; thus references to beginning school in “the seventh year” can be taken to mean that “children shouldn't go to school until they are seven.” What Steiner said, however, was “in the seventh year of their life—that is, “six-going-on-seven.” –Trans.] At this point, we attempt to convey an understanding of the different types of words and of the components and construction of a sentence—that is, of how punctuation marks such as commas and periods and so on are incorporated into a sentence.

Once again, with regard to telling and retelling, the fourth grade is a continuation of the third. When we take up short poems in the first and second grade, it's good to make a point of allowing the children to experience the rhythm, rhyme, and meter instinctively, and to wait to make them aware of the poem's inner structure that is, everything that relates to its inner beauty—until the third and fourth grades.

At that point, however, we try to lead everything the children have learned about writing descriptions and retelling stories in writing over into composing letters of all kinds. Then we try to awaken in the children a clear understanding of the tenses, of everything expressed by the various transformations of a verb. At around age nine, the children should acquire the concepts for what they need in this regard; they should get a feeling for it, so that they don't say "The man ran" when they should have said "The man has run"—that is, that they don't confuse the past tense with the present perfect. Children should get a feeling for when it is proper to say "He stood" rather than "He has stood," and other similar things that have to do with transformations in what a verb expresses. In the same way, we attempt to teach the children to feel instinctively the relationship between a preposition and its object. We should always make sure to help them get a feeling for when to use "on" instead of "at," and so on. Children who are going on ten should practice shaping their native language and should experience it as a malleable element.

In the fifth grade, it is important to review and expand on what we did in the fourth grade, and, from that point on, it is important to take into account the difference between active and passive verb forms. We also begin asking children of this particular age not only to reproduce freely what they have seen and heard, but also to quote what they have heard and read and to use quotation marks appropriately. We try to give the children a great deal of spoken practice in distinguishing between conveying their own opinions and conveying those of others. Through their writing assignments, we also try to arouse a keen distinction between what they themselves have thought, seen, and so forth, and what they communicate about what others have said. In this context, we again try to perfect their use of punctuation. Letter writing is also developed further.

In the sixth grade, of course we review and continue what we did in the fifth. In addition, we now try to give the children a strong feeling for the subjunctive mood. We use as many examples as possible in speaking about these things so that the children learn to distinguish between what can be stated as fact and what needs to be expressed in the subjunctive. When we have the children practice

speaking, we make a special point of not allowing any mistakes in the use of the subjunctive, so that they assimilate a strong feeling for this inner dimension of the language. A child is supposed to say, “I am taking care that my little sister learn (subjunctive) how to walk,” and not, “I am taking care that my little sister learns to walk.” [These distinctions are not as readily detected in current English. In Steiner’s example, the difference is between *lerne* and *lernt*; the first is perhaps closest to the process of learning (not yet fact), the second to having learned (fact). Trans.]

We now make the transition from personal letters to simple, concrete business compositions dealing with things the children have already learned about elsewhere. Even as early as the third grade we can extend what we say about the meadows and woods and so on to business relationships, so that later on the subject matter is already available for composing simple business letters.

In the seventh grade, we will again have to continue with what we did in the sixth grade, but now we also attempt to have the children develop an appropriate and flexible grasp of how to express wishing, astonishment, admiration, and so on in how they speak. We try to teach the children to form sentences in accordance with the inner configuration of these feelings. However, we do not need to mutilate poems or anything else in order to demonstrate how someone or other structured a sentence to express wishing. We approach it directly by having the children themselves express wishes and shape their sentences accordingly. We then have them express admiration and form the sentences accordingly, or help them to construct the sentences. To further educate their ability to see the inner flexibility of language, we then compare their wishing sentences to their admiring ones. What has been presented in science will already have enabled the children to compose simple characterizations of the wolf, the lion, or the bee, let’s say. At this stage, alongside such exercises, which are directed more toward the universally human element in education, we must especially foster the children’s ability to formulate practical matters of business. The teacher must be concerned with finding out about practical business matters and getting them into the student’s heads in some sensible fashion.

In the eighth grade, it will be important to teach the children to have a coherent understanding of longer pieces of prose or poetry; thus, at this stage we will read a drama and an epic with the children, always keeping in mind what I said before: All the explanations and interpretations precede the actual reading of the piece, so that the reading is always the conclusion of what we do with the material. In particular, however, the practical business element in language instruction must not be disregarded in the eighth grade.

[Discussions with Teachers, pp. 182–189.]

LANGUAGE

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2. Language and the Ninth Year Change from “Education and the Moral Life” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy II*, p. 16
3. The Child’s Changing Relationship to Language from “Education and the Moral Life” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy II*, p. 18
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1. Learning Language through Imitation

During the first period of life, there is an aspect of growth that overshadows everything else for the developing child—that is, the child as imitator. Children have a tendency to imitate whatever anyone does, including facial expressions, ways of holding things, and degrees of dexterity. This goes much farther than people recognize. The effects of one person on another are much deeper than people generally realize. If our actions are those of good human beings when we are with children, they assume our gestures, goodness, capacity to love, and good intentions. This is particularly true when they begin to learn language. Whatever is ensouled by the parents and others in the child's surroundings floods into that growing human being. Children completely adjust to and become like their surroundings, because the principle of imitation is the controlling factor in human nature until the change of teeth.

[“The Tasks of Schools” in *Education as a Force for Social Change*, p. 196.]

2. Language and the Ninth Year Change

It is especially important for the moral and ethical aspect of education that we remember, for the ages between seven and fourteen, that the child's moral judgment should be approached only through an appeal to feelings called forth by verbal pictures illustrating the essentials of an inherent morality. What matters at this age is that the child should develop sympathy for the moral and antipathy for the immoral. To give children moral admonitions would be going against their nature, for they do not penetrate the souls of children. The entire future moral development is determined by those things that, through forming sympathies, become transformed into moral judgments. One single fact will show the importance of the teacher's right relationship to the child with regard to moral development. If one can educate with a discriminating, yet practical, sense of psychology, one will notice that, at a certain time around the ninth or tenth year (the exact age may vary in individual cases), the children's relationship to the world—an outcome of sympathies and antipathies that can be cultivated—will be such that they forget themselves. Despite

a certain “physical egotism” (to give it a name), the child will still be fully open to environmental influences. Just as teachers need clear insight into the child’s developmental stages when they use observational methods in object lessons with children of nine or ten, such insight is particularly important when it comes to moral education. If one pays sufficient attention to the more individual traits emerging in pupils, an interesting phenomenon can be observed at that age: the awareness that the child has a special need for help from the teacher. Sometimes a few words spoken by the child can be like a call for help. They can be the appropriate signal for a perceptive teacher, who now must find the right words to help the child over the hump. For the child is passing through a critical stage, when everything may depend on a few words spoken by the teacher to reestablish the right relationship between pupil and teacher.

What is happening at this time? By wrestling with language, the young person becomes aware, very consciously, for the first time that “There is a difference between myself and the world.” (This is unlike the time during the first seven-year period when, unconsciously, the child first learned to refer to the self as “I.”) The child now strongly demands a new orientation for body, soul, and spirit vis-à-vis the world. This awareness happens between the ninth and the tenth year. Again, unconsciously, the child has a remarkable experience in the form of all kinds of seemingly unrelated sentiments, feelings, and will impulses, which have no outward relationship with the behavior. The experience is: “Here before me stands my teacher who, as authority, opens the world for me. I look into the world through the medium of this authority. But is this authority the right one for me? Am I receiving the right picture of the world?” Please note that I am not saying this thought is a conscious one. All this happens subtly in the realm of the child’s feelings. Yet this time is decisive for determining whether or not the child can feel the continued trust in the teacher’s authority necessary for a healthy development until the onset of puberty. And this experience causes a certain inner unrest and nervousness in the child. The teacher has to find the right words to safeguard the child’s continued confidence and trust. For together with this consolidation of trust, the moral character of the child also

becomes consolidated. At first it was only latent in the child; now it becomes inwardly more anchored and the child attains inner firmness. Children grasp, right into the physical organism, something that they had perceived thus far as a self-evident part of their own individual self, as I described earlier.

[“Education and the Moral Life” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy II*, pp. 76–78.]

3. The Child’s Changing Relationship to Language

How can we guide the moral education of the child, especially during the age of primary education? What means do we have at our disposal? To understand the answer, we will again have to look back at the three most significant stages in the development of the very young child.

The power of mental imagery and thinking that a child has developed until this point will continue to develop. One does not notice an abrupt change—perhaps at most, with the change of teeth, that the kind of mental imagery connected with memory takes on a different form. But one will notice that the soul and physical forces revealed in speech, which are closely linked to breathing and to the rhythmic system, will reappear, metamorphosed, during the years between the change of teeth and puberty. The first relationship to the realm of language is founded through the child’s learning to speak during the first years of life. *Language* here includes not just language itself in the restricted meaning of the word, for the entire human being, body, soul, and spirit, lives in language. Language is a symptom of the entire threefold human being.

Approximately between the ages of seven and fourteen years, however, this relationship to language becomes prominent in the child in an entirely different—even reversed—way. At that point, everything related to the soul, outwardly expressed through the medium of language, will reach a different phase of development and take on a different character. It is true that these things happen mostly in the unconscious, but they are nevertheless instrumental for the child’s entire development. Between the ages of seven and fourteen, the child wrestles with what lives in the language, and if he or she should speak more than one language, in all the languages

spoken. The child knows little of this struggle because it remains unconscious. The nature of this wrestling is due to increasingly intense merging of the sounds issuing from the rhythmic system with the pupil's thoughts, feelings, and will impulses. What is trying to evolve during this life period is the young adolescent's hold on the self by means of language.

It is extremely important, therefore, that we understand the fine nuances of character expressed in the ways students bring their speech and language into the classroom. The general directions I have already presented regarding the observation of the pupils' moral environment now sound back to us out of the tone of their voices, out of the very sound of their speech, if we are sensitive enough to perceive it. Through the way children use language, they present us with what I would call their *basic moral character*. Through the way we treat language and through the way students speak during lessons, every hour, even every minute, we are presented with the opportunity as teachers to guide what is thus revealed through speech, into the channels we consider appropriate and right. Very much can be done there, if one knows how to train during the age of primary education what, until the change of teeth, was struggling to become speech. [72-73]



Now, for an example how the stages of human life are interrelated: one example in the moral realm is, as I said earlier, that the child's ability to form mental images in the thinking process develops along a continuous line. Only memory will take on a different character after the change of teeth. Language, on the other hand, becomes somehow inverted. Between the second dentition and puberty, the young person develops an entirely different relationship to language. This new relationship can be properly served by bringing to the child at this time the grammar and logic inherent in language. One can tackle practically every aspect of language if, instead of rashly bringing to consciousness the unconscious element of language from early childhood, one makes this translation in a way that considers the child. ["Education and the Moral Life" in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy II*, pp. 72-73, 80.]

4. Language as a Social Instrument

To discover the spirit living in the language, those who speak *one* language must first understand the genius, the wonderful artistic structure of the language, even though they already speak it. They need to understand the spirit emanating from the language that permeates the people and forms the language into a unified whole. In that we learn to speak, we absorb, not consciously, but instinctively and unconsciously, with every word and with every connotation, something that reveals to us the genius of the language in a mysterious way. Social life is something that lives in many instincts. Language has always been one of the most wonderful social instruments. Only, in modern times, as we go from East to West, language has become increasingly abstract. People feel less and less what the sounds of the language say to the heart and to the head, and particularly the connections that the language forms to speak to the heart and to the head. People feel less and less the mysterious way in which the genius of the language makes impressions upon them.

Many other things that touch people as does the genius of language will become effective if a general human development becomes more widespread through the activity of the elementary school—acting not as a parochial school, but through rationally formed instruction. Then when people meet one another, they can unite through speech. Every conversation, every relationship to another person, becomes a source for the further development of our soul. What we do in the world that affects other people becomes a source of our own further development. We can first develop the elements of communication between people if we meet other people with those feelings aroused in us. We can develop this communication if we do not follow abstract modern science, but take up the living fire within us. This living fire can come to us from a science that is connected to what in human nature allows people to grow until twenty years of age, and from then on can lead to a development of supersensible knowledge.

[“Supersensible Knowledge and Social Pedagogical Life” in *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*, pp. 93-94.]

5. Language and the Development of Idealism in Adolescence

The connection of human beings to nature dies away. If one is permeated by this, if one observes this, then one knows how everything depends on finding the right words, words that will allow children at the age of nine to be astonished. The children expect this from us. If we do not deliver, we really destroy a great deal.

We must learn to observe children, must grow into them with our feelings, be inside them and not rest content with outer experimentation. The situation is really such that we have to say that the development of the human being includes a definite course of life that begins at the moment when in a lower region, as it were, from language, there emerge the words: "I am an 'I.'" One learns to say "I" to oneself at a relatively early age in childhood, but the experience is dreamlike and continues in this dreamy way. The child then enters school. And it is now our task to change this experience. The child wishes, after all, to take a different direction. We must direct the child to artistic activities. When we have done this for a while, the child retraces his or her life and arrives again at the moment of learning to say "I" to himself or herself. The child then continues the process and later, through the event of puberty, again passes through this moment.

We prepare the children for this process by getting them at the age of nine and ten to the point that they can look at the world in wonder, astonishment, and admiration. If we make their sense of beauty more conscious, we prepare the children for the time at and after puberty in such a way that they learn to love correctly, that they develop love in the right way. Love is not limited to sex; sex is merely a special aspect of love. Love is something that extends to everything, is the innermost impetus for action. We ought to do what we love to do. Duty is to merge with love; we should like what we are duty-bound to do. And this love develops in the right way only if we go along with the child's inner development. We must, therefore, pay attention to the correct cultivation of the sense of beauty throughout the elementary school years. The sense of truth the children have brought with them; the sense of beauty we have to develop in the way I have described.

That the children have brought the sense of truth with them can be seen in the fact that they have learned to speak before entering school. Language, as it were, incorporates truth and knowledge. We need language if we wish to learn about the world. This fact has led people like Mauthner to assume that everything is already contained in language. People like Mauthner—who wrote the book *Critique of Language*—actually believe that we harm human beings by taking them beyond the point at which they learn to speak. Mauthner wrote his *Critique of Language* because he did not believe in the world, because of his conviction that human beings should be left at a childlike stage, at the time when they learn to speak. Were this idea to become generally accepted, we would be left with a spiritual life that corresponds to that of children at the time when they have learned to speak. This manner of thinking tends toward producing such human beings who remain at the stage of children who have just learned to speak. Everything else is nowadays rejected as ignorance.

What now matters is that we can enter the concept of imitation with our feeling and then to understand the concept of authority as the basis, between us and the children, for the development of the sense for the beautiful. If we manage to do this up to the time of puberty, then as the children are growing into their inclinations toward ideals, the sense for the good is correctly developed. Before puberty it is through us that the children are motivated to do the good; through the reciprocal relationship we must affect the children in this way. It is necessary for the eleven-, twelve-, and thirteen-year-old girls and boys to have the teacher's authority behind them, to feel their teacher's pleasure and satisfaction when they are doing something that is good. And they should avoid bad actions because they feel their teacher would be disappointed. They should be aware of the teacher's presence and in this way unite with him or her. Only at puberty should they emancipate themselves from the teacher.

If we consider the children to be already mature in first grade, if we encourage them to voice their opinions and judgments as soon as they have learned to speak—that is, if we base everything on direct perception [*Anschauung*]
—we leave them at the stage of development at which they have just learned to speak, and we deny them any fur-

ther development. If, in other words, we do not address ourselves to the very real changes at puberty—that the children then leave behind what they were used to doing through our authority—they will not be able later in life to do without it. Children must first experience authority. Then at puberty they must be able to grow beyond it and begin to make and depend on their own judgments.

At this time we really must establish such a connection to the students that each one of them may choose a “hero whose path to Mt. Olympus can be emulated.” This change is, of course, connected with some unhappiness and even pain. It is no longer up to the teacher to represent the ideal for the children. The teacher must recognize the change and act accordingly. Before puberty the teacher was able to tell the children what to do. Now the students become rather sensitive to their teachers in their judgments, perceive their weaknesses and shortcomings. We must consciously expose ourselves to this change, must be aware of the students’ criticism of their teachers’ unwarranted behavior. They become especially sensitive at this age to their teachers’ attitudes. If, however, our interest in the students is honest and not egotistical, we shall educate and teach with exactly these possibilities of their feelings in mind. And this will result in a free relationship between us and them.

The effect will be the students’ healthy growth into the *true* that was given to them by the spiritual world as a kind of inheritance, so that they can merge with, grow together with, the *beautiful* in the right way, so that they can learn the *good* in the world of the senses, the good they are to develop and bring to expression during their lives. It is really a sin to talk about the true, the beautiful, and the good in abstractions, without showing concretely their relation to the various ages.

[*Education for Adolescents*, pp. 132-135.]

6. Language Teaching through the Grades

Nowadays one often encounters rather fanatical attitudes, so that something which in itself is quite right and justifiable, tends to become exaggerated to the point of a fanatical one-sidedness. And the teaching of foreign languages is no exception. The child learns his or her mother tongue naturally, that is, without any grammati-

cal consciousness, and this is how it should be. And when he or she enters school, the child should learn foreign languages in a similar way, namely without any grammatical awareness, although this time the process of learning a language will naturally be a more mature and conscious one.

However, during the tenth year, at the turning point of life mentioned already several times, the new situation calls for the introduction to the first fundamentals of grammar. These should be taught without any pedantry whatever. It is necessary to take this new step for the benefit of the child's healthy development, for at this age it has to make the transition from a predominantly feeling approach to life to one in which it has to unfold its ego consciousness. Whatever the young person is doing, has now to be done more consciously than hitherto. Consequently we must introduce a more conscious and intellectual element into the language which, meanwhile, the pupil has learned to speak, write, and read. But when doing so, we must avoid pedantic grammar exercises. Instead, we should give the children stimulating practice in recognizing and applying fundamental rules. At this stage the child really needs the logical support, which a knowledge of grammar can give, so that he or she does not have to puzzle time and again over how to express him or herself correctly.

We must realize that language contains two main elements which always play into each other, namely an emotional or feeling element and an intellectual, thinking element. I should like to give you an illustration of this with a quotation from Goethe's *Faust*:

Grey, dear friend, is every theory
And green the golden tree of life.

I am not expecting from you, our guests who have mainly come from the West, that you should study all the commentaries on Goethe's *Faust*, for there are enough of them to fill a whole library. However, if you did so, you would make a strange discovery. When coming to this sentence in *Faust*, most likely you would find a remark at the bottom of the page, duly equipped with yet a new number—at least a four-figure number because of all the many previous expla-

nations already given—you would find there a comment about the lack of logic inherent in this sentence. Despite the poetic license granted to any reputable author—so the commentator might point out—the colors of the tree in this stanza do not make sense. A golden tree—does this mean an orange tree? But then it would not be green. If it were an ordinary tree, it would not be golden. Perhaps Goethe had in mind an artificial tree? At any rate—so a typical commentary would continue—a tree cannot be golden and green at the same time. Then there is this other problem of a grey theory. How can a theory be grey if it is something invisible? In this way many commentaries point out the lack of logic in this sentence.

There are of course also other, more artistically inclined commentators who take delight in the apparent lack of logic in this passage. But what is really at the bottom of it all? It is the fact that in this sentence on the one side the emotional, the feeling element in language predominates, whereas on the other the more thoughtful, image-like aspect is stressed. When Goethe speaks of a golden tree, he implies that one would love the tree as one loves gold. The word gold here does not bear an image-like quality, but it reveals the warmth of feeling engendered by the glow of gold. Here only the feelings are portrayed. The adjective green, on the other hand, refers to an ordinary tree, such as we see it in nature. This is the logic of it.

With regard to the word “theory”: A theory is of course invisible. Yet, rightly or wrongly, the mere word may conjure up certain feelings in some people, which are reminiscent of those in a London fog! It is quite possible to transfer such a feeling to the concept of theory. The purely feeling element of language is again expressed in the adjective “grey.”

The feeling and thinking quality in language intermingles everywhere. In contemporary languages much has already become lamed, but during their earlier stages there lived everywhere an active and creative element through which the feeling and thinking qualities came into existence.

As mentioned already, before the age of nine the child has an entirely feeling relationship to language. Yet, unless we also introduce the thinking element inherent in language, the child’s self-consciousness

cannot develop properly, and this is the reason why it is so important for us to bring to the child the intellectual aspect of language. This can be done by a judicious teaching of grammatical rules, first of all in the mother tongue and subsequently also in foreign languages, whereby the rules should be introduced only after the child has already begun to speak the language. And so, in accordance with the indications given, the teacher should arouse the feeling in the pupil aged nine to ten that he or she is now beginning to penetrate the language more consciously. This is how a proper grammatical sense could be cultivated in the child.

By the time the pupil reaches the age of twelve, he should have developed a feeling for the beauty of language, that is, an aesthetic sense of the language. This should stimulate him to aim at what one might call "beauty in speaking" without, however, his ever falling into any mannerisms. From then on, until the time of puberty, the pupil should learn to appreciate the dialectical aspect of language, he should develop the faculty of convincing another person through his command of language. This third element of language should be introduced only when the pupil is approaching school-leaving age. [In 1922 the official school-leaving age was fourteen.]

Briefly summarizing the aims of language teaching one could say: First the child should develop, step by step, a feeling for the correct use of language, then a sense of beauty of language, and, finally, he should learn to experience the power inherent in linguistic command.

It is far more important for the teacher to find his way into such an approach to language teaching than for him merely to follow a fixed curriculum. In this way he will soon find out how to introduce and deal with what is needed for the various ages. After a predominantly artistic approach, in which the pupil up to nine plus is involved very actively, the teacher should begin to dwell more on the descriptive element in language without, however, neglecting the creative aspect. This is certainly possible if one chooses the kind of syllabus which I have tried to characterize during these past few days, where the introduction of nature study leads to geography and where the animals are seen within the context of man. The most effective way of including the descriptive element would be if the teacher appealed

mainly to the child's soul sphere rather than claiming its entire being. This should be done by his clothing the lesson content in a story form, told in a vivid and imaginative style. In like manner, at this stage of life, the teacher should present historical content by giving lively accounts of human events which, in themselves, form a whole, as already indicated.

Having gone through the stage of spontaneous activity, which was followed by an appreciation of the descriptive element, the pupil approaching the twelfth year is ready for what could be called the explanatory approach. Now cause and effect enter general considerations and content can be given which will stretch the powers of reasoning.

[*Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, pp. 211-215.]

7. Language as a Foundation for Feeling and Perception

This is only one aspect of education, however. Human beings come into the world not just for their own sake, but also for the sake of humanity. We cannot simply accept what appears in the child. The teacher will soon notice a complementary relationship that we in spiritual science call the laws of karma. You can easily see that beings are placed where they have something to do in the world. Edelweiss does not grow in the plains, but upon the mountaintops. Everything grows within its own element and cannot thrive where it does not belong. It is the same with the essence of the human being, which places itself in that element where it belongs. Things are more harmonious than we might think. For this reason, talents are more in harmony with those of the mother and interests more with those of the father. Nevertheless, we must also look in the other direction. Human beings depend upon the fact that individuals do not speak their own private languages but the language of the area where they are born. That is, they are dependent upon the people in their surroundings. Thus, an entire manner of thinking and feeling enters deeply into the soul through language. That is coarsely observable. Compare the soul of someone from Frankonia with that of someone from West Prussia and then try to see how language affects the entire manner of thinking and perceiving. [This would be comparable in contemporary United States to comparing someone raised in Louisiana with some-

one from New York, Trans.] It is that way with everything, namely, people are placed into life according to their qualities. Thus, if we want to educate consciously, we must know that we do not educate people only as individuals. Just as we cannot provide each child with an individual language, so we also cannot do something special for each child. Human nature is organized so that people adapt to the existing cultural process. We must raise children in what belongs to *humanity*, and it must take root in them.

When this becomes apparent to us, we must acknowledge powerlessness against those elements. If we look at the child's talents and then at the demands of life, it might appear impossible for us to bring them into harmony. Let us look at two children. One child is born in an environment and learns a particular language. He or she grows up with that language and it becomes a part of his or her soul, a part of the innermost human being. Anyone who has thought about the relationship of language to human nature will know that through language people learn not only how to reason logically, but also how to reason through feeling. For example, the way the *a* or *u* sound works in a language tremendously effects the soul's capacity to *feed*. Language provides a "skeleton" for feelings and perceptions. Imagine another child who, due to life's events, had to learn another language immediately after barely learning his or her mother language. Compare this child with one who is totally integrated with his or her language, so that not only is thinking done in that language, but also the child has learned to be in it. Then you will see that the soul life of this second child is much less settled and much less solid. A language that forms a skeleton for the soul results in a sounder nature. A language that "carries" the soul makes the soul less stable and less certain. Thus, the soul of a child who develops in the latter way is much more easily irritated, and does not meet life's external influences as vigorously.

[“Interests, Talent, and Education” in *The Education of the Child*, pp. 82-83.]

8. On the Origin of Language

Learned scholars, who devote themselves to research into language, have given much thought to what, in the course of human evolution,

may have been the origin of speech. There are two theories. The one represents the view that speech may have arisen out of soul experiences in much the same way as this takes place in the animal, albeit in its most primitive form—"moo-moo" being the expression of what the cow feels inwardly, and "bow-wow" what is experienced by the dog. And so, in a more complicated way, what in man becomes articulated speech arises out of this urge to give expression to inner feelings and experiences. In somewhat humorous vein this is called the "Bow-Wow Theory." The other point of view proceeds from the supposition that in the sounds of speech man imitates what takes place in the outer world. It is possible to imitate the sound of a bell, what is taking place inside the bell: "ding-dong-ding-dong." Here there is the attempt to imitate what takes place in the outer world. This is the basis for the theory that in speech everything may be traced back to external sounds, external event. It is the "Ding-Dong Theory." So we have these two theories in opposition to one another. It is not in any way my intention to make fun of this, for as a matter of fact, both are correct: the "bow-wow" theory is right for the vowel element in speech, the "ding-dong" theory for the consonantal element. In transposing gestures into sounds we learn by means of the consonants to imitate inwardly outer processes; and in the vowels we give form to inner experiences of the soul. In speech the inner and the outer unite. Human nature, itself homogeneous, understands how to bring this about. [*Human Values in Education*, pp. 61-62.]

9. Speech as an Expression of the Relationship of the Human Being and the Cosmos

Speech is, in fact, rooted in two ways in human feeling. First, it is based in everything a human being brings toward the world through the feeling life. What do we bring to the world in our feelings? Let us look at a distinct feeling or nuance of feeling—for example, astonishment or amazement. To the degree that we remain within the microcosm that is the human being with our souls, we have amazement. If, however, we can establish a cosmic connection—a cosmic relationship that can be connected to this feeling nuance of amazement—then amazement becomes the sound "o." The sound of *o* is

really the breath working in us when caught inwardly by amazement. Thus, you can consider *o* an expression of amazement.

In recent times, outer consideration of the world has related speech only to something external. The question was this: How did the relationship between sounds and what they mean first arise? No one realized that everything in the world leaves an impression on a person's feelings. In some situations, it may be so vague that it remains half-unconscious. But we will not find anything described by a word with the sound *o* that does not in some way engender—however slightly—astonishment. If you say “open,” the word contains an *o* sound, because something inherent in it causes slight astonishment. The roots of speech are contained in human feelings in this way. Feelings link you to the whole world, and you give the whole world sounds that in some way express these feeling connections.

Typically, such things have been viewed superficially. There was the belief, for example, that speech imitates the way an animal barks or growls. Based on this belief, the well-known “Bow-Wow” Theory of linguistics asserted that *all* speech is imitation. Such theories are dangerous, because they are partly true. By copying a dog and saying “bow-wow” (which carries the feeling nuance expressed in “ow”), one has entered a dog's soul condition. The sound is not formed according to theory but in a less direct way by placing oneself in the dog's condition of soul. Another theory maintains that every object contains an inherent sound, just as a bell, for example, has its own sound. The “Ding-Dong” Theory, as it is called, arose from this assumption. These are, in fact, the theories. But we cannot understand the human being unless we acknowledge that speech expresses the world of feeling connections we form with objects around us.

We also tend to have a nuance of feeling toward empty or black objects that is related to emptiness. This feeling toward anything related to blackness is the feeling of fear or anxiety. This is expressed in the *u* sound. The feeling nuance of wonder and admiration is expressed in the *a* sound; this is a feeling toward what is full—everything white, bright, and related to whiteness and brightness and the feeling toward the sound related to brightness. When we feel that we must ward off an external impression or in some way turn away from it for

self-protection, and if that feeling is one of resistance, it is expressed in the *e* sound. And its opposite feeling, that of aiming toward, or approaching and uniting with something, is expressed in the *i* sound.

These, then, are the main vowels. We will cover the details later, including the diphthongs. One other vowel should be considered, which occurs less frequently in European languages and expresses something stronger than all the others. If you try to find a vowel by letting *a*, *o*, and *u* sound together, this expresses at first a feeling of fear, and then an identification with what is feared. This sound expresses the most profound awe. It is found with particular frequency in Asian languages and shows that Asians are able to develop tremendous awe and veneration, whereas in Western languages this sound is missing, since awe and veneration are not the strongest traits of Europeans.

We now have an image of the inner soul moods expressed by the vowels. All vowels express the inner soul stirring in our affinity with things. Even when we are afraid, the fear is based on a mysterious affinity. We would never fear something without having a hidden affinity for it. In examining such matters, however, you must remember that it is relatively easy to make the observation that *o* has something to do with astonishment, *u* with fear and anxiety, *a* with admiration and wonder, *e* with resistance, *i* with approaching something, and *aou* with veneration. Nevertheless, one's ability to observe these connections will be obscured by confusing the feeling nuance that comes from *hearing* the sound and the feeling nuance that arises when *speaking* the sound. The two are different. You must bear in mind that the nuances of feeling I have enumerated are related to communicating the sounds. They apply when you want to communicate something to someone by using the sound. If you wish to tell someone that you are afraid, it is expressed by the *u* sound. There is a difference of nuance when you yourself are afraid and when you want to arouse fear in someone else by articulating *u*. Your own fear will be echoed back when you attempt to arouse it in another, for example, by saying to a child, "u-u" ["ooo"]. It is important to consider this aspect with regard to the social implications of speech. If you do so, you will easily see the point.

The feeling here is a pure inner soul process. This soul process, which is specifically based on the effect of affinity, can be met from outside by aversion. The tongue, lips, and palate make themselves felt as organs of aversion that ward things away. If we spoke only in vowels, we would continually surrender ourselves. We would, in fact, merge with things and be extremely selfless; we would unfold our deepest affinity for everything around us and would withdraw somewhat only because of nuances of affinity—for example, when we feel fear or horror. Even our withdrawal would contain an element of affinity. Vowels are related to our own sounding; likewise, consonants are related to things, which sound with consonants.

Consequently, you find that we must view vowels as nuances of feeling, whereas we find that consonants, *f*, *b*, *m*, and so on, are imitations of external things. Hence, I was correct yesterday when I showed you how *f* is related to a fish, since I imitated the shape of the fish. It is always possible to trace consonants back to an imitation of external objects, whereas vowels are very elementary expressions of feeling nuances in people toward things. Therefore, we can view speech as a confrontation between aversion and affinity. Affinities are always present in vowels, and aversions are always present in consonants.

We can also view speaking in another way. What kind of affinity is expressed in the chest region of the human being so that, as a result, the chest arrests aversion and the head merely accompanies it? The basis of it is musical, something that has passed beyond certain boundaries. Music is the foundation, and it goes beyond certain limits. In a sense, it surpasses itself and becomes more than music. In other words, to the degree that speech contains vowels, it encompasses something musical; to the degree that it contains consonants, it carries a kind of sculpture, or painting. Speech is a genuine synthesis, a true union in the human being of the musical with the sculptural element.

Thus, we can see that, with a kind of unconscious subtlety, language reveals not only the nature of individuals but that of human communities as well. In German, *Kopf* (head) expresses in every sense a roundness of form. *Kopf* denotes not only the human head but also a head of cabbage, for example. In the word *Kopf* the form is expressed.

The Romance languages do not depict the form of the head. There [in Italian] we find the word *testa*, which expresses something in the soul realm. *Testa* expresses the head as witness, something that testifies and identifies. This word for “head” comes from a very different foundation. On the one hand it expresses a sympathetic feeling of the mind, while, on the other, it depicts a fusion of aversion with the external world.

For now, let us try to determine the difference in terms of the main vowels. In *Kopf*, the *o* relates to astonishment. The soul feels something like astonishment in relation to anything round, because roundness is itself related to all that evokes astonishment. In *testa*, the *e* relates to resistance. If someone states something, we must in turn assert ourselves and resist; otherwise, we would simply merge and mingle with that individual. This feeling nuance is well expressed where a national tendency to testify, or witness, is an aspect of the head.

When you consider these matters, you are led away from the abstraction of looking to see what the dictionary says: this word for this language, that word for that language. The words in the different languages are in places taken from quite different connections. Merely to compare them is a purely external matter and to translate by the dictionary is on the whole the worst kind of translating. The word *Fuss* in German (foot) is related to taking a step, making an empty space, a *Furche* (furrow). The word for “foot” is related to the word for “furrow.” We take the foot and name it for what it does—make an impression. The word for “feet” in the Romance languages [Portuguese], *pés*, is taken from standing firmly, having a standpoint.

This linguistic study of meaning is extraordinarily helpful in teaching, but it does not yet exist as a science. We could ask why these things are as yet not included in science, even though they offer real practical help. The reason is that we are still working out what is necessary for the fifth post-Atlantean age, especially in terms of education. If you accept that speech in this sense indicates something inward in the vowels and something external in the consonants, you will find it very easy to create images for the consonants. You will no longer need the pictures I will give you in the next few lectures;

you will be able to make your own and establish an inner connection with the children. This is much better than merely adopting an outer image. In this way we recognize speech as a *relationship* between the human being and the cosmos. On our own as human beings, we would merely remain astonished, but our relationship with the cosmos invokes sounds from our astonishment.

Human beings are embedded in the cosmos in a particular way, and we can observe this externally. I am saying this because (as you saw in yesterday's lecture) much depends on the nature of our feelings toward growing children—the degree of reverence we have toward the mysterious revelation of the cosmos in growing human beings. A tremendous amount depends on our ability to develop this feeling as teachers and educators.

Now let's take a broader view and look again at the significant fact that the human being takes about eighteen breaths per minute. How many breaths is this in four minutes? $18 \times 4 = 72$ breaths. What is the number of breaths in a day? $18 \times 60 \times 24 = 25,920$ per day. I could also calculate this in a different way, by beginning with the number of breaths in four minutes—72. Then, instead of multiplying this number by 24×60 , I would simply multiply it by 6×60 , or 360; I would arrive at the same number of 25,920 breaths per day: $360 \times 72 = 25,920$. We can say that our breathing for four minutes—breathing in, breathing out, breathing in, breathing out—is, in a sense, a microcosmic “day.” The sum of 25,920 I obtained by multiplying it by 360 relates to this as the process of a whole year: the day of 24 hours is like a year for our breathing. Now we will look at our larger breathing process, which is made up of a daily alternation between being awake and sleeping. What, basically, is being awake and sleeping? It means that we breathe something out and breathe something in. We breathe out our I-being and astral body when we go to sleep, and we breathe them in when we awake. This occurs during the course of 24 hours. To arrive at a sum for the course of a year, we must multiply the day by 360. So with the greater breathing process, in one year we complete something similar to what we complete in one day with the microcosmic breathing process, assuming that we multiply what takes place in 4 minutes by 360. If

we multiply what takes place with waking and sleeping during one day by 360, the answer shows us what takes place in one year. And if we multiply one year by an average life span—that is by 72—we arrive again at 25,920.

Now we have discovered a twofold breathing process: our in-and-out-breathing, which takes place 72 times in four minutes and 25,920 times in one day, and our waking and sleeping, which takes place 360 times in one year and 25,920 times during a lifetime. Furthermore, we find a third breathing process by following the sun's course. You know that the spot of the sunrise in spring appears to advance slightly every year. After 25,920 years, the sun has moved around the whole ecliptic. Once again we have the number 25,920 in the planetary cosmic year. How is our life ingrained in the universe? Our average life span is 72 years. Multiply this by 360, and you arrive again at 25,920. You can imagine that in a Platonic year—the cosmic revolution of the sun—our human life span is but a day. Thus we can regard what is depicted as a year in the universe as one breath in our human life span and see our human life span as a day in the great cosmic year. Accordingly, we can revere even the smallest process as an image of the greater cosmic process. If we look at the whole process more closely, we find in the Platonic year—that is, in what happens during a Platonic year—an image of the process of evolution from the old Saturn through the Sun, Moon, and Earth stages and right up to the Vulcan stage. All the processes that take place as indicated are ordered like breathing processes related to 25,920.

All that occurs in our life between waking and sleeping expresses the ancient Moon period of evolution, the present Earth evolution, and the future Jupiter evolution. This expresses all that makes us members of what exists beyond our earth. The same thing that makes us earthly human beings also takes place in our smallest breathing process. As human beings, our alternation between waking and sleeping expresses our relationship to the ancient evolutionary periods of Moon, Earth, and Jupiter, and our life span expresses how, as cosmic human beings, we are rooted in the conditions of the universal year. For cosmic life and the whole planetary system, one day of our lives is a single breath. And all the seventy-two years of our life are a single

day for the being whose organs are our planetary system. Overcome the illusion that you are a limited human being; think of yourself as a cosmic process—that is the reality—and you will be able to say, “I am a breath of the universe.”

If you understand this so that you can remain completely indifferent to the theoretical aspect (a process of interest only in passing), and if, on the other hand, you can maintain a feeling of immeasurable reverence for what is expressed so mysteriously in every human being, this sense will become the solid foundation within you that must be the foundation for teaching. In the future, education cannot proceed merely by bringing conventional, adult life into teaching. It is truly awful to consider the possibility that in the future, elected parliaments will meet and decide questions of education based on the recommendations of those whose only reason for involvement is their sense of democracy. If things develop in this way, as they are now doing in Russia, the earth would lose its task and have its mission withdrawn; it would be expelled from the cosmos and fall to Ahriman.

It is time to derive what belongs to education from our knowledge of the relationship between humankind and the cosmos. We must imbue all our teaching with a feeling that standing before us is a growing human being, one who continues what took place in the supersensible world before conception and birth. This feeling must grow from the sort of recognition we arrived at as we considered the vowels and consonants. This feeling must permeate us completely. Only when we are truly permeated by this feeling can we teach properly. Do not believe that this feeling can be fruitless; the human being is organized so that, if our feelings are oriented correctly, we will derive our guiding forces from them.

If you cannot manage to see every human being as a cosmic mystery, you will not get beyond the sense that people are no more than mechanisms, and if such a feeling were cultivated, it would lead to the downfall of earthly culture. On the other hand, earthly culture is raised only when we permeate education with the feeling that the whole human being has cosmic significance. And this cosmic feeling arises only when we regard the content of human feeling as belonging to the period between birth and death. Human thinking indicates

the period before birth, and what exists in the human will points to what comes after death as a seed for the future. As the threefold human being stands before us, first we see what belongs to the time before birth, then we see what lies between birth and death, and, third, we see what awaits us after death. Our life before birth enters our existence as images, and the seed of what lies beyond death exists within us even before death.

Only facts such as these will give you some idea of what actually happens through human interrelationships. When reading older works on education (the pedagogy of Herbart, for example, which was excellent in its day), we always have the feeling that those people were using concepts that could not help them reach the world; they remain outside reality. Just consider the way affinity permeates all willing when properly developed in the earthly sense—how the seed of the future that belongs to the time after death, yet exists in us as a result of the will, is permeated by love and affinity. Likewise, in education, we must watch everything in an especially loving way, so that it can be arrested or cultivated properly. We must assist children in their affinity by appealing to the will. What will the true impulse for an education of the will have to be? That impulse can only be the affinity we must develop toward the child. As that affinity develops toward our students, our educational methods will improve.

Because educating the thinking is the opposite of educating the will, since it is permeated with aversion, you might ask whether we should develop aversions when we educate the thinking intellect of students? Yes, indeed, but you must understand it correctly. Place your aversions on the proper foundation. You must try to understand the students themselves if you want to properly educate their thinking capacity. Such understanding contains within it an element of aversion, since it belongs at this end of the scale. By comprehending your students and endeavoring to penetrate all their nuances, you become the teacher of their understanding, their faculty of knowledge. The aversions exist in this very activity, but you make the aversion good by educating your students.

Furthermore, you can be certain that we are not led to meet one another in this life if there are no preconditions for such a meeting.

These external processes are always the outer expression of something inner, regardless of how strange this may seem to a conventional world-view. The fact that you are present to teach these children from the Waldorf factory, and the fact that you will do what is necessary in this regard, indicates that this group of teachers and this group of children belong together in terms of karma. You become the appropriate teacher for these children because in previous times you developed aversions toward them. Now you free yourself from these aversions by educating their thinking. And we develop affinities in the right way by aiding the appropriate development of the will.

Be very clear about this; you can best penetrate the twofold human being as discussed in our seminar. But you must try to understand every aspect of the human being. Through what we attempted in the seminars, you will become a good educator of only the children's thinking. For the will life, you will be a good educator by trying to surround each individual with real affinity. These things belong to education: aversion enables us to comprehend, and affinity enables us to love. Since our bodies have centers where affinity and aversion meet, this affects our social interaction as expressed in the process of teaching. I ask you to think this through and take it into your feelings so that we can continue tomorrow.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 19-30.]

10. The Concrete and Abstract Elements of Language

When we think in ordinary life it is as if thinking, or forming mental images, continually escaped us. When we bump into something or feel something with our fingers—a piece of silk or velvet, for example—we immediately perceive that we have encountered that object, and we can feel its shape by touching its surface. Then we know that as human beings, we have connected with our environment. When we think, however, we do not seem to touch objects around us in this way. Once we have thought about something and made it our own, we can say that we have “apprehended,” or “grasped” it (*begreifen*). What do we mean by this? If external objects are alien to us—which is generally true for our thinking—then we do not say we have grasped them. If, for example, a piece of chalk is lying there,

and I am standing here moving my hand as one does when speaking, one does not say, "I have grasped the chalk." But if I actually take hold of the chalk with my hand, then I can say, "I have grasped it." In earlier times, people had a better understanding of what thinking really was, and out of such knowledge, words and expressions flowed into the language that expressed the real thing much better than our modern abstractionists realize. If we have had a mental picture of something, we say we have grasped it. This means we have come into contact with the object—we have "seized" it. [He is playing here on the words *ergreifen* and *erfassen*.]

Today we no longer realize that we can have intimate contact with objects in our environment through the very expressions in our thinking life. For example, there is a word in our language today that conceals its own meaning in a very hypocritical way. We say "concept" [*Begriff* in German, from *begreifen*]. I have a concept. The word *conceive* (to hold or gather) is contained within it [*greifen*, to grasp or seize]. I have something that I have grasped, or gathered into myself. We have only the word now; the life has gone out of its meaning. [Our English word *concept* derives from Latin *concipere*, to take hold of completely.]

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 23-24.]



Now we come to the I-being. Just as the astral body can be investigated through music, the true nature of the I-being can be studied through the word. It may be assumed that everyone, even doctors and teachers, accepts today's form of language as a finished product. If this is their standpoint, they can never understand the inner structure of language. This can be understood only when you consider language, not as the product of our modern mechanism, but as the result of the *genius* of language, working vitally and spiritually. You can do this when you attempt to understand the way a word is formed.

There is untold wisdom in words, way beyond human understanding. All human characteristics are expressed in the way various cultures form their words, and the peculiarities of any nation may be recognized in their language. For example, consider the German

word *Kopf* (head). This was originally connected with the rounded form of the head, which you also find in the word *Kohl* (cabbage), and in the expression *Kohlkopf* (head of cabbage). This particular word arises from a feeling for the form of the head. You see, here the I has a very different concept of the head from what we find in *testa*, for example, the word for “head” in the Romance languages, which comes from *testifying*, or “to bear witness.” Consequently, in these two instances, the feelings from which the words are formed come from very different sources.

If you understand language in this inward way, then you will see how the I-organization works. There are some districts where lightning is not called *Blitz* but *Himmlitzer*. This is because the people there do not think of the single flashes of lightning so much as the snakelike form. People who say *Blitz* picture the single flash and those who say *Himmlitzer* picture the zig-zag form. This then is how humans really live in language as far as their I is concerned, although in the current civilization, they have lost connection with their language, which has consequently become something abstract. I do not mean to say that if you have this understanding of language you will already have attained inward clairvoyant consciousness, whereby you will be able to behold beings like the human I. But you will be on the way to such a perception if you accompany your speaking with inner understanding.

Thus, education in medical and teacher training colleges should be advanced as indicated, so that the students’ training may arouse in them an inner feeling for space, an inner relationship to music, and an inner understanding of language. Now you may argue that the lecture halls are already becoming empty and, ultimately, teacher training colleges will be just as empty if we establish what we’ve been speaking of. Where would all this lead to? Medical training keeps getting longer and longer. If we continue with our current methods, people will be sixty by the time they are qualified! The situation we are speaking of is not due in any way to inner necessity but is related to the fact that inner conditions are not being fulfilled. If we fail to go from abstractions to plastic and musical concepts and to an understanding of the cosmic word—if we stop short at abstract

ideas—our horizon will be endless; we will continue on and on and never come to a boundary, to a point where we can survey the whole. The understanding that will come from understanding sculpting and music will make human beings more rational—and, believe me, their training will actually be accelerated rather than delayed. Consequently, this inner course of development will be the correct method of training educators, and not only teachers, but those others who have so much to contribute to educational work—the doctors.

[*The Roots of Education*, pp. 23-24, 45-47.]

11. Developing an Inner Feeling for Language through Dialect

If a feeling for the inner organs is not cultivated in the years when it is important, that is, between the ages of six and nine, the intellect will take over. This intellect is essentially the enemy of intellectual human life as well as of social life. I of course am not in favor of making people dumb. It is important, however, that we recognize the parasitic nature of the intellect and that we recognize the intellect as being complete only when it arises out of the entire human being and not in a one-sided way. That, however, is possible to achieve only when drawing and music instruction are supported in all areas of instruction, most importantly in speech and arithmetic.

We can certainly assume that all grammar already exists in the human organism. If you take that assumption seriously, you will realize that by making grammar conscious in a living way, you work on the creation of an I-consciousness in the child. You must orient everything toward that knowledge that exists in the body around the age of nine, when a consciousness of the I normally awakens. You need to bring forth into consciousness everything that exists unconsciously in the child's organism. In that way the child will reach the Rubicon of development at the age of nine in a favorable way. In that way you bring into consciousness what is unconscious. You then work with those forces in the child that want to develop, not the forces that you bring from outside the child. There is a way of teaching language by using the way the child already speaks and supporting the instruction through a living interaction between those children who speak a more cultivated language and those who speak a dialect. In this way

you can allow them to measure themselves against each other, not in some abstract way, but using feeling to guide a word, a sentence, in dialect into another. If you do that for an hour and a half, you will really make the children break out into a sweat. The teachers who teach this way in the Waldorf School certainly have enough when they do this for an hour and a half or so each morning! If you give instruction in language by working with the knowledge in the body so that you create an actual self-consciousness, you are working in harmony with the foundation you have laid in drawing and musical instruction. Thus you have two processes that support each other.

I was quite startled as I found in some more recent pedagogical literature a statement that teaching drawing was negatively influenced by language class because instruction in language or speaking in general forces people into abstractions. People forget how to see and how to view what exists in the external world as forms and colors. That is what is asserted there. That is not the case if you give instruction in language not in an abstract way, but instead develop it out of an inner experience. Then they support one another and what develops as a consciousness of the self around the age of nine becomes visible, piece by piece, as it goes on to imbue an external view of things with an artistic feeling for form.

I have had the teachers in the Waldorf School do the following exercises because they should be working entirely out of an artistic perspective. Our teachers may not be satisfied when the children can draw a circle or a square or a triangle. Instead, our children need to learn how to feel a circle, triangle, or square. They need to draw a circle so that they have a feeling of roundness. They should learn to draw a triangle so that they have a feeling for the three corners and that when they have first drawn one corner they should feel that there will be three. In the same way, when they draw a square, they should have a feeling of the right angle, a feeling that is carried throughout the whole drawing process from the very beginning. Our children need to learn what an arc is, what vertical or horizontal is, what a straight line is, not simply in seeing it, but an inner feeling of how the arm or the hand follows it. This is done as a basis for teaching writing. None of our children should learn to write a P without first

having the experience of the vertical and an arc, not simply that a child has an abstract understanding of that, of the vertical and the arc, but a feeling for a felt experience of such things.

By slowly developing everything intellectual out of the artistic, that is, out of the entire human being, you will also develop the entire human being, people with real initiative, with a real force of life in their bodies. They will not be like people in our own population who no longer know where they are after they have done their final examinations. This is a real tragedy. If your professional task is to understand human beings, then it is possible that you can experience the following. You are, for example, to test someone around the age of twenty-five or thirty whether he is to receive a given position. You approach him with the expectation that he should develop some initiative, particularly if he is to go into a practical profession. The person tells you, however, that you expect one thing or another but that he wants to go to India or to America in order to learn more about the profession. What that means is that he actually wants to move into the profession passively. He does not want to develop anything out of his own initiative, but instead wishes to have the opportunity that the world will make something of him. I know that saying this is something horrible for many people, but at the same time I am pointing out something we can see in people who have completed their education in the last decades. It has not developed a genuine initiative, initiative that reaches down into people's souls when it is necessary later in life. It is of course easy to say that we should develop initiative. The question is, though, how we do that, how we can arrange the material we are to present in education so that it acts not against initiative in the will, but strengthens it.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 83-86.]

12. The Formative Effect of Dialect

As for teaching languages, you first need to gain a sense of how to do this. I first became aware of this sense of teaching languages when I had the opportunity of pursuing the result of having children who spoke dialect sit in the same classroom as other children who did not speak the dialect. It is very interesting to observe children

who speak a dialect and how they carry themselves. A dialect, every dialect, has a certain characteristic. It arises out of what I would call an inner feeling of the human being just in the same way as the inner organic feeling arises, something that is much less important in today's intellectualism. Dialect is an inner experience that pushes the entire human being into speech. In modern conversational speech, the so-called educated speech, which has become abstract, there is no longer a proper connection between inner experience and what is expressed in a sound or series of sounds. Certain subtle differences in the relationship between the person and the person's surroundings are often wonderfully expressed in dialect. That is something you can no longer detect in educated speech. For example, when as a child I heard the word sky-flash (*Himmlitzer*), I knew immediately that it was something that must be similar to the sound. Try to feel the word *Himmlitzer*. In certain dialects, that is the word for lightning. There is something in the sounds or in the series of sounds. Here the language is drawing a picture; it paints in a kind of inner music. The close connection between language and inner experiences of feeling is enormously stronger in dialect than it is in educated language.

There is something else to consider. It is curious that when we compare languages, we discover that the inner logic of a language is greater in primitive languages than in more educated speech forms. You would actually expect the opposite. This is, of course, not true with the languages of black Africans. But those are really primitive languages and I will come back to those in a moment. In certain primitive languages there is a remarkable inner logic, which is much more abstract yet simpler than when the language becomes more civilized. Thus there is in dialect a greater inner logic than in educated language, and we can achieve a great deal. If, for example, in a village school we have to work with dialect, then we must begin with dialect, as we need to attempt to make conscious what already exists unconsciously in the language, namely, the grammar. Grammar should be taught in a very lively way. It should be taught in such a lively way that we assume that it already exists when the child speaks. When the child speaks, the grammar is already there. You should allow the children to speak sentences in the way they are used to

speaking so that they feel the inner connection and inner flexibility of the language. You can then begin to draw the child's attention and make them aware of what they do unconsciously. You certainly do not need to do that through a pedantic analysis. You can develop the entirety of grammar by simply making the children more aware of the life of the grammar that is already there when the child has learned to speak. [*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 110-112.]

13. Dialect and Standard Language

The question I was posed after yesterday's lecture is directly connected with what I explained in the previous days. It can also be considered today in connection with what we have been talking about. Yesterday I attempted to sketch out a description of how the content of the teaching material may actually not be the most important thing. I said we cannot make directly out of the material we obtain through science or from something else a popularized form adjusted for children, as often is done with biology or zoology, so that a simplified content is taught the children. I drew your attention to how the task of teaching can only become a task of education when we are in a position of being able to transform the material we have to present, regardless of what form it has, into an educational experience. Yesterday, I gave some indication of how to do that for biology and zoology. In education, we need to work more and more toward presenting everything, particularly with children from the ages of six or seven until puberty, in such a way that the forces that are trying to develop in a child can actually be brought to development.

If we are going to be able to do that, we must also be capable of properly using everything the child brings into school. I also mentioned that a large number of children bring into school something that we can well use in teaching, namely, their dialect. The children speak in dialect, and they speak in such a way that the dialects have developed in them under the influence of the instinct for imitation. If we have a talent for observing such things, we can recognize that those children who speak in dialect have a much more intimate relationship to language than those children who do not speak in dialect. The question I was asked yesterday was connected with how

we can use the capacity of the children to speak in dialect in school, in teaching them to speak the so-called standard language.

We certainly cannot overlook the fact that the intimate relationship that children who speak in dialect have to their languages exists because the dialect as such, in its words and sentences, has been formed out of a much more intense feeling and willing than standard language, which is based more upon thinking or upon a thinking derived primarily from feeling. In any event, emotion is much less present in standard language when a child learns standard language originally than it is in dialect. The same is also true in regard to the will impulse.

Now this points us at the very beginning to something extremely important for teaching and education, namely, that human beings, more than we normally assume, develop themselves from two sources that are really related to one another like the North and South Poles. If we work in one direction or the other in education or in forming our teaching, if we work to primarily base everything upon visualization so that the child reasons visually and thus slowly develops through a comprehension of the pictures presented, we are going to one extreme. If, on the other hand, we educate the child through using the child's capacity of memory or count upon the child's acceptance due to obedience to our authority, we are going to the other extreme.

It is particularly clear in language that these two extremes always belong together in human nature. Language itself has a clearly perceptible musical element, an element which is closely connected with that innermost aspect of the human being. Language also has at the same time a sculptural or drawing element. As very small children, we attempt to imitate, though unconsciously, in our language what we perceive through the senses. It is especially clear in language how the musical and sculptural elements work in two diverging directions. If we educate children more according to the musical element, which in school is expressed primarily through a feeling for authority, we will destroy what exists in the child as a sculptural desire. The musical element of language develops under the influence of authority such that the child continuously has an instinct or a desire to speak, even in the details of the tones, in the same way that a person who is felt to be

an authority speaks. A conformity to the authority's musical element is, whether we want to believe that it is right or wrong, simply there because of the nature of the child. If you have a talent for observing such things, you will quickly notice how the musical element of the child's language conforms to that of the person educating the child.

A one-sided development of the musical element in language destroys language's sculptural element. When people only follow the musical element, they are forced more and more to make language an inner experience, to follow their feelings in a certain way by recreating the tone, the intonation, and particularly the nuances of the vowels to conform to those of the people whom they perceive as authorities. This is most certainly true when a child enters elementary school. It is less true for a child in that age between birth and elementary school, when he or she first learns language. During that time, the child is an imitator and develops language out of the entirety of human nature and with a continuous adjustment of the remainder of the human organism to the environment. At that point much enters into speaking which guides language into a more sculptural form. However, because human beings are imitators and imitate right into the innermost activities of their nature, the sculptural element also forms during this time in an inner way. Here we can see one major difference in language development. From birth until the change of teeth, children develop their language sculpturally. If a child has the good fortune to be able to adjust to a dialect during that period of life, one that is more inwardly connected to the human being than standard language, then the child is, in regard to willing and authority aspects of language development, more intimately connected to language than it is with standard language.

Upon entering elementary school, the musical element then replaces the sculptural element, as I mentioned before, and the inner feelings have an effect. However, since the musical element as such counteracts the sculptural element, it is necessary for us to appropriately use in teaching elementary school what the children bring with them, what they have developed in language through their own forces until the age of six or seven.

In language, broadly speaking, the unconscious has had a great effect on the child. We should also learn from the fact that primitive peoples have often developed a much richer grammar than those present in the languages of more civilized peoples. This is seldom taken into account outside of spiritual science, but it is something we should consider as a result of a genuine observation of human beings, namely, that the human being develops a logic from within so that language is actually logically formed. Thus we do not need to teach grammar in a way other than by bringing what already exists as a completely developed language structure into consciousness. When teaching and learning grammar, we need only to follow the general tendency of awakening the child and of bringing that into consciousness. We need only to develop those forces that can be developed until the age of nine, in the sense that I described before. We need to use the instruction in language in order to continue to awaken the child. We can best do that if we use every opportunity that occurs to work from dialect. If we have a child who before the age of seven has already learned a more educated informal language, the so-called standard language, it will be extremely difficult to reach the aspect of the child's unconscious that has a natural relationship to the logical formation of language, since that has already withered. Thus if we have children who speak dialect and others who do not in the same class, we should always connect our instruction in grammar with what those children who do speak in dialect already provide us.

We first want to try to find the structure of a sentence and then a word from the perspective of dialect. We can do that if we proceed by having a child say a sentence, for example, one that is as simple as possible. The main thing the sentence will always contain is something that is an inner enlivening of an activity. The more often we begin with an inner enlivening of an activity, the more we will be able to achieve an awakening of consciousness in the child while teaching language.

There is a very extensive and clever literature about so-called subjectless sentences, for instance, "It is raining," "It is lightning," "It is thundering," and so forth. The most important point about this is hardly mentioned in all of that research, however. What is most

important is that these sentences correspond to the child's actual understanding. The sentences correspond to that feeling in children that exists in people who are not educated, and where the soul feels itself to be at one with the external world. A differentiation between the I and the external world has not yet been developed. If I say, for example, "It is raining," this is based upon an unconscious feeling that what is occurring as an activity outside of myself continues in that space within my skin, and that my I does not confront the external world. When saying something like "It is raining" or "It is lightning," we do not feel ourselves separate from the world. In a certain sense, these subjectless sentences are the original sentences of human nature. They are simply the first step of language development which arrests an activity. Originally, we perceived all of the world as an activity, something we do not consider enough. In a certain sense, in our youngest childhood, we see everything substantial as a substantiated verb and accept it simply as it is. Later, what we become aware of, what is active, is what is active and then occupies our own activity. Now you might say that contradicts the fact that children first say "Papa" or something similar. That is not at all a contradiction, since in speaking the series of sounds, the child brings into life that activity which the corresponding person presents to the child.

Learning to speak is at first the enlivening of an activity whose substantiation occurs only afterwards. This is something that, when we look at dialect, we can certainly take into account. You can attempt to feel that by having a child say something and then trying to feel that within yourself. The words in dialect are such that they are extremely close to what lives in the gesture that accompanies the word in dialect. To a much greater extent dialect words require the person to participate, to live into the word. By feeling the word in dialect you can determine what is an abstraction, and what the subject and the predicate are. The predicate is derived from the activity, whereas the subject is actually more of an intellectual abstraction of the activity. When we have children speak sentences in dialect and we then consider the pictures they provide us with, and we can see those as representing what human beings actually feel when we go on to develop the rules of grammar, we are using instruction in grammar and sentence structure to help the child to awaken.

We can now allow these two things to interact in a wonderful way. We can translate what has been presented in dialect into standard language and then show, through a direct feeling and with a lively interaction with the children, how a certain “aroma” of language is given to the so-called educated informal language, to standard language. From there we can go on to the inner characteristics of standard language. This creates a certain development of thinking. In standard language we need to give much more attention to the development of the thoughts that are its basis than we do with dialect.

Dialect shows us directly that human beings did not develop speech from thinking. Instead they learned to think from language, so it was language that first developed out of the human unconscious. As human beings thought about language, thoughts first arose from language. If we can properly feel this, then we can connect a living feeling with what I would call the genius of language. In many regards language is much more clever than individual human beings. In earliest childhood we can in fact find our way through the complicated organism of language. Only later do we discover those remarkable connections that only a sharp logic can reveal and which exist in language out of our unconscious nature. The spirit has an effect upon language. However, we will not understand that spiritual aspect if we only consider how the spirit, in an abstract form, has an effect upon human beings, in the way that people in our materialistic age like to do.

Perhaps I can again touch something which is often said to be the basis of psychoanalysis but which needs to be understood in a quite different sense than psychoanalysts often do. Let us take something that often occurs in life. A lady is invited to a home where guests have been invited, but the lady of the house is absent that evening because of illness. This lady now attends the party. On the same evening, the lady of the house needs to leave. The party breaks up because the man of the house needs to take his wife to the train. The group of people now go along the street, and a coach comes around the corner. At first the carriage is going very quickly and the group of people move to the left and right of the street to make way. However, the one lady who had been invited that evening runs in front of the horses. She runs

and runs, and in spite of all the coachman's shouting, he is unable to get her to move to one side. She keeps on running in front of the coach, and as they come to a bridge, she recognizes the situation and jumps into the water. She needs to be rescued. The group of people who were at the party don't know what to do with her except bring her back to the house where they had been invited that evening.

The psychoanalyst would say that this lady was mentally isolated, that she had been startled as a child by a horse that had chased her or something similar, and that this experience was carried in the depths of her mind. Now, on this evening, this experience surfaces again. This is a very clever theory. But those who have learned to observe reality and who have learned to place themselves into reality through spiritual science will not see this as valid.

The truth is quite different. The lady is infatuated with the man of the house, and is quite happy to have been invited to the party on just that day when the lady of the house has to leave. Of course, this lady would not admit this, since she is a very correct person. She could be, in fact, a very correct lady in her consciousness, but what she does not admit has an effect in her subconscious. For that reason, she arranges everything so that all of the guests invited that evening will bring her back to the house when the lady of the house has left. That is what she wanted from the very beginning, but was not at all conscious of it.

Here you can see how thinking, cleverness, and intelligence work without having an effect through the human consciousness. Those who can observe life know that there are people who can arrange things from a distance to achieve what they want without having any conscious idea that they are doing so. Nevertheless everything is all very systematically arranged toward a particular goal. We need to be aware that reason is not only something that we develop, it is also something that acts within us in our nature, something which is active within us long before we become aware of it.

What we want to teach children about language has an effect upon them long before they become aware of it. We should therefore avoid trying to teach them the rules for speaking or writing, but instead enable them to awaken and become aware of what subcon-

sciously acts within. Whether we have one intention or another in our instruction is tremendously important. We should always pay attention to the intention behind teaching.

Speaking a dialect has an intimate connection with the subconscious, so we can develop real grammar and rules for sentence structure from the dialect language by basing our work upon the reason that lives within human nature. If, however, we need to work with children who already speak the standard language, we should whenever possible not work in such a way to develop a kind of grammar through the intellect, and not direct our work by teaching about the dative and accusative and how we write, how periods and commas are placed at particular locations and so forth. We instead need to work in a different way. When we need to teach children who do not speak in dialect, then we must create our instruction and grammar in an artistic way and appeal to a feeling for style.

Children bring an instinct for language with them into elementary school, and we need to develop this feeling wherever possible until the child reaches the age of nine. We can only do this by developing a feeling for style in an artistic way. That is something we can achieve—although in this age where authority is being undermined everywhere this may be laughed at—by using the natural desires of children to follow authority, and thus to form those sentences that we present to the children in the most artistic way. We need to artistically form the sentences so that we draw from the child a feeling for their artistic form. That is something we can do when we make the children aware of the difference between an assertion or a question, or perhaps a statement of feeling, and have the child speak it in such a way that a statement with feeling is spoken with the intonation of an assertion. We can then make the children aware of how an assertion is spoken in a neutral, objective way; whereas a statement of feeling is spoken with certain nuances of feeling. We can work with this artistic element of language, then out of that element develop grammar and syntax.

If we use dialect in order to develop the natural human instinct for language while using standard language in order to awaken an inner feeling for style, we can achieve what is necessary in teaching

language. I will speak about this in more detail later, however; for now I simply want to indicate the principles.

This principle shows that we must keep the developing child in mind at all times. We need to ask what is developing at this particular age. If we do not have the feeling that with the change of teeth children are, in a certain sense, born a second time, then we will not have the proper enthusiasm for our teaching. Of course, the physical birth is much more obvious than what occurs at around the age of seven. At birth the physical body of a human being is separated from that body of the mother. With the change of teeth, the human etheric body becomes separate from the physical body, with which the etheric body was intimately connected. The etheric body worked within the physical body to develop the second set of teeth, but now it becomes free. What children bring to school in terms of capacities are actually the free and newborn capacities of the etheric body. This is the first spiritual aspect that a child presents.

When we have a child younger than seven before us, we have it before us only as a physical body. All the child's spiritual and soul aspects are active within that physical body, and we can reach the child only through the fact that the child itself has a desire to imitate. At the age of seven, the etheric body, that is, all those aspects of human nature which have an etheric component in their substance, now become free and have a life for themselves.

I have already mentioned that the human being is composed of more than 75 percent water. Why do people in physiology and anatomy always speak as though the human being consisted of a solid body? What occurs within a human being works in just the same way in fluids. It also occurs in the gaseous state. What develops in a child in regard to spiritual and soul capacities after the change of teeth occurs neither in a solid nor in liquid nor in gaseous state. It occurs instead in what we carry within our body as the etheric, what we carry within us in the form of heat, light, chemical, and life ethers.

It is nonsense to say that thoughts are only processes within the nervous system, imagining the nerves as semisolid or at least soft forms. No, thoughts occur through direct development, by not being transformed into memories. Thoughts occur in such a way that they

do not even have contact with the physical body after the age of seven.

When people think, they think only in their etheric element, which fills their physical bodies. You might, however, object by saying that thoughts become memories and thus remain within the human being. The etheric element is very volatile; all thoughts would dissolve if they were to live only in it. Memory is a much more complicated process than people normally think. Often they have the idea—which is based upon materialism—that when people think, the thoughts they have seek out a place to live somewhere in the human soul, and that we bring them forth again when we recall them. But that is not how it is. If you can observe the process of thinking, you will find that when you see something through your senses in the outer world, you connect thoughts with it. But when you recall something and form a thought, then what you have is something that otherwise comes from the external world but now arises within your own inner world. Just as you comprehend thoughts connected with the external world, you also comprehend thoughts which arise within you. Memory does not occur because thoughts sink down into the soul, but because what physically acts upon the eye and the ear is continued within the physical body. Thinking is a parallel process. This process leaves behind a rhythmical element which can be brought forth inwardly at a later time, so it can be perceived in the same way that external perceptions are.

Probably all of you have observed how young children help themselves so that they can better bring up their memories. They do everything possible in order to strengthen thinking through the senses if they are to remember something. Recall how many children study, how they seek to include within their physical body what they are to learn as a thought, how a physical inclusion occurs in parallel with thinking. When children simply think, they often do not remember. They only remember when they again hear what they have memorized, or are in some other way physically reminded of what they have memorized.

In order for us to remember, there must be some process that works in parallel to thinking. For thinking, it is totally unimportant whether it is developed through the external world or through

a memory that arises within. Thinking is something that is fleeting. Thoughts are not retained. It is something else which is retained that then each time gives rise to a new thought. There is no difference between whether I remember something and then create a thought and when I see something in the external world that gives rise to a thought. In the one case, there is a process connected with the external world and in the other case there is a process connected with an inner experience. In any event, when I recall something, my organs go into a rhythmic movement and repeat what they carried out under the impression of the experience. When I have the experience for the first time, that is, while I observe it in the external world, my thoughts develop only in connection with the external world. When I remember something, my thoughts are ignited from within by my organs, which begin to vibrate in the same way as when I first had the experience.

Such things cannot be directly proven in the same way that external processes can be proven. These things must be slowly comprehended so that they become a certainty through a genuine observation of life. When we look at this particular kind of thinking that actually occurs within the volatile element of the etheric and when we determine how the physical organs must be capable of vibrating in the same sense as the etheric vibrates, we will properly comprehend the enormous transformation that human life undergoes through the change of teeth. Up to this point the entire etheric body is active. The heat, chemical, light, and life ethers are active in the organs, forming them in such a way that they can vibrate in material along with the etheric. The etheric body is the architect and sculptor of the physical body. Once the physical body is developed to this degree, under the influence of the etheric body—which actually thinks—the intellect is emancipated from the physical body so that the physical body can vibrate like a violin string when another string is struck. Thus when the physical body has developed to the point that the change of teeth has begun, we can then count upon developing the etheric body as such. We form the physical body at the same time as we form the etheric body. But we need to have a feeling for this birth of the etheric body at the time of the change of teeth.

Going on, we again need to sense that something still higher in human nature is born at puberty, something that previously had been working on a further formation of the human organism. Whether we call what is born at the age of fourteen or fifteen in a human being the astral body and whether we are pleased with that description or not is unimportant. What is important is to realize that just as the intellectual element is born through the etheric body around the age of seven, the entire nonphysical soul aspect is born around the age of fourteen or fifteen. Prior to that, feeling and willing are closely connected with the physical organism. Just as thinking is connected with the physical organism until the age of seven, feeling and willing are closely connected with the physical organism, that is, until puberty.

We must therefore be aware that before the age of puberty, which is also when the students graduate from elementary school, we do not under any circumstances bring into thinking—which is slowly developing with the etheric body—anything that could lead to an independence of the will or feeling too early. When the child is educated with love under the guidance of authority—when the child learns feeling and willing under the guidance of others, under the guidance of adult instructors—then at the proper moment, namely at puberty, the child's own independent feeling and willing will be born. We can only properly develop our feeling and willing in that we allow them to develop under the authority of other people. If we achieve an independent development of will too early, if we achieve what I might call certain secret functions of the will too early, that will damage us for the remainder of our lives. We achieve a subtle functioning of the will too early if we are tempted to subject our moral and religious impulses to our own judgment at too early a time.

Until puberty, children should learn morality and religion through the influence of moral and religious authorities. Only at puberty does the spiritual and soul nature of the human being begin to become free of the body so that we can allow it to make its own judgments. When you say such things today, you have the prejudices of our times against you. As I mentioned this question of a natural feeling for authority in a more or less public lecture in Germany at a time when everything seemed to be under the influence of a revolu-

tion (though it did not turn out to be), everyone objected to this because they all wanted to keep the authorities away from children. What they really wanted was that teachers cease to exist and that the children would teach and raise themselves in a democratic way.

I had to answer that this is something that children do not want at all. Children want to be guided, they want to love and learn from authority. What develops within children as a love of authority is connected with their own nature.

When human beings reach sexual maturity, there, of course, develops a love for the other sex. This then becomes individualized into the love of a man for a woman. However, what is thus individualized is at the same time an individual expression for a general love for humanity, for a love for humanity in general. The general love of humanity as well as a love for particular persons develops in the same way as love for the other sex does at sexual maturity. This love that one person has for others develops as an independent force only with sexual maturity, since love must be freed of authority. This kind of love is genuine devotion. Until sexual maturity, love is a need. It is something that the child's own being demands egotistically. We must recognize that children in elementary school egotistically demand to be able to love. They need to have that person of authority near them on whom they hang, to whom they are devoted because they find pleasure in devotion, into which they are forced by their own nature. That is the primary element in love, whether it be love of humanity or love of nature, love of the stars, or love of supersensible beings and God. It is what lives in the human beings as love, and it is essentially the content of the astral body.

Only when you have thoroughly accepted these things will you be able to develop a proper understanding of how language, at least to the extent that the child brings language to school in the form of a dialect, has developed under the influence of the physical body itself. In contrast, from the age of seven onward, we no longer have a possibility of bringing style into the imaginative element of language if we do not develop a feeling for style itself through our own individual personal relationship, our love for the child. Out of this loving relationship, a feeling for style in more educated, standard language, can grow.

A child that learned a dialect just as it learned to walk already has a feeling for the dialect. It is something we can develop out of the child itself. But it is also useful to make children aware of dialect even if they have not had the good fortune of learning it. Compared to standard language, a dialect is more artistic. Standard language is more related to reason and adheres more to convention. In doing this, we are using something we need to use in education—the artistic element. In a certain sense, we use something existing in the child's blood that forms the dialect. [*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 150-165.]

14. Bringing Life to Language

A question was asked of me today that is connected with what I have just said. I was asked what the direction of language is, what we should do so that all of the words that have lost their meaning no longer form a hindrance to the development of thinking, so that a new spiritual life can arise. An English mathematician who attempted to form a mathematical description of all the ways of thinking recently said, in a lecture he gave on education, that style is the intellectual ethical aspect. I think this could be a genuine literary ideal. In order to speak or write ethically each person would need a particular vocabulary for himself, just as each people do now. In language as it is now, the art of drama only develops the words, but seldom develops general human concepts. How can we transform language so that in the future the individual thought or feeling, as well as the generality of the individual concept, becomes audible or visible? Or should language simply disappear and be replaced by something else in the future?

Now that is certainly quite a collection of questions! Nevertheless I want to go into them a little today; tomorrow and the next day I will speak about them in more detail. It is necessary to look into how more external relationships to language exist in our civilized languages, since they are in a certain way more advanced than external relationships that exist in other languages. There is, for example, something very external in translation by taking some text in one language and looking up the words in a dictionary. When working this way you will in general not achieve what exists in the language beyond anything purely external. Language is not simply permeated by

reason; it is directly experienced, directly felt. For that reason, people would become terribly externalized if everyone were to speak some general language like Esperanto. I am not prejudiced; I have heard wonderful-sounding poems in Esperanto. But much of what lives in a language in regard to the feelings, the life of the language, would be lost through such a universal language. This is also something that is always lost when we simply translate one language word for word into another using a dictionary. We therefore need to say that in one sense the man who spoke about that here was quite correct, although it is not good to make such things into formulas. It is not good to try to formulate thoughts mathematically or to do other things that are only of interest in the moment. What we can say, though, is that it is important for us to try to imbue our language with spirit. Our language, like all civilized languages, has moved strongly into clichés. For that reason, it is particularly good to work with dialect.

Dialects, where they are spoken, are more alive than so-called standard language. A dialect contains much more personal qualities: it contains secret, intimate qualities. People who speak in dialect speak more accurately than those who speak standard language. In dialect, it is more difficult to lie than it is in standard language. That assertion may appear paradoxical to you, but it is nevertheless true in a certain sense. Of course I am not saying there are no bald-faced liars who speak dialect. But it is true that such people must be much worse than they would need to be if they were to lie only in educated, standard language. There you do not need to be as bad in order to lie, because the language itself enables lying more than when you speak in dialect. You need to be a really bad person if you are to lie in dialect because people love the words in dialect more than they do those of standard language. People are ashamed to use words in dialect as clichés, whereas the words in standard language can easily be used as clichés. This is something that we need to teach people in general—that there are genuine experiences in the words. Then we need to bring life into the language as well.

Today hardly anyone is interested in trying to bring life into language. I have tried to do that in my books in homeopathic doses. In order to make certain things understandable, I have used in my books

a concept that has the same relationship to force as water flowing in a stream does to the ice on top of the stream. I used the word *kraften* (to work actively, forcefully). Usually we only have the word *Kraft*, meaning power or force. We do not speak of *kraften*. We can also use similar words. If we are to bring life into language, then we also need a syntax that is alive, not dead. Today people correct you immediately if you put the subject somewhere in the sentence other than where people are accustomed to having it. Such things are still just possible in German, and you still have a certain amount of freedom. In the Western European languages—well, that is just terrible, everything is wrong there. You hear all the time that you can't say that, that is not English, or that is not French. But, to say "that is not German" is not possible. In German you can put the subject anywhere in the sentence. You can also give an inner life to the sentence in some way. I do not want to speak in popular terms, but I do want to emphasize the process of dying in the language. A language begins to die when you are always hearing that you cannot say something in one way or another, that you are speaking incorrectly. It may not seem as strange but it is just the same as if a hundred people were to go to a door and I were to look at them and decide purely according to my own views who was a good person and who was a bad person. Life does not allow us to stereotype things. When we do that, it appears grotesque. Life requires that everything remain in movement. For that reason, syntax and grammar must arise out of the life of feeling, not out of dead reasoning. That perspective will enable us to continue with a living development of language.

Goethe introduced much dialect into language. It is always good to enliven written language with dialect because it enables words to be felt in a warmer, more lively way. We should also consider that a kind of ethical life is brought into language. (This, of course, does not mean that we should be humorless in our speech. Friedrich Theodore Vischer wrote a wonderful book about the difference between frivolity and cynicism. It also contains a number of remarks about language usage and about how to live into language.) When teaching language, we have a certain responsibility to use it also as a training for ethics in life. Nevertheless there needs to be some feeling; it should not be

done simply according to convention. We move further and further away from what is alive in language if we say, as is done in the Western European languages, that one or another turn of phrase is incorrect and that only one particular way of saying things is allowed.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 178-181.]

15. The Transition from Concrete to Abstract Language

Those who try to view history symptomatologically do not believe it is necessary to look at each individual event and describe it for itself. Instead, they see such events as symptoms of deeper development. They might say to themselves that if Gutenberg lived and invented the art of printing books during a particular historical time, that was connected with what existed in the depths of humanity at that time. The invention of printing is only an indication that humanity at that time was mature enough to move on from certain simple concrete ideas to more abstract ones. If we come into life during a time that is held together more through printing than through direct and basic content, then we live life in a much more abstract manner.

The way life became more abstract during the course of historical events is seldom taken into account. Think for a moment about a simple example. I can say that my coat is shabby. Everyone can understand it when I say that my coat is shabby, but no one actually knows what that really means. What it means was originally connected with moths, with small insects. At that time people hung their coats in the closet and did not brush them properly. These little insects lived in them and ate the cloth. The coat then had holes in it, and the word shabby arose from the destruction of coats by moths. There you have the transition from the concrete to the abstract. Such transition continually takes place and is something we should take note of. In the area in Austria where I grew up, the farmers spoke about "sleep in their eyes." For them, the sleep in their eyes was not something abstract in the way we think of it today when we say the sleep is in our eyes. The farmer rubbed his eyes, and what he rubbed out of the corners of his eyes in the morning, that specific excretion, he called "sleep." Those farmers do not have any other concept of sleep; they must first be taught the abstract idea of sleep.

Of course, such things are now dying out. Those of us who are older can remember such things from our youth, if we did not grow up in the city. We can remember how everything was concrete, but with the close of the nineteenth century, such things more or less died out. I could give you a number of such examples, and you would hardly believe that people in the country thought in such a concrete way. You can experience many curious things in the country. There is an Austrian poet who wrote in dialect and wrote a number of beautiful things that are admired by all the city people. But only city people admire them; country people do not understand them. He used words the way city people use them—abstractly. People in the country do not understand his poetry at all because they have specific things in mind, so everything has a very different meaning. I recall, for example, that one of his poems speaks about nature. It is completely incomprehensible for farmers, because a farmer does not have the same concept of nature as an educated person. A farmer understands the word nature to mean something very concrete. In the same way, I can find examples everywhere that would show how the transition from the concrete to the abstract occurs throughout human development, and how a whole wave moving toward abstraction crashed in upon humanity with the rise of book printing. In a way, people began to filter their concepts through the influence of book printing.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 207-209.]

16. The Experience of the Logos throughout History

The most significant document that can reveal to us how different must be our conception of the world and its civilization from that of olden times, is the Gospel of St. John—the deepest and most beautiful document of Greek culture. This marvelous Gospel shows, even in the first line, that we must rise to ideas of quite a different nature, to living ideas, if we would learn from ancient times something for our present age. In the Gospel of St. John, Greek thought and feeling were the vesture for the newly arising Christianity. The first line runs: “In the Beginning was the Word”—in Greek “the Logos.” In the feeling we have today when we hear the word “word,” there

remains nothing at all of what the writer of the Gospel of St. John felt when he wrote, "In the beginning was the Word." The feeble, insignificant, meaning we have when we use the word "word" was certainly not in the mind of the writer of his Gospel when he wrote the line. In this word "word" lies something quite different. With us, the "word" is a feeble expression of abstract thoughts. The word only appeals to abstract thoughts. To the Greeks the word was still a call to the human will. When a syllable was uttered, the body of a Greek would tingle to express this syllable through his whole being also. The Greek still knew that one is not only expressing oneself by saying, for example, "It is all one to me." He knew how, when he heard the phrase, "It is all one to me," he tingled to make these corresponding movements (shrugging the shoulders). The word did not only live in the organ of speech but in the whole of man's organism of movement; but humanity has forgotten these things.

If you want to realize how the word—the word that in ancient Greece still summoned forth a gesture—how the word can live through the whole being of man, you should go to the demonstration of eurythmy next week. It is all only a beginning, really a modest beginning to bring the word into the will once again, to show the human being (on the stage at any rate, even if it is not possible in ordinary life) in such a way that the word actually lives in the movements of his arms and legs. And when we introduce eurythmy into our schools, it is a humble beginning—and must still be regarded as such today to make the word once more a moving factor in the whole of life.

In Greece there was still quite a different feeling—a feeling that came over from the East. There was a tingling, an urge in the human being to let the will reveal itself through the limbs, with every syllable, with every word, every phrase, with the rhythm and measure of every phrase. He realized how the word could become creative in every movement. But in those days he knew still more. Words were to him expressions for the forces of cloud formation, the forces lying in the growth of plants and all natural phenomena. The word rumbled in the rolling waves, worked in the whistling wind. Just as the word lives in my breath so that I make a corresponding movement, so did

the Greek find all that was living in the word in the raging wind, in the surging wave, even in the rumbling earthquake. These were words pouring out of the earth.

The paltry ideas which arise in us when we use the word "word" would be very much out of place if I were to transfer them to the primal beginning of the world. I wonder what sort of a start we should have made with these words and ideas, if at the beginning of the world these feeble ideas of the "word" had been there, and were supposed to be creative? Our words have become intellectualistic; they no longer have creative power.

Thus, above all things, we must rise to what the Greek felt as a revelation of the whole human being, a call to the will, when he spoke of the Word, of the Logos. The Greek felt the Logos surging and sounding through the whole cosmos. And then he felt what really resounds in the line: "In the Beginning was the Word." In all that was conjured up in these words there lived the living creative force not only within man but in wind and wave, cloud, sunshine, and starlight. Everywhere the world and the cosmos were a revelation of the Word. Greek gymnastic was a revelation of the Word. And in its weaker division, in musical education, there was a shadowy image of all that was felt in the Word. The Word worked in Greek wrestling. The shadowy image of the Word in music worked in the Greek dances. The spirit worked into the nature of man even though it was a bodily, gymnastic education that was given.

We must realize how feeble our ideas have become in modern civilization, and come to perceive rightly how the mighty impulse pulsating through such a line as "In the Beginning was the Word," was weakened when it passed over into Roman culture, becoming more and more shadowy, until all we now feel is an inner lassitude when we speak of it. In olden times, all wisdom, all science was a commentary on the sentence "In the Beginning was the Word." At first, the Word, the Logos, lived in the ideas that arose in man when he spoke these words, but this life grew feebler and feebler. And then came the Middle Ages and the Logos died. Only the dead Logos could be tolerated in man. And those who were educated were not only educated by having the dead Logos communicated to them, but also

the dead word—the Latin tongue in its decay. The dying word of speech became the chief medium of education up to the time of the sixteenth century, when there arose a certain inner revolt against it.

What then does civilization signify up to the sixteenth century? The death of human feeling for the living Logos as it is contained in the Gospel of St. John. And the actual clinging to a dead language is an outer manifestation of this death of the Logos. If one wanted briefly to characterize the course of civilization in so far as it fundamentally affects the impulses of education, one really should say: All that humanity has lost is expressed most of all in the fact that it has understood less and less of such things as live in the Gospel of St. John.

The course of civilization through the Middle Ages up to the sixteenth century lost the inner force of a writing like the Gospel of St. John, and this has resulted in the lack existing in humanity today; hence the clamor for educational reforms. The question of education in our age will only assume its right bearing, when people realize the barrenness of the human heart when it wants to understand the Gospel of St. John, and compares this with the intense devotion which arose in man when he believed self to be transported from his own being out into all the creative forces of the universe, as he allowed the true content of this first sentence of the Gospel to ring out within him—“In the Beginning was the Word.” We must realize that the cry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for a different kind of education arose because the most godly people of that time, those who felt most deeply the need for a renewal of education, also sensed the loss of the inner elementary life-force which enables man also to have a living understanding of the spirit. For it is the spirit to which the Gospel of St. John refers when it speaks of the Logos.

We have reached a point where we do indeed long for the spirit, but our speech is composed of mere words. And in the words we have lost the spirit that still existed for the Greeks, inasmuch as the whole human being in his activity in the world dawned upon them when the word was uttered, just as in still earlier times the activity of the universe dawned upon man when in the world-creative, cosmos-creative words he recognized the Divine that the world rests on and that must become living in man if he is to become a whole man. And

the teacher must become a whole man, for otherwise he can educate only half men and quarter men. The teacher must again come to an understanding of the Word.

If we would bring before our souls this mystery of the Word, the Word in its fullness, as it worked and was understood, in the age when the full significance of the Gospel of St. John was still felt, we must say to ourselves: In the old consciousness of man, spirit was present in the word—even in the feeble word that was used in speech. Spirit poured into the word and was the power within it.

[*A Modern Art of Education*, 1972, pp. 97-100.]

WRITING, COMPOSITION WRITING, HANDWRITING AND LEFTHANDEDNESS

THE INTRODUCTION OF WRITING

Excerpts from the major education courses:

1. *The Foundations of Human Experience* (1919), p. 70
2. *Practical Advice to Teachers* (1919), p. 72
3. *The Renewal of Education* (1920), p. 87
4. *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education* (1921), p. 93
5. *The Spiritual Ground of Education* (1922), p. 96
6. *The Child's Changing Consciousness* (1923), p. 99
7. *A Modern Art of Education* (1923), 1972 edition, p. 103
8. *The Essentials of Education* (1924), p. 107
9. *The Roots of Education* (1924), p. 112
10. *Human Values in Education* (1924), p. 115
11. *The Kingdom of Childhood* (1924), p. 120

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES TO THE INTRODUCTION OF WRITING THAT ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS VOLUME

12. *Education in the Light of Spiritual Science* (1906), p. 56
13. *The Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science* (1907),
p. 22
14. *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*, (1919), pp. 36–37, 42–44, 48–50
15. *A Lecture for Prospective Parents* (1919), p. 61
16. *Supersensible Knowledge and Social Pedagogical Life* (1919), p. 91
17. *Spiritual Science and Pedagogy* (1919), pp. 140–142
18. *Knowledge of Health and Illness* (1921), p. 117
19. *Fundamentals of Waldorf Education* (1921), p. 117
20. *Educational Methods I* (1921), pp. 164–165
21. *The Art of Teaching* (1922), pp. 31–32
22. *Waldorf Pedagogy* (1923), pp. 136–138

23. *Anthroposophy and Education* (1923), pp. 152–154
24. *Educational Issues I* (1924), pp. 198–200
25. *Educational Issues II* (1924), pp. 214–220

COMPOSITION WRITING

1. Composition Writing from *The Kingdom of Childhood*, p. 126
2. Business Compositions from *Practical Advice to Teachers*, p. 127
3. Working with Business Writing from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 130
4. Suggested Themes for Compositions from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 131
5. Summarizing Material in Self-Written Books from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 132
6. Dictations in the Second Grade from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 134

THE INTRODUCTION OF WRITING

EXCERPTS FROM THE

MAJOR EDUCATION COURSES

1. Background to the Introduction of Writing (1919)

You can see, from what I have just said, that the genius of nature attends to human development during the first stage of life. In a certain sense, we take up the work of the genius of nature when we further develop and educate the child. Through our language and deeds, which the child imitates and which affect the child through the will, we continue that activity we have seen the genius of nature effecting through milk, only we use humans as a means of providing this nutrition. We also see that nature teaches, since the nutrition received through milk is the first means of education. Nature teaches naturally. We begin to teach the soul through our language and deeds, which act upon the child educationally. That is why it is so important to be conscious that as teachers we cannot do very much with the head. When it is born into the world, the head already presents us with what it will become. We can awaken what is in the head, but we have no possibility of putting more there.

Here we need to become clear that birth can bring only certain things into earthly physical existence. The things that have arisen through superficial convention during the course of cultural development are totally unimportant for the spiritual world. For instance, our conventional means of reading or writing are, of course, not brought by the child (I have already discussed this from another point of view). Spirits do not write, nor do they read. They do not read in books nor write with a pen. It is only a creation of spiritual-

ists to think that spirits work with human language, or even write. What speech, or even writing contains is simply convention living upon the Earth. We do something good for the child only when we do not teach these conventions of reading and writing intellectually, but instead implant reading and writing into the child through the chest and limbs.

Of course, we have not simply left the children in their cradles before they are seven years old and begin elementary school. They have done things and through imitating adults have helped themselves along so that, in a certain sense, their head-spirit has awakened. When children begin elementary school, we can use what they have already awakened in their head-spirit to teach reading and writing in the conventional way. But then we begin to damage this head-spirit through our influence. For this reason, I have said that, to be good, the instruction of reading and writing must be based in art. We must first introduce elements of drawing and painting and music, because these affect the human limb and chest aspects and affect only indirectly the head. However, they do awaken what is in the head. You do not torture the head aspect in the way we do if we simply teach reading and writing in the intellectual, conventional way. If we first allow children to draw and then develop letters from their drawings, we teach the children from the limbs to the head. We show them an f, for example. If we make children look at the f and copy it, we act upon intellect, and then the intellect trains the will. This is the wrong way. The proper way is to do as much as possible through the will to awaken the intellect. We can do this only if we begin with the artistic and then go on to forming the intellect. During the first years of teaching, when we first receive the children, we must teach them reading and writing in an artistic way.

You must realize that while you are teaching children, they have things to do other than what you are doing with them. Children have all kinds of things to do which belong only indirectly to your domain. Children must grow. They must grow, and you need to be clear that while you are teaching, children must grow properly. What does that mean? It means that you should not disturb growth through your teaching; you should not engage children in anything

that would disturb their growth. Your teaching must work in parallel with the needs of growth. What I have to say here is particularly important for the elementary school years. In the same way that what arises from the head before the change of teeth is connected with the creation of form, what occurs during the period of elementary schooling is the development of life, that is, growth and everything connected with it until puberty. The development of life arising out of the chest activity concludes only at puberty. Thus, during the development in elementary school, your primary concern is with the human chest aspect. You cannot be successful unless you realize that while you are teaching children, they develop through the chest organism. In a certain sense, you must be a comrade of nature, since nature develops children through the chest, that is, through breathing, nutrition, movement, and so forth.

[*Foundations of Human Experience*, pp. 178-180.]

2. From *Practical Advice to Teachers* (1919)

My dear friends, first we must make the distinction that the lectures on education in general differ from those in this course, which will deal more with specific teaching methods. I would also like to say a few words as an introduction, since the methods we will use differ from the prevalent teaching methods, which are based on premises very different from ours. Our own methods will certainly not differ from the other methods applied so far merely out of obstinacy, for the sake of being new or different. They will be different because we must begin to see the special tasks of our age and how we must teach so that future humanity can fulfill the developmental impulses prescribed by the universal cosmic order.

We must realize above all that by employing our method we will, in a certain way, harmonize the higher human being (the human spirit and soul) with the physical body (our lower being). The subjects you teach will not be treated as they have been up to now. In a way, you must use them to develop the soul and physical forces of the individual correctly. The important thing for you is not to transmit information as such but to utilize knowledge to develop human capacities. First and foremost, you must begin to distinguish

between the conventional subject matter of tradition (though this may not be stated clearly and concisely) and knowledge based on the recognition of universal human nature. When you teach children reading and writing today, simply consider the place of reading and writing in culture as a whole. We read, but the art of reading evolved through the development of culture. The shapes of our letters and the connections among their shapes are purely a matter of convention. By teaching children reading as it exists today, we teach them something that means absolutely nothing to them as human beings, apart from its context within a particular cultural period. We must be aware that nothing we practice in terms of material culture has any direct significance whatsoever for supraphysical humankind or for the supraphysical world. The belief advocated in certain quarters (especially among spiritualists) is that spirits use human script to bring the suprasensory into the physical world; in reality, this is incorrect. Human writing is derived from human activity and convention on the physical plane. Spirits are not the least interested in complying with such physical conventions. Although it is true that spirits communicate with us, they do so only through the medium of a person who fulfills a kind of translation function; spirits do not themselves directly transform what lives in them into a form that can be written and read. The reading and writing you teach children is based on convention; it came about within the realm of physical life itself.

Teaching children arithmetic is a very different matter. You get the sense that the most important thing in arithmetic is not the shapes of the numbers but the reality living in them. This living reality has much more meaning for the spiritual world than what lives in reading and writing. Finally, if we begin to teach children various activities that we may call artistic, we enter an area that has a definite, eternal meaning—something that reaches up into the activity of the human spirit and soul. In teaching children reading and writing, we work in the most exclusively physical domain; in arithmetic our teaching becomes less physical; and in music or drawing, or in related fields, we really teach the children's soul and spirit. In a rationally conducted lesson we can combine these three impulses of the supraphysical in artistic activity, the partially supraphysical in arithmetic, and the com-

pletely physical in reading and writing. In this way, we harmonize the human being. Imagine, for example, approaching a child by saying, “You have seen a fish, haven’t you?” (Today I am merely introducing the subject, just touching on certain points aphoristically.) “Try to remember what the fish looked like when you saw it. If I do this on the blackboard, it looks very like a fish, doesn’t it?”



“The fish you saw looked something like this drawing on the blackboard. Imagine you wanted to say ‘fish.’ What you say when you speak the word *fish* is present in this sign [on the left]. Now try not to say ‘fish,’ but only *start* to say it.” Here we try to teach the child only to begin the word *fish*—“*f.f.f.*” “There, you see, you have started to say ‘fish.’ Now suppose people in ancient times gradually began to simplify this sign [see right sketch]. When you start to say ‘fish,’ *f.f.f.* you express this in writing by making only this sign. People call this sign *f*. So you have learned that what you express by saying ‘fish’ begins with *f*. Now you write it down as *f*. Whenever you start writing ‘fish,’ you breathe *f.f.f.* with your breath. So you learn the sign for when you start to say ‘fish.’”

When you begin by appealing to children’s nature this way, you really transport them to earlier cultural ages, because this is the way writing originally came about. Later on, the process became a mere convenience, so we no longer recognize the relationship between the abstract shapes of letters and the images that came about purely through things that were seen and reproduced as drawings. All letters arose from such image forms. And now consider that if you teach the child only what is conventional by saying “This is how you make an *f*” what you teach is purely derivative and unrelated to any human context. This is how we divorce writing from its original context,

the medium of art. So we begin to teach writing by using art and by drawing forms; we use the forms of consonants when we want to reach back far enough that children will be moved by the differences in the forms. It is not enough to tell the children merely through speaking, which is exactly why people are the way they are today. By removing the shapes of letters from the current convention and showing their source, we move the whole being of the child, who thus becomes very different than would otherwise be the case if we appeal only to the intellect. We must not allow ourselves to think only in abstractions. Instead, we must teach art in drawing and so on, teach soul substance in arithmetic, and teach reading and use art to teach the conventional in writing. In other words, we must permeate all of our teaching with an element of art.

From the very beginning we will have to greatly emphasize our encouragement of children's artistic capacities. The artistic element especially affects the human will in a powerful way. So we arrive at what is related to the whole human being, whereas everything related to convention remains in the realm of the head. So we proceed in a way that enables every child to draw and paint. We start with the simplest level, with drawing and painting. We also begin by cultivating music so that children quickly become accustomed to handling a musical instrument; this also generates an artistic feeling in children. From this, children also learn to sense in their whole being what would otherwise be mere convention.

Our task is to find teaching methods that continually engage the whole human being. We would not succeed in this endeavor if we failed to concentrate on developing the human sense of art. By developing this sense we lend strength to the future inclination of children to become interested in the world in ways that are appropriate to each individual's total being. The fundamental flaw so far has been the way people inhabit the world with only the head, and the rest of their being merely trails along behind. Consequently, those other human aspects are now guided by animal urges that indulge only untamed emotions, which we are currently experiencing in what we see spreading so strangely from the eastern part of Europe. This phenomenon arose because people have not been nurtured in

their wholeness. It is not simply a matter of cultivating the artistic aspect; our teaching itself, in every subject, must be drawn from the artistic realm. Every method must be permeated by the artistic element. Education must become a true art. The subject of the lesson itself should not become more important than the underlying basis. Drawing thus provides first the written forms of letters and then their printed forms. Based on drawing, we build up to reading. As you will see, this is how we strike a chord with which the souls of children happily vibrate, because they are then no longer interested in the external aspects but see, for example, how a breathed sound is expressed in reading and writing.

Consequently, we will have to rearrange much of how we teach. You will find that what we aim at in reading and writing today cannot, of course, be established exclusively as indicated here; all we can do is awaken the necessary forces as a basis. If we were to base our teaching only on the process of drawing evolving toward reading and writing (modern life being what it is), we would have to keep the children in school until they were twenty. The normal period of education would not be enough. All we can do now is accomplish our method in *principle* while continuing to educate the children and retaining the artistic element.

After working through the letters in this way for a while, we must make the children understand that adults are able to discover meaning in these strange shapes. While cultivating what the child has learned from isolated instances we go on (regardless of whether the details have been understood) to writing whole sentences. In sentences the children will notice shapes, for example, the *f* they are familiar with in *fish*. They will notice other shapes as well that cannot be addressed individually, because there will not be enough time. The next step is to write the various printed letters on the blackboard, and then one day we put a whole long sentence on the board and say to the children, "This is what adults see when they have formed everything in the way we formed the *f* in *fish*." Then we teach them to copy the writing. Make sure that what they see passes through their hands, so that they not only read with their eyes but also form what they read with their hands. In this way they come to know that they themselves can give

form to whatever is on the blackboard. We do not let the children learn to read unless they can form what they see with their hands, both handwritten and printed letters. We thus accomplish something that is very important—children never read with their eyes only, but the activity of the eyes passes mysteriously into the whole activity of their limbs. Children then feel unconsciously, all the way into their legs, what would otherwise pass only through their eyes. Our aim is to interest the *whole* human being in this activity. Afterward we may reverse the procedure. We can fragment the sentence we have written, break up the words, and show the forms of the letters we have not yet derived from their elements; we go from the whole to its parts. For example, if we have written the word *head*, the children learn to write *head* simply by copying it. Then we separate the word into its letters, *h-e-a-d*, and thus go from the whole to its parts.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 1-7.]

A question concerning the pictures used for sounds and letters—for example, the f in fish, mentioned in the first lecture of Practical Advice to Teachers, which was given in the morning.

Rudolf Steiner. One must find such things, these *pictures* for example, for oneself. Don't rely on what other people have already done. Put your own free, but controlled, imagination to work, and have faith in what you find for yourselves; you can do the same thing for letters that express motion, the letter *s* for example. Work it out for yourselves.

[*Discussions with Teachers*, p. 24.]



Let us now turn to the next step. We shall assume that you have continued for a while in the exercises with crayons and paints. If what is learned is to be built on good foundations, it is essential that learning to write be preceded by concentration on drawing, so that writing can, to some extent, be derived from drawing. It is also essential that reading print be derived from reading handwriting. We will try to find the transition from drawing to writing, from writing to reading handwriting, and from reading handwriting to reading print. Let us

assume that you have reached the stage where the children are finding their feet in drawing and have mastered to some extent how to make the curved and straight forms that will be needed in writing. We now seek the transition to what we have described as the basis for writing and reading lessons. Today I will start with a few examples of how you might proceed. We assume that the children have reached the point where they can master straight and curved lines with their little hands. You then try to show them that there are such things as letters, a whole lot of them. We started with the *fish* and *f*. The sequence you follow is quite immaterial, and you need not proceed in alphabetical order; I will do so now merely so that you will have some sort of comprehensive record. Let us see what success we have in evolving writing and reading out of your own free imagination. I would now say to the children, "You know what a bath is." Let me here interject another point. It is very important in teaching to be cunning in a rational manner, that is, always to have something up your sleeve that can contribute unseen to the children's education. In this sense it is good to use the word *bath* for the step I am about to describe, so that while they are in school the children are reminded of a bath, of washing themselves, of cleanliness as such. It is good always to have a hidden purpose in the background, without actually mentioning it or masking it in admonishments. It is helpful to choose examples that compel the children to think of things that might also contribute to a moral and aesthetic attitude.

Then you continue, "You see, when grown-ups want to write down what a bath is they do it like this: 'bath.' This is the picture of what you express when you say, 'bath,' and mean a bath." Now I again let a number of the children copy this word, just copy it; whenever they are given a concept like this, it should go straight into their hands so that they take it in not just by looking but with their whole being. Then I say, "Watch how you start to say, 'bath'; let us look at the beginning of the word *bath*, *b*." The children have to be led from saying the whole word *bath* to just breathing the initial sound, as I illustrated with the fish. The next thing to make clear to them is that just as *bath* is the sign for the whole bath, so *b* is the sign for the beginning of the word *bath*.

Then I explain that a beginning like this can also be found in other words. I say, "If you say, 'band,' you also start like this; if you say, 'bow,' like the bow some people wear in their hair, you again start in the same way. Have you ever seen a bear in the zoo? When you begin to say, 'bear,' you breathe the same sound. All these words start with the same sound." In this way I try to lead the children from the whole word to the beginning of the word by finding the transition to the single sound or letter, always taking the initial letter from the whole word.

It is important that you yourself try to develop the initial letter in a meaningful way out of the drawing element. You will achieve this very well if you simply use your imagination. Just think that the people who first saw such animals as beavers and bears drew the



animal's back, with its hind paws on the ground and its forepaws lifted up. They drew an animal in the act of rising on its hind legs, and their drawing turned into a capital B. You will always find that the initial letter of a word is a drawing, an animal or plant form or some external object. You can give your imagination free reign; there is no need to delve into

cultural histories, which are incomplete in any case. The fact is that if you go back in history to the most ancient forms of Egyptian writing, which was still a type of sign writing, you find many copies of objects and animals in the letters. Not until the transition from the Egyptian to the Phoenician culture did the change take place that brought about the development of the picture into a sign representing a sound. It is this transition that the children must experience anew. Let us therefore gain a clear idea of the theory of it ourselves.

When writing first began to develop in ancient Egypt, every detail that was written down was written in picture writing; it was drawn, although the drawing had to be as simplified as possible. If someone employed in copying this picture writing made a mistake, if, for instance, a holy word was misrepresented, the scribe was condemned to death. We thus see how very, very seriously anything

connected with writing was taken in ancient Egypt. All writing at that time consisted of pictures of this kind. Then cultural life was taken up by the Phoenicians, who lived more firmly in the external world. They retained the initial picture of a word and transferred it to represent the sound.

Since we are not here to study Egyptian languages, let me give you an example that is valid for Egyptian and also easily adapted to our own language. The Egyptians knew that the form of the upper lip could depict the sound for *M*. They therefore took the sign for the letter *M* from the picture of the upper lip. From this sign the letter that we use for the beginning of the word *mouth* emerged, and the letter is also valid for any other word beginning with the same sound. In this way the picture sign for the beginning of a word became the sign for a sound. Because this principle was adhered to in the history and development of writing, it is also excellent for teaching, and we shall use it here. We shall endeavor to arrive at letters by starting with drawings. Just as we move from the fish with its two fins to the *f* and from the bear dancing on its hind legs to the capital letter *B*, so we move from the upper lip to the mouth and from the mouth to the capital letter *M*.

With our imagination we seek to pave the way for the child from drawing to writing. I told you that it is unnecessary to make extensive studies of the history of writing in order to find what you need. What you might discover through such studies will serve you far less in your teaching than what you find through your own soul activity and your own imagination. The kind of activity necessary for studying the history of writing would make you so dead that you would have a far less living influence on your students than you will have if you yourself arrive at the idea of deriving the *B* from the bear. Working things out for yourself will refresh you so much that what you tell your students will have a far more living effect than lesson material you find through historical research.



Looking at life and your teaching with these two aspects in mind, you must ask yourselves which is more important. Is it to take in a historical fact with great effort and then strenuously seek to weave it into your lessons or to have such agility of soul that you can invent your own examples to offer your students with your own enthusiasm? It will always give you joy, albeit a quiet joy, to transfer to a letter the shape you have made yourself out of some animal or plant. And your joy will live in what you your student become as they grow up.

Next we point out to the children that what they have found at the beginning of a word can also appear in the middle. You say, for instance: "You have all seen a little baby; when grown-ups want to write the word *baby*, they do it like this: 'BABY.' Here you can see that what you had at the beginning in *bear* is now at the beginning and in the middle in *baby*." [Rudolf Steiner used the German word *Rebe* (vine) as his example here, so I have freely adapted his meaning to an English word.—Trans.] You always use uppercase letters in the beginning so that the children can see the similarity to the picture. In this way you teach them that what they have learned about the beginning of a word can also be found in the middle of a word. This is another step in the process of dividing the whole into parts for them. You see that the important point for us in our endeavor to achieve a living rather than a dead teaching is always to start from the whole. Just as in arithmetic we start not from the addenda but from the sum, which we divide into parts, so here, too, we proceed from the whole to the parts. The great advantage of this method of teaching is that we are thus able to place the children in the world in a living way; the world is a totality, and the children maintain permanent links with the living whole if we progress as I have indicated. Having them learn the individual letters from pictures gives them a link with living reality. But you must never neglect to write the letter forms in such a way that they are seen to arise from the pictures, and you must always take into account that the consonants can be explained as pictures of external objects, but never the vowels. Your point of departure for the vowels is that they always render the inner being of human beings and their relationship to the external world.

For example, when you are teaching children the letter *A* [ah] you will say, "Think of the sun you see in the morning. Can any of you remember what you did when the sun rose this morning?" Perhaps some of the children will remember what they did. If none of them remember, they will have to be helped to recall how they must have stood there and, if the sunrise was very beautiful, they must have said, "Ah!" A note of feeling must be struck, calling forth the resonance that sounds in the vowel. Then you must try to tell them that when they stood like that and said, "Ah!" it was just as if a beam of sunlight from their inner being spread out from their mouths.

That which lives in you when you see the sunrise streams forth out of your inner being when you say, "Ah." But you do not let all of it stream out; you keep some of it back, and it becomes this sign. You should try to clothe in the form of a drawing what lies in the breath when a vowel is spoken. You will find drawings that can show in a picture how the signs for the vowels have come about. Primitive cultures do not have many vowels, not even the primitive cultures of today. The languages of primitive cultures are very rich in consonants; these people can express many more things in consonants than we know how to express. They even click their tongues and are skilled in articulating all sorts of complicated consonants, with only a hint of vowel sounds between. You will find African tribal people who make sounds resembling the crack of a whip and so on, while the vowels are only faintly heard. European travelers who meet these tribes usually sound their vowels much more strongly than the tribal peoples do.

We can always evolve the vowels out of drawing. For instance, by appealing to the children's feelings, you can try to make them imagine themselves in the following situation:

"Think what would happen if your brother or sister came to you and said something you did not understand at first. After a while you begin to understand what is meant. Then what do you say?" One of the children may answer, or you may



have to point out, that they would say, "*ee*" [*i* in German]. When we draw the shape of the sound *ee*, it seems to point toward what has been understood, though it is a somewhat rough expression. In

eurythmy you find it expressed very clearly. A simple line becomes “*i*”; the line should be fatter at the bottom and thinner at the top, but instead, we draw a line and express the thinner part with a smaller sign above it. In this way every vowel can be derived from the shape of the aspiration, out of the breath. Using this method, you will at first be teaching the children a kind of sign writing. You need not feel constrained about employing ideas that arouse feelings that really did live in the process of cultural development. You could say, “Have you ever seen a tall building with a dome on top? [Rudolf Steiner’s example here is *Dach* (roof). *Dome* fits the letter D so well that I have used it here and very slightly altered the text accordingly. – Trans.] A dome, *D*. You would have to make the *D* like this: \triangle

This writing seemed awkward, however, so people upended it and made *D*. Such ideas really are inherent in writing, and you can make use of them.



Now you proceed to the lowercase letters. You say, “After a while people did not want their writing to be so complicated, they wanted it to be simpler. So out of this sign *D*, which really ought to be \triangle , they made this sign, the lowercase *d*. You can most certainly evolve the existing letter shapes in this way out of figures you have taught the children in drawing. By always pointing out the transition from form to form and never teaching in an abstract way, you help the children progress so that they can find the genuine transition from the form derived from the drawing to the shape of the actual letter in handwriting. There are some individuals today who have recognized such things, though they are rare. There are educators who have pointed out that writing ought to be derived from drawing, but they proceed in a different manner from the one recommended here. Their starting point is the shape of the letters as they are today; instead of proceeding from the sign for the dancing bear to the *B*,

they try to lead the children from drawing to writing by cutting the *B* into separate lines and curves: D

They advocate an abstract version of what we are trying to do concretely. These educators are quite right in seeing that it would be practical to proceed from drawing to writing, but people today are too entangled in the deadwood of our culture to hit upon a clearly living way of going about things. Let me warn you at this point not to be taken in by all sorts of modern endeavors that might tempt you to say that efforts are being made here and there to do this and that. For you will always discover that the intentions do not have very deep foundations. Somehow people are constantly impelled to attempt such things, but they will not succeed until humankind has accepted spiritual science as a part of culture. We can always make a connection between the human being and the surrounding world by teaching writing in an organic way and teaching reading by starting with reading handwriting. It is natural to teaching that there is a certain yearning for complete freedom, and we should not dismiss this element. Notice how freedom flows into this discussion of how we might prepare ourselves to be teachers; our discussion intrinsically has something to do with freedom. I have pointed out that you should not fetter yourselves by toiling away at studying how writing came into being during the transition from Egyptian to Phoenician culture, that you must develop your own soul capacities. What can be done by this method of teaching will differ from teacher to teacher. Not everyone can use a dancing bear; someone might use a better example for the same purpose. One teacher, however, can achieve the final result just as well as another. All teachers give of themselves when they teach. In this, their freedom remains inviolate. The more teachers desire to preserve their freedom, the more they will be able to enter into their teaching by giving themselves.



But one thing that children do not want—certainly not during the change of teeth something they will reject with strong inner opposition—is to have to draw on a piece of paper, or on the chalkboard,

a peculiar sign that looks like this: *A*, only to be told that this is supposed to sound the same as what would spontaneously come from one's own mouth [Ah!] when seeing something especially wonderful! [In German, the letter *A* is pronounced *ah* as in father or star.] For such a sign has nothing whatever to do with the inner experience of a child. When a child sees a combination of colors, feelings are immediately stimulated. But if one puts something in front of a child that looks like FATHER, expecting an association with what is known and loved as the child's own father, then the inner being of the child can feel only opposition.

How have our written symbols come about? Think about the ancient Egyptians with their hieroglyphs that still retained some similarity to what they were intended to convey. Ancient cuneiform writing also still had some resemblance to what the signs signified, although these were more expressive of the will-nature of the ancient people who used them, whereas the Egyptian hieroglyphs expressed more of a feeling approach. The forms of these ancient writings, especially when meant to be read, brought to mind the likeness of what they represented from the external world. But what would children make of such weird and ornate signs on the chalkboard? What could they have to do with their own fathers? And yet the young pupils are expected to learn and work with these apparently meaningless symbols. No wonder that something in the child becomes resentful.

We must seriously consider this when children between twelve and fourteen years of age come to our school and, for the time being, we are expected to give them the finishing touches, so to speak. Great problems arise for us at the beginning and end of the school years. We must try to do justice, as much as possible, to the ideal curriculum, and we must do our utmost not to estrange the children too much from modern life. In the very first school year the curriculum contains a rather disastrous element. It is expected that children should achieve the aim of reading as much as possible, while little is required in the way of writing. Writing need only be started, but reading must be brought to the stage during the first year where the children can read pieces both in Gothic and Latin script that have been read with or to them. They must be able to do this in both Gothic and Latin script,

while relatively little is required in the way of writing. If we could educate in an ideal way, we would start with the forms of letters in the manner discussed, and then we would let the children gradually change the forms. After World War I, workers' councils of all kinds were established throughout Germany. Many of the Gothic characters differ radically from their Latin counterparts; both scripts were used for writing German during Steiner's time, which we have ourselves developed into the forms of handwritten characters. We will do this; we will not allow ourselves to be prevented from starting with drawing and painting and then evolving the written letters from drawing and painting. Only afterward will we proceed to the printed letters.

When the children have learned to recognize the handwritten letters, we will make the transition to printed letters. We will allow one mistake, however, because there will not be enough time in the first year to mold both the Gothic and the Latin scripts in this way and then go on to reading both scripts. This would overburden the first year of school too much. For this reason, we will follow the path from painting and drawing to writing the Gothic script and then make the transition from Gothic written to Gothic printed letters with simple reading. Then, without first deriving the Latin letters from drawing, we will move directly from printed German to printed Latin letters. We will work this out as a compromise. In order to do justice to true education we will develop writing from drawing, but on the other hand, so that the children can keep up with the requirements of the curriculum, we will also start them on elementary reading of texts in Latin print. This will be our task with respect to writing and reading. In these lectures on method I have already pointed out that once we have developed the forms of the letters to a certain degree, we will have to proceed more rapidly.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 1-7, 62-71, 167-168.]

3. From *The Renewal of Education* (1920)

As we have shown in practice at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, it is absolutely necessary to avoid beginning with an intellectually oriented education when children are seven or eight. Instead we need to work from the more artistic aspect. We do not teach writing in an

intellectual way, by working with the forms of the letters. Instead we teach it by beginning with a kind of primitive drawing. In that way, we develop the will more than the intellect, whereas the common way of teaching writing today speaks too strongly to the intellect. Thus we attempt to engage the entire human being. In that way, the individual one-sided talents balance out. [35]



We have, of course, the task of teaching the children to write, but today writing is a kind of artificial product of culture. It has arisen in the course of human development out of a pictorial writing and has become what we now have today, a purely conventional and abstract writing. If we try to gain a feeling for older writing, for instance Egyptian hieroglyphics, and to understand their basic character, we will see how people originally tended to reproduce the external world in their writing through drawing.

Writing and drawing things in the world are, in a way, also the basis of human speech development. Many theories have been put forward about the development of speech. There is, for instance—I am not making this up, they are called this in the technical papers—there is the so-called Ding-Dong Theory that assumes speech is a kind of model of some inner tonal qualities of our surroundings. Then there is the Bow-Wow Theory, which assumes that speech is based upon sounds produced by other beings in our surroundings. None of these theories, however, begin with a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of human nature. A sufficient comprehension of human nature, particularly one based upon a trained observation of children's speech, shows that human feeling is engaged in a much different way when learning the vowels. They are learned through feeling. If we train our own powers of observation, we will see how all vowels arise from certain human inner experiences that are like simple or more complicated interjections, expressions of feeling. Inwardly, we as human beings live in the vowels. People express external events in consonants. People copy external events through their own organs; nevertheless they reproduce them. Speech itself is a reproduction of

external events through consonants, and vowels provide the color. Thus, writing is, in its origins, a pictorial reproduction.

If, as is done today, we teach conventionalized writing to children, it can affect only the intellect. For that reason, we should not actually begin with learning to write, but with an artistic comprehension of those forms that are then expressed through writing or printing.

If you are not very clever, you can proceed by taking Egyptian hieroglyphics or some other pictorial writing, then developing certain forms out of it in order to arrive at today's conventional letter forms. But that is not necessary. We do not need to hold ourselves to such strict realism. We can try to discover for ourselves such lines in modern letter forms that make it possible for us to give the children some exercises in movements of the hands or fingers. If we have the children draw one line or another without regard to the fact that they should become letters, or allow them to gain an understanding throughout their entire being for round or angular forms, horizontal or vertical lines, we will bring the children a dexterity directed toward the world.

Through this approach, we can also achieve something that is extraordinarily important psychologically. At first we do not even teach writing but guide the children into a kind of artistic drawing that we can develop even further into painting, as we do at the Waldorf School. That way the children also develop a living relationship to color and harmony in youth, something they are very receptive to at the age of seven or eight. If we allow children to enjoy this artistically taught instruction in drawing, aside from the fact that it also leads to writing, we will see how they need to move their fingers or perhaps the entire arm in a certain way that begins not simply from thinking, but from a kind of dexterity. Thereby the I begins to allow the intellect to develop as a consequence of the entire human being. The less we train the intellect and the more we work with the entire human being so that the dexterity of the intellect arises out of the movements of the limbs, the better it is.

If you visit the handwork classes at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, you will perhaps find it somewhat paradoxical when you see that both boys and girls sit together and knit and crochet, and further, that everyone not only does "women's work" but also "men's work."

Why is that? The success of this approach can be seen in the fact that boys, when they are not artificially restricted from doing the work, take the same joy in these activities as the girls. Why is that? If we know that we do not develop our intellect by simply going directly to some intellectual education, if we know that someone who moves their fingers in a clumsy way also has a clumsy intellect, has inflexible ideas and thoughts, and those who know how to properly move their fingers also have flexible thoughts and ideas and can enter into the real nature of things, then we will not underestimate the importance of developing external capabilities. The goal is to develop the intellect to a large extent from how we work externally as human beings.

Educationally, it is an enormously important moment when we allow the written forms that are the basis of reading to spring out of what we have created artistically. Thus instruction in the Waldorf School begins from a purely artistic point of view. We develop writing from art and then reading from writing. In that way, we completely develop the children in relation to those forces that slowly want to develop out of their nature. In truth we bring nothing foreign into the child. As a matter of course, around the age of nine the children are able to write from what they have learned in drawing and then go on to reading. This is particularly important, because when people work against rather than with the forces of human nature, they damage children for the rest of their lives. If, however, we do exactly what the child's nature wants, we can help human beings develop something fruitful for the rest of their lives.



Our teachers may not be satisfied when the children can draw a circle or a square or a triangle. Instead, our children need to learn how to feel a circle, triangle, or square. They need to draw a circle so that they have a feeling of roundness. They should learn to draw a triangle so that they have a feeling for the three corners and that when they have first drawn one corner they should feel that there will be three. In the same way, when they draw a square, they should have a feeling of the right angle, a feeling that is carried throughout the

whole drawing process from the very beginning. Our children need to learn what an arc is, what vertical or horizontal is, what a straight line is, not simply in seeing it, but an inner feeling of how the arm or the hand follows it. This is done as a basis for teaching writing. None of our children should learn to write a P without first having the experience of the vertical and an arc, not simply that a child has an abstract understanding of that, of the vertical and the arc, but a feeling for a felt experience of such things.

By slowly developing everything intellectual out of the artistic, that is, out of the entire human being, you will also develop the entire human being, people with real initiative, with a real force of life in their bodies. They will not be like people in our own population who no longer know where they are after they have done their final examinations. This is a real tragedy. If your professional task is to understand human beings, then it is possible that you can experience the following. You are, for example, to test someone around the age of twenty-five or thirty whether he is to receive a given position. You approach him with the expectation they should develop some initiative, particularly if he is to go into a practical profession. The person tells you, however, that you expect one thing or another but that he wants to go to India or to America in order to learn more about the profession. What that means is that he actually wants to move into the profession passively. He does not want to develop anything out of his own initiative, but instead wishes to have the opportunity that the world will make something of him. I know that saying this is something horrible for many people, but at the same time I am pointing out something we can see in people who have completed their education in the last decades. It has not developed a genuine initiative, initiative that reaches down into people's souls when it is necessary later in life. It is of course easy to say that we should develop initiative. The question is, though, how we do that, how we can arrange the material we are to present in education so that it acts not against initiative in the will, but strengthens it. [113-114]



And yet it is just this analytical activity that is normally taken too little into account in teaching and education. We are more likely to take the view that the external world demands synthesis. Consequently synthesizing is what is primarily taken into account rather than analyzing. This is very significant. If, for example, you want to pursue the idea of beginning with dialect when teaching language, it is clear how necessary it is to analyze. The child already has a dialect language. When we have the child speak some sentences, we then need to analyze what already exists in those sentences in order to derive the rules of speech formation from them. We can also develop the analytical activity in instruction much further.

I would like to draw your attention to something that you have probably already encountered in one form or another. What I am referring to is how, for example, when explaining letters we are not primarily involved in a synthetic but rather in an analytic activity. If I have a child say the word fish and then simply write the word on the blackboard, I attempt to teach the child the word without dividing it into separate letters. I might even attempt to have the child copy the word, assuming he or she has been drawing in the way I discussed previously. Of course the child has at this time no idea that there is an *f-i-s-h* within it. The child should simply imitate what I put on the board. Before I go on to the letters, I would often try to have the child copy complete words. Now I go on to the analysis. I would try to draw the child's attention to how the word begins with *f*. Thus, I analyze the *f* in the context of the word. I then do the same with the *i* and so forth. Thus we work with human nature as it is when, instead of beginning with letters and synthesizing them into words, we begin with whole words and analyze them into letters.

This is something we also need to take into account, particularly from the perspective of the development of the human soul in preparation for later life. As you all know, we suffer today under the materialistic view of the world. This perspective demands not only that we only accept material things as being valid. It also insists that we trace everything in the world back to the activities of atoms. It is unimportant whether we think of those atoms in the way people thought of them in the 1880s, that is, as small elastic particles made

up of some unknown material, or whether we think of them as people do today—as electrical forces or electrical centers of force. What is important in materialism is material itself, and when the tools of materialism are transferred to our view of the spirit and soul, we think of them as being composed of tiny particles and depending upon the activities of those particles. Today we have come so far that we are no longer aware that we are working with hypotheses. Most people believe it is a proven scientific fact that atoms form the basis of phenomena in the external world.

Why have people in our age developed such an inclination for atomism? Because they have developed insufficient analytical activities in children. If we were to develop in children those analytical activities that begin with unified word pictures and then analyze them into letters, the child would be able to activate its capacity to analyze at the age when it first wants to do so; it would not have to do so later by inventing atomic structures and so forth. Materialism is encouraged by a failure to satisfy our desire for analysis. If we satisfied the impulse to analyze in the way that I have described here, we would certainly keep people from sympathizing with the materialistic worldview.

For this reason in the Waldorf School we always teach beginning not with letters, but with complete sentences. We analyze the sentence into words and the words into letters and then the letters into vowels. In this way we come to a proper inner understanding as the child grasps the meaning of what a sentence or word is. We awaken the child's consciousness by analyzing sentences and words.

[*Renewal of Education*, pp. 88-91, 169-171, 113-114.]

4. From *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education* (1921)

When children enter class one and we are expected to teach them writing as soon as possible, we might be tempted to introduce the letters of the alphabet as they are used today. But the forms of these letters are something with which the child of this age just after the onset of the change of teeth has not the slightest inner connection. How was it then, at the time when such a direct human relationship to the written letters still existed? To find the answer we need only

look at what happened in early civilizations. In those ancient days primitive man engraved images on tablets or painted pictures which still bore a resemblance to what he had seen in nature. There still was a direct human link between outer objects and their written forms. As civilization progressed, these forms became more and more abstract until, after having undergone many transformations, they finally emerged as today's letters of the alphabet, which no longer bear any direct human relationship to the person writing them.

But the young child who, in many ways, shows us how men of earlier civilizations experienced the world, needs a direct connection with whatever we demand from its will activities. Therefore, when introducing writing, we must refrain from teaching today's abstract letter forms straight away. Especially at the time of changing teeth must we offer the child a human and artistic bridge to whatever we teach. This implies that we allow the child to link what it has seen with its eyes to the result of its own will activity on paper, which we call writing. Experiencing life through his/her own will activities is a primary need of the child at this stage. We must give the child an opportunity to give vent to this innate artistic drive by, for example, letting him/her run a curve (see diagram).



When we draw the child's attention to the fact that his/her legs have run such a curve on the floor, we lift up his/her will activity into a semiconscious feeling. The next step would be to ask the child to draw the curve he/she had run into the air, using his/her arm and hand. Now another form could be run on the floor, again to be "written" into the air.

Thus the form which in the first instance was made by the entire body of the running child, was subsequently reproduced merely by the use of his/her hand. This could be followed by the teacher asking the child to pronounce words beginning with the letter "L." Gradually, under his or her guidance, the child will find the



link between the shape he or she has run and drawn, and the sound of the appropriate letter “L.”

Only after the experience of his/her own inner movement is the child led to the drawing of the actual letters. This would be one way of proceeding, but there is also another possibility. After the change

of teeth the child inwardly is not only a musician but, as an echo from earlier stages, he/she has remained also an inner sculptor. Therefore one can begin by talking to the child about the fish, gradually leading over artistically to its outer form, which the child will draw. Then, appealing to his/her sense of sound, one directs his or her attention from the whole word *fish* to the initial sound “F,” in this way relating the shape of the letter to its sound.

This method, at least to a certain extent, even follows the historical development of the letter “F.” There is, however, no need to restrict ourselves to actual historical examples, it is certainly right for us to use our own imagination. What matters is not that the child recapitulates the evolution of the actual letters, but that it finds its way into writing through the artistic activity of drawing pictures which finally will lead to today’s abstract letter forms. For instance, one could remind the children of how water makes waves, drawing a picture of this kind,



and gradually changing it into



of teeth the child inwardly is not only a musician but, as an echo from earlier stages, he/she has remained also an inner sculptor. Therefore one can begin by talking to the child about the fish, gradually leading over artistically to its outer form, which the child will draw. Then, appealing to



Repeating words such as, “Washing Waves of Water-Waving, Washing Water,” while at the same time drawing the form, one links the sound of the letter “W” to its written form. Taking one’s start with the child’s own life experience, one leads over from the activity of drawing to the final letter forms.

Following our Waldorf method, the children won’t learn to write as quickly as they do in other schools. In the Waldorf School we hold regular meetings for parents without their children, in which they are invited to discuss the effects of Waldorf education with their teachers. In such meetings some parents have expressed their anxieties about the fact that their children even at the age of eight, are still unable to write properly. We have to show them that our slower approach is really a blessing, because it allows the child to integrate the art of writing with its whole being. We try to convince them that in our school the child learns writing at the right age and in a far more humane manner than if he or she had to absorb something essentially alien to his/her own nature; alien because it represents the end product of a long cultural evolution. We must help our parents to see the importance of an immediate and direct response in the child to the introduction of writing. Naturally we have to provide our pupils with the tools of learning, but we must always do so by adapting our content to the nature of the child.

[*Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, pp. 147-151.]

5. From *Spiritual Ground of Education* (1922)

If you consider the letters we now use for reading and writing, you will realize that there is no connection between what a seven-year old child is naturally disposed to do and these letters. Remember, that when men first began to write they used painted or drawn signs which copied things or happenings in the surrounding world; or else men wrote from out of will impulses, so that the forms of writing gave expression to processes of the will, as for example in cuneiform. The entirely abstract forms of letters which the eye must gaze at nowadays, or the hand form, arose from out of picture writing. If we confront a young child with these letters we are bringing to him an alien thing,

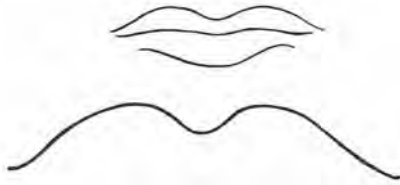
a thing which in no wise conforms to his nature. Let us be clear what this pushing of a foreign body into a child's organism really means. It is just as if we habituated the child from his earliest years to wearing very small clothes, which do not fit and which therefore damage his organism. Nowadays when observation tends to be superficial, people do not even perceive what damage is done to the organism by the mere fact of introducing reading and writing to the child in a wrong way. An art of education founded in a knowledge of man does truly proceed by drawing out all that is in the child. It does not merely say: the individuality must be developed, it really does it. And this is achieved, firstly by not taking reading as the starting point. For with a child the first things are movements, gestures, expressions of will, not perception or observation. These come later. Hence it is necessary to begin, not with reading, but with writing—a writing which shall come naturally from man's whole being.

Hence, we begin with writing lessons, not reading lessons, and we endeavor to lead over what the child does of his own accord out of imitation, through his will, through his hands, into writing. Let me make it clear to you by an example: We ask the child to say the word "fish," for instance, and while doing so, show him the form of the fish in a simple sketch; then ask him to copy it; thus we get the child to experience the word "fish." From "fish" we pass to $f(F)$, and from the form of the fish we can gradually evolve the letter f . Thus we derive the form of the letter by an artistic activity which carries over what is observed into what is willed.



By this means we avoid introducing an utterly alien F , a thing which would affect the child like a demon, something foreign thrust into his body; and instead we call forth from him the thing he has seen himself in the market place. And this we transform little by little into f .

In this way we come near to the way writing originated, for it arose in a manner similar *to* this. But there is no need for the teacher to make a study of antiquity and exactly reproduce the way picture writing arose so as to give it in the same manner to the child. What is necessary is to give the rein to living fantasy and to produce afresh whatever can lead over from the object, from immediate life, to the letter forms. You will then find the most manifold ways of deriving the letter form for the child from life itself. While you say *M* let him feel how the *M* vibrates on the lips, then get him to see the shape of the lips as form, then you will be able to pass over gradually from the *M* that vibrates on the lips to *M*.



In this way, if you proceed spiritually, imaginatively, and not intellectually, you will gradually be able to derive from the child's own activity, all that leads to his learning to write. He will learn to write later and more slowly than children commonly do today. But when parents come and say: My child is eight or nine years old and cannot yet write properly, we must always answer: What is learned more slowly at any given age is more surely and healthily absorbed by the organism, than what is crammed into it.

Along these lines, moreover, there is scope for the individuality of the teacher, and this is an important consideration. As we now have many children in the Waldorf School we have had to start parallel classes—thus we have two first classes, two second classes and so on. If you go into one of the first classes you will find writing being taught by way of painting and drawing. You observe how the teacher is doing it. For instance, it might be just as we have been describing here. Then you go into the other Class I, Class I-B; and you find another teacher teaching the same subject. But you see something quite different. You find the teacher letting the children run round in a kind

of eurythmy, and getting them to experience the form from out of their own bodily movements. Then what the child runs is retained as the form of the letter. And it is possible to do it in yet a third and a fourth manner. You will find the same subject taught in the most varied ways in the different parallel classes. Why? Well, because it is not a matter of indifference whether the teacher who has to take a lesson has one temperament or another. The lesson can only be harmonious when there is the right contact between the teacher and the whole class. Hence every teacher must give his lesson in his own way. And just as life appears in manifold variety so can a teaching founded in life take the most varied forms.

Usually, when pedagogic principles are laid down it is expected that they shall be carried out. They are written down in a book. The good teacher is he who carries them out punctiliously, 1, 2, 3, etc. Now I am convinced that if a dozen men, or even fewer, sit down together they can produce the most wonderful program for what should take place in education; firstly, secondly, thirdly, etc. People are so wonderfully intelligent nowadays; I am not being sarcastic, I really mean it, one can think out the most splendid things in the abstract. But whether it is possible to put into practice what one has thought out is quite another matter. That is a concern of life. And when we have to deal with life, I ask you now, life is in all of you, natural life, you are all human beings, yet you all look different. No one man's hair is like another's. Life displays its variety in the manifold varieties of form. Each man has a different face. If you lay down abstract principles, you expect to find the same thing done in every classroom. If your principles are taken from life, you know that life is various, and that the same thing can be done in the most varied ways. ... When the art of education is held as a living art, all pedantry and also every kind of formalism must be avoided. And education will be true when it is really made into an art, and when the teacher is made into an artist. It is thus possible for us in the Waldorf School to teach writing by means of art. Then reading can be learned afterwards almost as a matter of course, without effort. It comes rather later than is customary, but it comes almost of itself.

[*Spiritual Ground of Education*, pp. 61-65.]

6. From *The Child's Changing Consciousness* (1923)

We should not be disheartened because the child at each developmental stage reacts specifically to what the external world—that is we, the teachers—wishes to bring, even if this may assume the form of a certain inner opposition. Naturally, since consciousness has not awakened sufficiently at that age, the child is unaware of any inner resistance. In keeping with their own nature, children, having gone through the change of teeth, demand lesson content that has form and coloring that satisfies what is overflowing from their organisms. I will speak more about this later.

But one thing that children do not want—certainly not during the change of teeth—something they will reject with strong inner opposition—is to have to draw on a piece of paper, or on the chalkboard, a peculiar sign that looks like this: *A*, only to be told that this is supposed to sound the same as what would spontaneously come from one's own mouth [Ah!] when seeing something especially wonderful! [In German, the letter *A* is pronounced “*ah*” as in “father” or “star.” –Trans.] For such a sign has nothing whatever to do with the inner experience of a child. When a child sees a combination of colors, feelings are immediately stimulated. But if one puts something in front of a child that looks like FATHER, expecting an association with what is known and loved as the child's own father, then the inner being of the child can feel only opposition.

How have our written symbols come about? Think about the ancient Egyptians with their hieroglyphs that still retained some similarity to what they were intended to convey. Ancient cuneiform writing also still had some resemblance to what the signs signified, although these were more expressive of the will-nature of the ancient people who used them, whereas the Egyptian hieroglyphs expressed more of a feeling approach. The forms of these ancient writings, especially when meant to be read, brought to mind the likeness of what they represented from the external world. But what would children make of such weird and ornate signs on the chalkboard? What could they have to do with their own fathers? And yet the young pupils are expected to learn and work with these apparently meaningless symbols. No wonder that something in the child becomes resentful.

When children are losing their baby teeth, they feel least connected with the kind of writing and reading prevalent in our present stage of civilization, because it represents the results of stylization and convention. Children, who have only recently come into the world, are suddenly expected to absorb the final results of all of the transformations that writing and reading have gone through. Even though nothing of the many stages of cultural progress that have evolved throughout the ages has yet touched the children, they are suddenly expected to deal with signs that have lost any connection between our modern age and ancient Egypt. Is it any wonder, then, if children feel out of touch?

But reading and writing are activities that are, initially, very alien to children at around the seventh year. Please do not conclude from what I have said that children should not be taught to read and write. Of course they must learn this because, after all, we do not educate the young for our benefit, but for life. The point is, how should this be done without countering human nature? We shall go into this question more thoroughly during the next few days. But, generally speaking, it is good if educators realize how alien many things are to a child's soul, things that we take from contemporary life and teach because we feel it is necessary for the children to know them. [59-61]

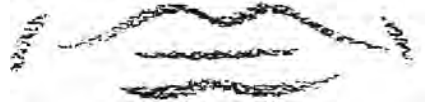


When children enter school, we are very likely to meet a certain inner opposition, mainly toward reading and writing, as mentioned yesterday. Try to see the situation through a child's eyes. There stands a man. He has black or blond hair. He has a forehead, nose, eyes. He has legs. He walks, and he holds something in his hands. He says something. He has his own thought-life. This is father. And now the child is supposed to accept that this sign, FATHER represents an actual father. There is not the slightest reason why a child should do so. Children bring formative forces with them, forces eager to flow out of the organism. Previously, these forces were instrumental in effecting the wonderful formation of the brain with its attendant nervous system. They accomplished the wonderful formation of the

second teeth. One should become modest and ask how one could possibly create, out of one's own resources, these second teeth on the basis of the first baby teeth; what sublime powers of wisdom, of which we are totally unaware, work in all these forces! The child was entirely surrendered to this unconscious wisdom weaving through the formative forces. Children live in space and time, and now, suddenly, they are supposed to make sense of everything that is imposed on them by learning to read and write.

It is not proper to lead children directly into the final stages of our advanced culture. We must lead them in harmony with what wants to flow from their own being. The right way of introducing the child to reading and writing is to allow the formative forces—which up to its seventh year have been working upon the physical organization and which now are being released for outer soul activities—to become actively engaged. For example, instead of presenting the child directly with letters or even complete words, you draw something looking like this.

In this way, by appealing to the formative forces in its soul, you will find that now the child can remember something that has actual meaning, something already grasped by the child's formative forces. Such a child will tell you, "That is a mouth." And now you can ask it to say, "Mmmouth."



Then you ask it to leave out the end part of the word, gradually getting the child to pronounce "Mmm." Next you can say, "Let us paint what you have just said." We have left something out, therefore this is what we paint.

And now let us make it even simpler:

It has become the letter *M*.



Or we might draw something looking like this.



The child will say, “Fish.” The teacher responds, “Let’s make this fish simpler.” Again one will ask the child to sound only the first letter, in this way obtaining the letter *F*. And so, from these pictures, we lead to abstract letter forms.

There is no need to go back into history to show how contemporary writing evolved from ancient pictography. For our pedagogical purposes it is really unneces-



sary to delve into the history of civilization. All we have to do is find our way—helped along by wings of fantasy—into this method, and then, no matter what language we speak, choose some characteristic words that we then transform into pictures and finally derive the actual letters from them. In this way we work together with what the child wants inwardly during and immediately after the change of teeth. From this you will understand that, after having introduced writing by drawing a painting and by painting a drawing (it is good for children to use color immediately because they live in color, as everyone who deals with them knows), one can then progress to reading. This is because the entire human being is active in writing. The hand is needed, and the whole body has to adapt itself—even if only to a slight degree; the entire person is involved. Writing, when evolved through painting-drawing, is still more concrete than reading.

[*The Child's Changing Consciousness*, pp. 59-61, 73-76.]

7. From *A Modern Art of Education* (1923), 1972 edition

In the previous lectures I have shown that when the child reaches the usual school age at the transitional time of the change of teeth, all teaching should be given in an artistic, pictorial form. Today, I propose to carry further the ideas already put before you and to show how this method appeals directly to the child’s life of heart and feeling, and out of this life develops everything.

Let us take a few characteristic examples to show how writing can be derived from the artistic element of painting and drawing. I have already said that if a system of education is to harmonize with

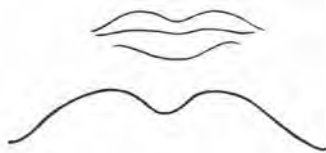
the natural development of the human organism, the child must be taught to write before he learns to read. The reason for this is that in writing the whole being is more active than is the case in reading. Writing entails the movement of only one particular member, but fundamentally speaking, the forces of the whole being must lend themselves to this movement. In reading, only the head and the intellect are engaged, and in a truly organic system of education we must develop everything out of the qualities and forces of the child's whole nature.

We will assume that we have been able to give the child some idea of flowing water; he has learnt to form a mental picture of waves and flowing water. We now proceed to make the child attentive to the initial sound, the initial letter of the word "wave." Thus we turn our attention to the initial letter of characteristic words as we speak them out.

We indicate that the surface of water rising into waves follows this line.



And from making the movement of this line, we bring the child to drawing it, and so to making the *W*. The child is thus introduced to the form of the letter "W" in writing. The *W* has arisen from the picture of a wave. In the first place the child is given a mental picture or pictures which can lead over to the letters which he then learns to write. We may let the child draw the form of the mouth:



and then we introduce to him the first letter of the word "mouth." In one of our evening talks I gave you another example. (*Between the lectures there were meetings for discussion and questions, at which Rudolf Steiner often spoke.*) The child draws the form of a fish; when

the fundamental form is firmly in his mind, we pass on to the initial letter of the word “fish.”



A great many letters can be treated in this way; others will have to be derived somewhat differently. Suppose, for instance, we give the child an imaginative idea of the movement of the sounding wind. This is the better way with little children, though, of course, there are many possibilities. We describe the on-rushing wind and let the child imitate its sound and so come to such a form as this:



Thus by holding fast in painting the form of definitely shaped objects, movements or even activities, we can develop nearly all the consonants.

In the case of the vowels we must rather turn to gesture, for the vowels are an expression of man's inner being. “A” (ah), for example, inevitably contains an element of wonder, of astonishment. Eurythmy will prove to be of great assistance here, for there we have gestures that truly correspond to feeling. The “I,” the “A” and all the other vowels can be drawn from the corresponding gesture in eurythmy, for the vowels must be derived from movements that accompany the feelings out of the life of the human being.

In this way we can proceed to the abstract nature of writing from the entirely concrete elements of painting-drawing, drawing-painting. We then succeed in making the child start from feeling called up by a picture; he then becomes able to relate to the actual letters the quality

of soul contained in the feeling. The principle underlying writing thus arises from the feeling life of the soul.

When we come to reading, our efforts must simply be in the direction of getting the child to recognize and this time in his head of what has already been elaborated through the bodily forces as a whole. Reading is then recognized as an activity in which he has already been employed. This is of the very greatest significance. The whole process of development is spoiled if the child is led straight away to what is abstract, if he is taught to carry out any activity by means of a purely mental concept. On the other hand, a healthy growth will always ensue if the actual activity is introduced first, and the idea is only afterwards unfolded out of the activity. Reading is essentially a mental act. Therefore, if reading is taught first, and not after writing, the child is prematurely involved in a process of development exclusively concerned with the head instead of with the forces of his whole being.

By such methods as these, education can be guided into a sphere that embraces the whole man into the realm of art. This must indeed be the aim of all our teaching up to the age of about nine and a half. Pictures, rhythms, measure, these qualities must pervade all our teaching. Everything else is premature. It is for this reason utterly impossible before this age to convey anything to the child in which strong distinctions are made between himself and the outer world. The child only begins to realize himself as a being apart from the outer world between the ninth and tenth year. Hence, when he first comes to school, we must make all outer things appear as living beings. We shall not merely speak of the plants, but we shall speak of them as living beings, as holding converse with us and with each other in such a way that the child's outlook on nature and man is filled with imagination. The plants, the trees, the clouds all speak to him, and at this age he must really feel no separation between himself and the outer world., We must give him the feeling in an artistic way that just as he himself can speak, so everything that surrounds him also speaks.

The more we enable the child thus to flow out into his whole environment, the more vividly we describe plant, animal, and stone,

so that in them weaving, articulate spirituality is wafted towards him, the more adequately do we respond to the demands of his innermost being in these early years. They are years when the feeling life of the soul must flow into the processes of breathing and of the circulation of the blood and into the whole vascular system indeed into the whole human organism. If we educate in this sense, the child's life of feeling will be called on in a way right for our times, so that the child will develop strongly and naturally in his organism and life of soul.

It is of incalculable benefit to the child if we develop this element of feeling in writing and then allow a faint echo of the intellect to enter as he rediscovers in reading what he has already experienced in writing. There is then a gentle accompaniment from the intellect. This is the very best way of leading the child on towards his ninth year.

Between the ages of seven and nine or nine-and-a-half, it is essential that the teaching shall make a direct appeal to the element of feeling. The child must receive the various forms of the letters into his life of feeling. This is very important. We harden the child's nature unduly, we over-strengthen the forces of bone and cartilage and sinew in relation to the rest of the organism, if we teach him to write mechanically, making him trace arbitrary curves and lines for the letters, making use only of his bodily mechanism without calling upon the eye as well.

If we also call upon the eye, and the eye is of course connected with the movements of the hand, by developing the letters in an artistic way, so that the letter does not spring from merely mechanical movements of the hand, the eye itself will take pleasure in the results of its own activity. Qualities of the soul are thus brought rightly into play, and the life of feeling develops at an age when it can best flow into the physical organism with healing power.

[*Modern Art of Education*, 1972, pp. 135-43.]

8. From *The Essentials of Education* (1924)

When we read modern books on embryology, botany, or zoology, we feel a sense of despair in finding ourselves immediately forced to plunge into a cold intellectuality. Although the life and the development of nature are not essentially "intellectual," we have to

deliberately and consciously set aside every artistic element. Once we have read a book on botany written according to strict scientific rules, our first task as teachers is to rid ourselves of everything we found there. Obviously, we must assimilate the information about botanical processes, and the sacrifice of learning from such books is necessary; but in order to educate children between the change of teeth and puberty, we must eliminate what we found there, transforming everything into artistic, imaginable forms through our own artistic activity and sensibility. Whatever lives in our thoughts about nature must fly on the wings of artistic inspiration and transform into images. They must rise in the soul of the child.

Two extremes must be avoided. One is a result of intellectualizing tendencies, where we approach children in an academic way, expecting them to assimilate sharply outlined ideas and definitions. It is, after all, very comfortable to instruct and teach by definitions. And the more gifted children learn to parrot them, allowing the teacher to be certain that they retain what has been taught them in the previous lesson, whereas those who don't learn can be left behind.

Such methods are very convenient. But it's like a cobbler who thinks that the shoes made for a three-year-old girl should still fit the ten-year-old, whereas only her toes fit into the shoes but not the heels. Much of a child's spiritual and psychic nature is ignored by the education we give children. It is necessary that, through the medium of flexible and artistic forms, we give children perceptions, ideas, and feelings in pictorial form that can metamorphose and grow with the soul, because the soul itself is growing. But before this can happen, there must be a living relationship between child and teacher, not the dead relationship that arises from lifeless educational concepts. Thus, all instruction given to children between approximately seven and fifteen must be permeated with pictures.

In many ways, this runs counter to the ordinary tendencies of modern culture, and we of course belong to this modern culture. We read books that impart much significant substance through little squiggles we call *a*, *b*, *c*, and so on. We fail to realize that we have been damaged by being forced to learn these symbols, since they have absolutely no relationship to our inner life. Why should

a or *b* look the way they do today? There is no inner necessity, no experience that justifies writing an *b* after an *a* to express a feeling of astonishment or wonder.

This was not always the situation, however. People first made images in pictographic writing to describe external processes, and when they looked at the sheet or a board on which something had been written, they received an echo of that outer object or process. In other words, we should spare the child of six or seven from learning to write as it is done today. What we need instead is to bring the child something that can actually arise from the child's own being, from the activities of his or her arms and fingers. The child sees a shining, radiant object and receives an impression; we then fix it with a drawing that represents the impression of radiance, which a child can understand. If a child strokes a stick from top to bottom and then makes a stroke on the paper from top to bottom, the meaning is obvious. I show a fish to a child, who then follows the general direction of the form, followed by the front and back fins that cross in the opposite direction. I draw the general form of the fish, and this line across it, and say to the child, "Here, on the paper, you have something like a fish." Then I go into the child's inner experience of the fish. It contains an *f*, and so I draw a line crossed by another line, and thus, out of the child's feeling experience, I have a picture that corresponds to the sound that begins the word *fish*. All writing can be developed in this way—not a mere copying of the abstract now in use, but a perception of the things themselves as they arise from a child's drawing and painting. When I derive writing from the drawing and painting, I am working with the living forces of an image. It would be enough to present the beginning of this artistic approach; we can feel how it calls on the child's whole being, not just an intellectual understanding, which is overtaxed to a certain extent. If we abandon the intellectual element for imagery at this age, the intellect usually withdraws into the background. If, on the other hand, we overemphasize the intellect and are unable to move into a mode of imagery, the child's breathing process is delicately and subtly disrupted. The child can become congested, as it were, with weakened exhalation. You should think of this as very subtle,

not necessarily obvious. If education is too intellectual between the ages of seven and fourteen, exhalation becomes congested, and the child is subjected to a kind of subconscious nightmare. A kind of intimate nightmare arises, which becomes chronic in the organism and leads in later life to asthmas and other diseases connected with swelling in the breathing system.

Another extreme occurs when the teacher enters the school like a little Caesar, with the self-image of a *mighty* Caesar, of course. In this situation, the child is always at the mercy of a teacher's impulsiveness. Whereas extreme intellectualism leads to congested exhalation, the metabolic forces are thinned by overly domineering and exaggerated assertiveness in the teacher. A child's digestive organs are gradually weakened, which again may have chronic effects in later life. Both of these excesses must be eliminated from education—too much intellectualizing and extreme obstinateness. We can hold a balance between the two by what happens in the soul when we allow the will to pass gently into the child's own activity and by toning down the intellect so that feelings are cultivated in a way that does not suppress the breathing, but cultivates feelings that turn toward imagery and express the buoyant capacity I described. When this is done, the child's development is supported between the change of teeth and puberty.

Thus, from week to week, month to month, year to year, a true knowledge of the human being will help us read the developing being like a book that tells us what needs to be done in the teaching. The curriculum must reproduce what we read in the evolutionary process of the human being. Specific ways that we can do this will be addressed in coming lectures.



This morning I attempted to describe the way knowledge itself must be transformed inwardly from mere knowledge about nature into higher forms of cognition. This allows our understanding of the whole human being and the growing child to be translated into an artistic approach to education and instruction. I can imagine that a certain question may arise: Assuming that a teacher thoroughly un-

derstands the physical body through pure observation and intellect, the etheric body through shaping activity, the astral body through the concept of music, and the I-being through insight into the true nature of speech, what practical application does this have?

Certainly, if we must describe education and instruction as a whole—as we have for Waldorf methods in these lectures—then we would have to say that the most important aspect of a teacher’s perspective on life and the world is not what we generally understand as a “worldview”—that would be completely theoretical. Instead, it is an aspect that, as a soul force, can enter the whole activity of the human being. Any teacher who tries to acquire the principles of education from today’s recognized knowledge of the human being would have to look elsewhere for the necessary inspiration. Hence the continual references to educational ideals that, however convincing they appear, always remain ineffective, because they are rooted in abstractions.

Nevertheless, true insight that penetrates the nature of the world and the human being will, by its very nature, kindle inspiration in the human heart. While practicing their profession, teachers can always draw inspiration from the feeling of their relationship to the world and to their own being—like artists, whose work seems to live in their very marrow. The artist doesn’t need to go anywhere else for inspiration—it comes from the thing itself. Similarly, the inspiration found by teachers in their world-view, experienced internally and constantly renewed, is carried into the soul constitution of the children entrusted to them. Such inspiration lives in everything the teacher does at school.

Those who have insight into the human being have the ability to perceive that a musical element flows into harmony with the formative processes in the inner being of the child during the elementary years, between the change of teeth and puberty. Such a person will never be likely to stray from the right way of teaching, writing, and reading to children. They have a living understanding that writing—particularly as described here—mobilizes the whole being; it uses the arms and hands and permeates them with spirit that exercises the whole person. These are the very aspects of the human being that will be perceived in a living way if we begin with a view of the world

such as I described this morning. It also helps to become clear that reading is merely a pursuit of the head, an unbalanced activity for the human being. The teacher will sense that such one-sidedness is suitable only for children whose whole being has become active. Thus, teachers who take hold of this insight into the human being will be careful to develop writing from painting and drawing (as I described) until children can write what they experience in their deepest being in words or sentences.

When children have reached a certain level of development, they can speak and then write what they have said. This is when it becomes appropriate to teach reading. Reading is easy to teach once writing has been somewhat developed. After children have begun work within their own being—in the nervous system and limbs, in the substance of their writing and reading, and in their inner participation in producing reading material—only then are they ready for one-sided activity. Then, without any danger to their development as human beings, the head can become active, and what they first learned by writing is turned into reading.

It really comes down to this: Week after week and month after month, the germinating human being must be promoted to activity that suits the developing forces of the human organization. It is important to decide what should be done at each stage by reading the particular way each human being tries to evolve. It doesn't work to use schedules that limit some activity to an hour or forty-five minutes, then jump to something else, and again to a third lesson, and so on. Consequently, we have introduced a system of instruction into the Waldorf school where the same subject is taught during the early morning hours for several weeks at a time. In this approach to teaching—so-called “block” teaching, which is characteristic of Waldorf education—students immerse themselves in the subject; they are not torn away as soon as they meet it.

In everything that must be presented to children between the change of teeth and puberty we have to discover ways of reading, what is needed through the demands of human nature itself. When it is a matter of gradually leading children into a real relationship to their own being and the world, it is most important that the teachers

themselves have a real relationship to the world. In contemporary culture, of course, no matter how educated people may be, they cannot really acquire an inwardly alive and rich relationship to the world and their own being. This is yet another radical statement, but we must not be afraid of real insight into what must be gradually introduced into our civilization.

[*Essentials of Education*, pp. 30-34, 51-54.]

9. From *The Roots of Education* (1924)

When we begin to view the facts, however, we are immediately faced with certain contradictions. Children must learn to read and write, and when they come to school we assume they will first learn to read, and after that they will learn to write in connection with their reading. Let's consider, however, the reality of letters—what it means when we take a pen to paper and try to express through writing what is in the mind. What is the relationship between the printed letters of today and the original picture-language of ancient times? How were we taught these things? We show children a capital *A* and a lowercase *a*, but what in the world do these letters have to do with the sound “ah?” There is no relationship at all between the form of the letter *A* and the sound “ah.”

When the art of writing arose, things were different. In certain areas, pictorial signs were used, and a kind of pictorial painting was employed. Later, this was standardized; but originally those drawings copied the process and feeling of the sounds; thus, what appeared on paper was, to some extent, a reproduction of what lived in the soul. Modern characters, however, are alien to a small child's nature, and it is little wonder that when certain early peoples first saw printed letters, it had a peculiar effect on them. When the people of Europe came among the Native Americans and showed them how they expressed their thoughts on paper, the Native Americans were alarmed and considered it the work of the devil; they were afraid of the little demons lurking behind those written letters. They immediately concluded that the Europeans engaged in black magic, since people have a habit of attributing to black magic whatever they cannot understand.

But what is the truth of the matter? We know that when we utter the sound “ah,” we express wonder and admiration. Now, it is very natural to try to reproduce this sound with the whole body and express it in a gesture of the arms. If you copy this gesture (stretching the arms obliquely above the head) you get the capital *A*. When you teach writing, you can, for example, begin with a feeling of wonder, and proceed with the children to some kind of painting and drawing, and in this way you can bring their inner and outer experiences into that painting and drawing.

Consider another example. I tell a girl to think of a fish and ask her to paint it (awkward though this may be). It must be done in a particular way, not simply as she might prefer, but with the head of the fish in front, like this, and the rest of the fish here. The child paints the fish, and thus, through a kind of painting and drawing, she produces a written character. You then tell her to pronounce the word *fish*—fish. Now take away the *ish*, and from *fish* you have arrived at her first written letter, “*f*.” [See diagram on page 104. Ed.]

In this way a child will come to understand how pictorial writing arose, and how it developed into contemporary writing. The forms were copied, but the pictures were abandoned.

This is how drawing the various sounds arose. You do not need to make a special study of how such things evolved. This is not really necessary for teachers, since they can develop them out of their own intuition and power to think. Have a boy, for example, paint the upper lip of a mouth, and then pronounce the word *mouth*. Leave out the *outh*, and you get the *m*. In this way you can relate all the written characters to some reality, and the child will constantly develop a living, inner activity. [See diagrams on page 102. – Ed.] Thus, you should teach the children writing first, and let today’s abstract letters arise from tangible reality; when a child learns to write in this way, the whole being is engaged in the process. Whereas, if you begin with reading, then only the head organization participates in an abstract way. In writing, the hand must participate as well, and in this way the whole human being is aroused to activity.

When you begin with writing—writing developed through the formation of images and drawing forms—your teaching will approach

the child's whole being. Then you can move on to teaching reading; and what was developed out of the child's whole being through drawing can be understood by the head. This method of teaching writing and reading will naturally take longer, but it will have a far healthier effect on the whole earthly life from birth to death. These things can be done when the practical work of the school flows out of a real spiritual knowledge of the human being. Such knowledge can, through its own inner force, become the teaching method in our schools. The desires of those who earnestly seek a new art of education live in this; but its essence can be truly found only when we are unafraid to look for a full knowledge of the human being in body, soul, and spirit. [*Roots of Education*, pp. 50-54.]

10. From *Human Values in Education*

When we are quite clear about this we shall, out of the whole nexus of our studies, come to see how we can find the right approach to an instruction which is truly educational, an education which really instructs. Let us take an example. How must the child learn to read and write? There is actually a great deal more misery connected with this than one usually imagines, though human intellectualism is far too crude to perceive it. One recognizes that learning to read and write is a necessity, so it follows that the child must at all costs be drilled into learning reading and writing. But just consider what this means for a child! When they are grown-up, people have no inclination to put themselves in the child's place, to imagine what he undergoes when he learns to read and write. In our civilization today we have letters, *a*, *b*, *c* and so on; they are there before us in certain definite forms. Now the child has the sound *a* (ah, as in father). When does he use it? This sound is for him the expression of an inner soul experience. He uses this sound when he is faced with something which calls up in him a feeling of wonder, of astonishment. This sound he understands. It is bound up with human nature. Or he has the sound *e* (eh, as in they). When does he use this? He uses it when he wants to show he has the feeling: "Something has come up against me; I have experienced something which encroaches on my own nature." If somebody gives, me a blow, I say *e* (eh). [*In English we tend to prefix*

an aspirate to the vowel, saying "Ha" when something astonishes us, or "Heh" when something impinges on us, e.g. "Heh, stop it!"]

It is the same with the consonants. Every sound corresponds to some expression of life; the consonants imitate an outer, external world, the vowels express what is experienced inwardly in the soul. The study of language, philology, is today only approaching the first elements of such things.

Learned scholars, who devote themselves to research into language, have given much thought to what, in the course of human evolution, may have been the origin of speech. There are two theories. The one represents the view that speech may have arisen out of soul experiences in much the same way as this takes place in the animal, albeit in its most primitive form "moo moo" being the expression of what the cow feels inwardly, and "bow-wow" what is experienced by the dog. And so, in a more complicated way, what in man becomes articulated speech arises out of this urge to give, expression to inner feelings and experiences. In somewhat humorous vein this is called the "Bow-Wow Theory". The other point of view proceeds from the supposition that in the sounds of speech man imitates what takes place in the outer world. It is possible to imitate the sound of a bell, what is taking place inside the bell: "ding-dong-ding-dong." Here there is the attempt to imitate what takes place in the outer world. This is the basis for the theory that in speech everything may be traced back to external sounds, external event. It is the "Ding-Dong Theory". So we have these two theories in opposition to one another. It is not in any way my intention to make fun of this, for as a matter of fact, both are correct: the "bow-wow" theory is right for the vowel element in speech, the "ding-dong" theory for the consonantal elements. In transposing gestures into sounds we learn by means of the consonants to imitate inwardly outer processes; and in the vowels we give form to inner experiences of the soul. In speech the inner and the outer unite. Human nature, itself homogeneous, understands how to bring this about. We receive the child into the primary school. Through his inner organization he has become a being able to speak. Now, suddenly he is expected to, experience—I say experience deliberately weighing my words, not recognize—*experience* a connection between

astonishment, wonder, (ah) and the demonic sign *a*. This is something completely foreign to him. He is supposed to learn something which he feels to be utterly remote, and to relate this to, the sound “ah.” This is something outside the sphere of a young child’s comprehension. He feels it as a veritable torture if at the very outset we confront him with the forms of the letters in use today.

We can, however, remember something else. The letters which we have today were not always there. Let us look back to those ancient peoples who had a picture writing. They used pictures to give tangible form to what was uttered, and these pictures certainly had something to do with what they were intended to express. They did not have letters such as we use, but pictures which were related to their meaning. Up to a certain point the same could be said of cuneiform writing.

These were times when people still had a human relationship to things, even when these were fixed into a definite form. Today we no longer have this, but with the child we must go back to it again. We must of course not do so in such a way that we study the cultural history of ancient peoples and fall back on the forms which were, once used in picture writing; but we must bring all our educational fantasy into play as teachers, in order to create the kind of pictures, we need. Fantasy, imagination [the German word *phantasie* is often more equivalent to the English **imagination** than to **fantasy**] we must certainly have for without it we cannot be teachers or educators. And so, it is always necessary to refer to the importance of enthusiasm, of inspiration, when dealing with some characteristic feature of anthropology. It never gives me any pleasure, for instance, when I go into a class in our Waldorf school and notice that a teacher is tired and is teaching out of a certain mood of weariness. That is something one must never do. One simply cannot be tired, one can only be filled with enthusiasm. When teaching, one must be absolutely on the spot with one’s whole being. It is quite wrong to be tired when teaching; tiredness, must be kept for some other occasion. The essential thing for a teacher is that he learns to give full play to his fantasy. What does this mean? To begin with I call up in the child’s mind something that he has seen at the market, or some other place, a fish for example.

I next get him to draw a fish, and for this I even allow him to use colors, so that he paints as he draws and draws as he paints. This, being achieved I then let him say the word "fish," not speaking the word quickly, but separating the sounds, "f-i-ssh". Then I lead him on so that he says only the beginning of the word fish (*f*. . .) and gradually I transfer the shape of the fish into an imagination than to fantasy. In this lecture the latter is probably a more appropriate sign that is somewhat fish like, while at the same time getting the child to say *f*. . . And there we have it, the letter "*f*"!

Or I let the child say Wave (W-a-v-e) showing him at the same time what a wave is (see sketch). Once again I let him paint this and get him to say the beginning of the word and then I change the picture of a wave into the letter "*w*."



Continuing to work in the same way, I allow the written characters gradually to emerge from the painting-drawing and drawing-painting, as indeed they actually arose in the first place. I do not bring the child into a stage of civilization with which as yet he has nothing in common, but I guide him in such a way that he is never torn away from his relationship to the outer world. In order to do this there is no necessity to study the history of culture albeit the writing in use today has arisen out of picture-writing one must only give free play to one's fantasy, for then one brings the child to the point at which he is able to form writing out of this drawing and painting.

Now we must not think of this only as an ingenious and clever new method. We must value the fact that the child unites himself inwardly with something that is new to him when his soul activity is constantly stimulated. He does not grow into it when he is pushed, so that he is always coming into an unfamiliar relationship with his

environment. The whole point is that we are working on the inner being of the child.

What is usually done today? It is perhaps already somewhat out-of-date, but not so long ago people gave little girls “beautiful” dolls, with real hair, dolls that could shut their eyes when one laid them down, dolls with pretty faces and so on. Civilization calls them beautiful, but they are nevertheless hideous, because they are inartistic. What sort of dolls are these? They are the sort which cannot activate the child’s fantasy. Now let us do something different. Tie a handkerchief so that you have a figure with arms and legs; then make eyes with blobs of ink and perhaps a mouth with red ink as well; now the child must develop his fantasy if he is to imagine this as having the human shape. Such a thing works with tremendous living force on the child, because it offers him the possibility of using his fantasy. Naturally one must do this first oneself. But the possibility must be provided for the child, and this must be done at the age when everything is play. It is for this reason that all those things which do not stimulate fantasy in the child are so damaging when given as toys. As I said, today these beautiful dolls are somewhat out-dated, for now we give children monkeys or bears. To be sure, neither do these toys give any opportunity for the unfolding of a fantasy having any relationship to the human being. Let us suppose that a child runs up to us and we give him a bear to cuddle. Things like this show clearly how far our civilization is from being able to penetrate into the depths of human nature. But it is quite remarkable how children in a perfectly natural, artistic way are able to form imaginatively a picture of this inner side of human nature.

In the Waldorf school we have made a transition from the ordinary methods of teaching to what may be termed a teaching through art, and this quite apart from the fact that in no circumstances do we begin by teaching the children to write, but we let them paint as they draw, and draw as they paint. Perhaps we might even say that we let them splash about, which involves the possibly tiresome job of cleaning up the classroom afterwards. I shall also speak tomorrow about how to lead over from writing to reading, but quite apart from this painting and drawing, we guide the child as far as possible

into the realm of the artistic by letting him practice modeling in his own little way, but without suggesting that he should make anything beyond what he himself wants to fashion out of his own inner being.

[*Human Values in Education*, pp. 61-66.]

11. From *The Kingdom of Childhood*

And so between the change of teeth and puberty you must educate out of the very essence of imagination. For the quality that makes a child under seven so wholly into a sense-organ now becomes more inward; it enters the soul life. The sense organs do not think; they perceive pictures, or rather they form pictures from the external objects. And even when the child's sense experiences have already a quality of soul, it is not a thought that emerges but an image, albeit a soul image, an imaginative picture. Therefore in your teaching you must work in pictures, in images.

Now you can work least of all in pictures if you are teaching children something that is really quite foreign to them. For example, the calligraphy of today is quite foreign to children both in written or printed letters. They have no relation whatever to what is called an *A*. Why should they have a relation to an *A*? Why should they be interested in an *L*? These are quite foreign to them, this *A*, this *L*. Nevertheless when children come to school they are taught these things, with the result that they feel no contact with what they are doing. And if they are taught this before the change of teeth and are obliged to stick letters into cut-out holes, for example, then they are given things that are outside their nature and to which they have not the slightest relationship.

But what you should appeal to is what the children do possess now—an artistic sense, a faculty for creating imaginative pictures. It is to this you must turn. You should avoid a direct approach to the conventional letters of the alphabet that are used in writing and printing. Rather, you should lead the children, in a vivid and imaginative way, through the various stages that humanity has passed through in the history of civilization.

In former times there was picture writing; that is to say, people painted something on the page that reminded them of the object.

You do not need to study the history of civilization, but you can show children the meaning and spirit of what people wanted to express in picture writing. Then children will feel at home in their lessons.

For example: Let us take the word *Mund*—(mouth). Get the children to draw a mouth, or rather paint it. Let them put on dabs of red color and then tell them to

pronounce the word; you can say to them: don't pronounce the whole word at first, but begin only with the sound "M."

And now you can form the *let-*

ter M out of the upper lip. If you follow this process you can get the letter *M* out of the mouth that the children first painted.



This is how writing really originated, even though today it is difficult to recognize from the words themselves that the letters were once pictures, because the words have all been subject to change in the course of the evolution of speech. Originally each sound had its own image and each picture could have but one meaning.

You do not need to go back to these original characters, but you can invent ways and means of your own.

The teacher must be inventive and must create out of the spirit of the thing.

Take the word *fish*. Let the children draw or paint some kind of fish. Let them say the beginning of the word: "F" and you can gradually get the letter *F* out of the picture.



And thus, if you are inventive, you can find pictures for all the consonants. They can be worked out from a kind of painting-drawing or drawing-painting. This is more awkward to deal with than the methods of today. For it is of course necessary that after the children have been doing this painting for an hour or two you have to clear it all away. But it just has to be so, there is nothing else to be done.

So you can see how the letters can be developed out of pictures and the pictures again directly out of life. This is the way you must do it. On no account should you teach reading first, but proceeding

from your drawing-painting and painting-drawing, you allow the letters to arise out of these, and then you can proceed to reading.

If you look around you will find plenty of objects that you can use to develop the consonants in this way. All the consonants can be developed from the initial letters of the words describing these objects.

It is not so easy for the vowels. But perhaps for the vowels the following is possible. Suppose you say to the children: "Look at the beautiful sun! You must really admire it; stand like this so that you can look up and admire the glorious sun." The children can stand, look up, and then express their wonder thus: Ah! Then you



paint this gesture and you actually have the Hebrew *A*, the sound "Ah," the sound of wonder. Now you need only to make it smaller and gradually turn it into the letter *A*.

And so if you bring before the children something of an inner soul quality and above all what is expressed in eurythmy, letting them take up one position or another, then you can also develop the vowels in the way I have mentioned. Eurythmy will be a very great help to you because the sounds are already formed in the eurythmy gestures and movements. Think for instance of an *O*. You embrace something lovingly. Out of this you can obtain the *O*. You can really get the vowels from the gesture, the movement.



Thus you must work out of observation and imagination, and the children will then come to know the sounds and the letters from the things themselves. You must start from the picture.

The letter, as we know it today in its finished form, has a history behind it. It is something that has been simplified from a picture, but the kind of magical signs of the printed letters of the present day no longer tell us what the pictures were like.

When the Europeans, these "better men," went to America at the time when the "savages," the native Indians, were still there—even in

the middle of the nineteenth century such things happened—they showed these savages printed writing and the Indians ran away from it because they thought the letters were little devils. And they said: The palefaces, as the Indians called the Europeans, communicate with each other by means of little devils, little demons.

This is just what letters are for children. They mean nothing to them. The child feels something demonic in the letters, and rightly so. They already become a means of magic because they are merely signs.

You must begin with the picture. That is not a magic sign but something real and you must work from this.

People will object that the children then learn to read and write too late. This is said only because it is not known today how harmful it is when the children learn to read and write too soon. It is a very bad thing to be able to write early. Reading and writing as we have them today are really not suited to the human being till a later age—the eleventh or twelfth year—and the more a child is blessed with not being able to read and write well before this age, the better it is for the later years of life. A child who cannot write properly at thirteen or fourteen (I can speak out of my own experience because I could not do it at that age) is not so hindered for later spiritual development as one who early, at seven or eight years, can already read and write perfectly. These are things that the teacher must notice.

Naturally you will not be able to proceed as you really should today because the children have to pass from your independent school into public life. But a great deal can be done nevertheless when you know these things. It is a question of knowledge. And your knowledge must show you, above all, that it is quite wrong to teach reading before writing. In writing, especially if it is developed from the painting-drawing, drawing-painting that I have spoken of, the whole human being is active—the fingers take part, the body is positioned, the whole person is engaged. In reading only the head is occupied and anything that only occupies a part of the organism and leaves the remaining parts impassive should be taught as late as possible. It is most important first to bring the whole being into movement, and later on the single parts.

Naturally, if you want to work in this way you cannot expect to be given instructions for every detail, but only an indication of the path to be followed. And so you can build on nothing else but absolute freedom in this method of education arising out of Anthroposophy, though this freedom must include the free creative fancy of the teacher and educator.

In the Waldorf School we have been blessed with what I might call a very questionable success. We began with one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty pupils; but these pupils came from the industrial works of Emil Molt, so they were at that time to a certain extent “compulsory” children, though we had also some children from anthroposophical families. In the short time of its existence the Waldorf School has grown so big that we have now more than eight hundred children and between forty and fifty teachers. This is a doubtful success because gradually it becomes impossible to keep a clear view of the whole. From the arrangements of the Waldorf School that I shall describe to you, you will soon see how difficult it is to survey the whole; though I shall later indicate certain ways of making this possible. We have had to form parallel classes; in the case of the fifth and sixth there are three parallel classes: A, B, and C. These classes are still overfull and have more children than the other classes in the school.

There is therefore a teacher in Class A, another in Class B. Just imagine how this would work out in a “proper” educational establishment of today. You come into Class 1 A, where you find a particular educational drill going on that is considered the best. Now you go into Class 1 B. It could equally well be called “A,” only that different children are sitting there, for in both classes exactly the same thing goes on, because the “right method” is used. This is of course all most clearly thought out: What is intellectual has but one meaning and it cannot be otherwise.

With us in the Waldorf School you find no such thing. You go into the first Class A. There you see a teacher, man or woman, who is teaching writing. The teacher lets the children make all kinds of forms, let us say with string. They then go on to painting the forms

and gradually letters arise. A second teacher likes to do it differently. If you go into Class B you find that this teacher is letting the children “dance” the forms round the room, in order that they may experience the forms of the letters in their own bodies. Then this teacher carries over these forms also into the letters themselves. You would never find uniformity of teaching in Classes A, B, and C. The same things are taught but in completely different ways, for a free creative imagination pervades the class. There are no prescribed rules for teaching in the Waldorf School, but only one unifying spirit that permeates the whole. It is very important that you understand this. Teachers are autonomous. Within this one unifying spirit they can do entirely what they think is right for themselves.

You will say: Yes, but if everyone can do as they like, then the whole school will fall into a chaotic condition. For in Class 5A, there could be goodness knows what kind of hocus-pocus going on, and in 5B, you might find them playing chess. But that is exactly what does not happen in the Waldorf School, for though there is freedom everywhere the spirit that is appropriate to the age of the children is active in each class.

[*The Kingdom of Childhood*, pp. 23-29.]

COMPOSITION WRITING

[For curricular indications on composition writing, see The Language Arts Curriculum from "First Lecture on the Curriculum" in *Discussions with Teachers*, pp. 183-189.]

1. Composition Writing

In our work with children of elementary school age, we must see to it that we engage the rhythmic system only. The rhythmic system never tires and is not overexerted when we employ it in the right way, and for this rhythmic system we need not an intellectual but rather a pictorial method of presentation, something that comes out of the fantasy. Therefore it is imperative that fantasy should hold sway in the school. This must still be so even in the last period of which we have spoken, from eleven-and-two-thirds to fourteen years; we must still bring lifeless things to life through fantasy and always connect them with real life. It is possible to connect all the phenomena of physics with real life, but we ourselves must have fantasy in order to do it. This is absolutely necessary.

Now this fantasy should above all be the guiding principle in what are called compositions, when the children have to write about something and work it out for themselves. Here you must strictly avoid allowing the children to write a composition about anything that you have not first talked over with them. You yourself, with the authority of the teacher and educator, should have first spoken about the subject with the children; then the child should produce a composition under the influence of what you yourself have said. Even when the children are approaching puberty you must still not depart from this principle. Even then children should not just write whatever occurs to them; they should always feel that a certain mood has been aroused in them through having discussed the subject with their teacher, and all that they then write in their own essay must preserve this mood.

Here again it is “aliveness” that must be the guiding principle. “Aliveness” in the teacher must pass over to “aliveness” in the children.
[*Kingdom of Childhood*, pp. 114-115.]

2. Business Compositions

In foreign languages, homework should be restricted mainly to reading. Any written work should really be done at school. As little homework as possible should be given and not until the later stages, after the age of twelve. Even then it should deal only with the affairs of real life, such as writing letters, business correspondence, and so on. It is real malpractice, in a higher sense, to have school children write essays in foreign languages on subjects that have nothing to do with life. We should be content with letter writing, business correspondence, and similar topics. We can go beyond these subjects at most by letting the children recount events that have happened to them, things that they have experienced. Up to the age of fourteen such narration of real happenings should be cultivated far more than free composition. Free composition really has no place in school before the ages of fourteen or fifteen. What does belong in school up to that point is the narrative retelling of what the children have experienced and heard; they must learn to take these experiences in, for otherwise they cannot participate in an appropriately social way in the cultural process of humanity. Indeed, educated people today generally notice only half the world and not the whole of it.

People do many experiments today, particularly in the field of criminal psychology. Everything has to be proved by experiment these days. Let me give you an example. A lecture is announced (these are academic experiments carried out at universities). For the purpose of the experiment the lecturer plans the sequence of events beforehand with one of the students. The professor mounts the platform and speaks the first words of the lecture. (All this is written down in great detail.) At that moment the student who is part of the plot leaps onto the platform and tears down the coat the professor has hung on a hook there. He does exactly what they have prearranged. The professor behaves accordingly and makes a rush at the student to prevent him from taking down the coat. All the actions are predetermined.

They wrestle, making the movements they have contrived beforehand. They have studied it in detail and learned it by heart so that they do everything exactly as arranged. Then the audience members, who are not in the know, will behave in some way. This cannot be predetermined. But perhaps the plot could include someone whose task it is to carefully observe the behavior of the audience. Finally, at the end of the experiment, the members of the audience are asked to write down what they have seen.

Such experiments have been conducted at universities, including the very experiment I have just described. The result was that, from an audience of about thirty people, at most four or five related the scene correctly. This can be verified because every action was prearranged, and the scene was enacted accordingly. Barely one-tenth of the audience recorded the scene accurately. Most people write down the most absurd things when taken by surprise in this way. Since we are so fond of experimenting today, we conduct this kind of investigation and then scientifically reach the significant conclusion that witnesses in court are unreliable. If only one-tenth of an educated audience in a university lecture hall (they are all educated people, are they not?) reports a sequence of events correctly, while the others report incorrectly and some even put down utter nonsense, how can witnesses in court be expected to give accurate accounts about events they saw weeks or perhaps months earlier? People with sound common sense certainly know this to be true, because, in the course of ordinary life, people nearly always incorrectly relate what they have seen or heard. All you can do is develop a fine nose for detecting whether something is being told to you accurately or not. Of all the things people tell you from every side, hardly one-tenth is, strictly speaking, true, hardly one-tenth is a correct account of an actual event. As a matter of fact, people do things by halves. They develop the half that they could more easily do without if they were to rely properly on sound common sense; it is the other half that is more important. We ought to see to it that our cultural life develops in a way that will mean that witnesses are more reliable and people tell more of the truth. But to achieve this end, we should start to work on it in childhood. That is the reason why it is essential to let

children recount what they have seen and experienced rather than expect them to write free compositions. In this way we will inculcate in them the habit of telling in life, and perhaps also in court, not something that they have invented but whatever is the truth regarding the external facts discerned by their senses. The will realm ought to be taken more into account in this effort than the intellectual realm. The purpose of that experiment of the prearranged scene enacted in a lecture hall and the statements made by the audience was to find out how many lies people tell. In an intellectual age like ours, this is understandable. But we must bring our intellectual age back to the realm of the will. We must pay attention to educational details, such as letting the children (once they can write and particularly after their twelfth year) recount events that have actually happened rather than cultivating free composition, which has no place in education before the age of fourteen or fifteen.



The principles of grammar should lead not so much to the kind of essay depicting the human being's inner life as though bathed in a soup of sentimentality but rather to business compositions, business letters. The former kind of essay, a glorified version of the spirit that reigns when people gather over their wine in the evening or at coffee parties, is the kind of essay usually expected of thirteen- to sixteen-year-olds. No child should pass beyond the age of fifteen without having gone through the stage of writing specimens of practical business letters. Do not say that the children can learn to do so later. Yes, by overcoming dreadful obstacles they can learn it later, but only if they can overcome these obstacles. It is of great benefit to the children if you teach them to let their knowledge of grammar and language flow into business letters. There should be nobody today who has not at one time learned to write a decent business letter. A person may not need to apply this knowledge in later life at all, but there really should be nobody who has not been encouraged at one time to write a decent business letter. If you satiate the children mainly with sentimental idealism between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, they

will later develop an aversion to idealism and become materialistic people. If you lead them during these years into the practical concerns of life, they will retain a healthy relationship to the idealistic needs of the soul, since these can be wiped out only if they are senselessly indulged during early youth.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 136-140, 160-161.]

3. Working with Business Writing

A question is asked about business writing. [See *Discussions with Teachers*; lecture 12 and “First Lecture on Curriculum.”]

Dr. Steiner: I recently asked that *The Coming Day* do something and received the reply yesterday. I told them I could not accept it as it was. I have to be able to understand what happened. Usually you can't tell what happened. In the first case, the address was incorrect, and secondly, instead of what I wanted to know, namely, if something had been moved to a different location, other things were included. The third thing it included was something that did not interest me at all, namely, the charges they had incurred. I could not find out what I wanted to know, namely, whether the task was done, from what was written in the reply. A different address was given. That comes from a superficiality because people do not believe things need to be exact. You only need to say what happened. You should try to understand the course of a business relationship, and then write from that perspective. That can best be done in a critical way. You should try to probe, to get behind all this gibberish, and see if you can't bring some style into it.

Concerning business writing: If you need an expert opinion about something, then that opinion is a business report. Information of various sorts, sales reports and so forth, those are all business reports. It is not so terribly bad if you do something wrong.

Someone who can do something will find their way better than someone who can do nothing. Those who do things are the ones who most often cannot do them. Using simple expressions is better than normal “business style.” Some of the things I have experienced myself, I could not repeat here, they were so terrible. It is really not

so bad if you simply summarize the situation and repeat it. Everyone can understand that. This is not connected with business alone. You need only read some legal opinion or legal judgment. I once read that a railway is a straight or curving means of movement on a plane or a number of planes with greater or lesser degree of elevation from a particular goal, and so forth. It was sixteen lines. When you create your lessons, always consider how you can draw them out of the nature of the children.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 278-279.]

4. Suggested Themes for Compositions

Dr. Steiner: We should try to make the children curious about their work. If you ask the children such questions, that makes them curious about what they can find out for themselves. That is something that will excite them. I would do it in that way. The children cannot develop a feeling of responsibility before you teach them the meaning and consequence of the concept of responsibility.

Give them such themes for their essays as “The Steam Engine: Proof of Human Strength” and then follow it immediately with “The Steam Engine: Proof of Human Weakness.” Give them two such themes, one right after the other, and I think you will certainly arouse their interest. You can organize your instruction so that you arouse the children’s interest. They will become excited about it, but you must keep the excitement down to an extent. They must also be able to attentively follow the instruction without such excitement. People understand the idea of responsibility only with very great difficulty and so late that you should actually begin to speak about it with children. You can give them some examples and teach them about people with and without a feeling of responsibility. The children have understood that the squid is a weeping person and the mouse an attentive eye. We need to develop the things that lie within our pedagogy so that the children receive really strong pictures, and those are engraved in them. We need to give the children pictures that become deeply engraved within them. To do that, however, we need time. We need time until the children understand them. Once they have that, they will yearn for pictures. [335-336]



The ninth-grade teacher asks about essay themes. He has had them write essays about Faust and the character of Faust.

Dr. Steiner: That is really too much for them. You should remember that even Kuno Fischer did not write well about that. I would center the themes more on observations of life, like the ones I mentioned earlier. For the eighth grade, we could also do such things as “What Is Beauty in Nature?” and then follow it with “What Is Beauty in the Soul?” You should use more themes like that, where the children have to concentrate on developing the theme.

A teacher: Should we first discuss the theme?

Dr. Steiner: You should discuss the theme in the normal context of the lesson. You will need to have discussed a number of things. While you were discussing Jean Paul, there were a number of good theme possibilities. You set the themes too high.

A teacher: What would you give the ninth grade as an essay about the friendship between Schiller and Goethe?

Dr. Steiner: I would describe how it looked when Goethe went from Weimar to Tiefurt. Then I would have them describe “A Walk with Goethe” as concretely as possible. These are things they can do. [338-341]



A teacher: In the foreign language class, we read the Forum scene from *Julius Caesar*.

Dr. Steiner: Could you also do that in writing as a kind of essay? You need to do something like that, also. In German, too, so that they have a picture; one that they can really articulate. [195-196]



Cliques in the eleventh grade are discussed.

Dr. Steiner: Give them “Outsiders and Sociable People” as an essay topic, so that they have to think things through. [691]

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner.*]

5. Summarizing Material in Self-Written Books

A teacher asks about purchasing a history textbook for the twelfth grade.

Dr. Steiner: Well, it’s true the students must know something. In the last grade of high school, history class is mainly a kind of review. That is also the case here. Couldn’t you teach from your notes so that a textbook would not be necessary?

You see, what is really very important is that you summarize everything they need to know as efficiently as possible. I happily remember how, when I was in school, we did not have any geometry books. The teacher summarized the important things in dictations. A self-written book gives you reason to know what is in it. Of course, when the children first had to learn everything they need, we could not do it that way. If such things are to be fruitful, it must be possible to summarize what they need to know. Everything they will be asked about history in the final examination can be written down on fifty or sixty pages. It is clear that no one, not even an expert in history, remembers everything in Ploetz. [Karl Ploetz, 1819–1881, author of *Auszug aus der alten, mittleren und neueren Geschichte* (Extracts of ancient, medieval, and modern history, 1863). It remains the standard history reference in Germany.] Giving children such textbooks is illusory. They just have chapter titles, but you could summarize all of the material in fifty or sixty pages. It is possible that all the subject teachers would want textbooks, but we should try to avoid that.

In such questions, an efficient summarization is what is important. Other schools have the children underline the things they need to study. They also need to cover things in a given amount of time. You should dictate such history notebooks beginning in the tenth grade.

A middle-grades teacher asks about notebooks according to blocks.

Dr. Steiner: You should give a dictation at the end of the period about what was just covered. Create the dictation with the children. You can summarize the material in a written form during one period and review it in the next. Use key sentences rather than key words.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, pp. 627-628.]

6. Dictations in Second Grade

Regarding a boy who had left the school:

Dr. Steiner: The two places that could be dangerous for us lie in the following. The one is that people could claim he could do less than is possible with a calculator. To that, we can say that our goal is to develop the concept of numbers differently. We do not think that is possible with such young children. We will have to go into this business with calculators. The other thing that is dangerous for us is his poor dictation. There, we can simply say that dictation is not really a part of the second grade in our school. The situation is quite tempting for someone with a modern pedagogical understanding. That is how we can most easily be attacked. We will have to defend ourselves against that. We need to energetically and decisively defend ourselves.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 410.]

HANDWRITING

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LEFT-HANDEDNESS

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STENOGRAPHY AND TYPING

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HANDWRITING

1. Establishing a Hygienic Basis for Handwriting

When we now teach the various subjects expected of a school—reading, the thought processes in arithmetic, those in the natural sciences, everything that is of a cognitive nature—we give the children ideas and mental pictures. The ideas and mental images are for the child's organism an activity that is quite different from physical/corporeal instruction—which, although it participates in the education of the thought processes, is also carried out independently. Physical/corporeal instruction is carried out quite independently in eurythmy, in physical education, and in instrumental music, but no longer in singing. Everything is, of course, relative. But there is a great difference, a polarity, between what the children are asked to do in these subjects—and also when they are learning reading and writing, when we strongly appeal to the physical activity—and what they are asked to do in subjects such as arithmetic, in which case the physical activity plays a subordinate role. In handwriting, on the other hand, physical activity plays a predominant part.

We should really go into details. Let me single out the subject of writing and show you the role physical activity plays. There are two types of people in regard to writing. (I believe I have already mentioned this to those of you who have attended previous lectures.) There are those who write as though the writing is flowing from their wrists. The forming of the letters is carried out from the wrist. Future business people are actually trained to write in this way. Their writing flows from their wrists, and this is all there is to it. That is one of the two types of people in regard to writing. The other type is disposed to looking at the letters. These people always contemplate what they write, deriving an almost aesthetic pleasure from it. These are the painter type, and they do not so much write from the wrist. Those of the first type do not paint.

I actually got to know the special training for people who are prepared for business. They are encouraged to put a kind of flourish to the letters. Their writing is characterized by continuous flourishes emanating from a certain swinging motion of the wrist. Taken to an extreme, this kind of writing will lead to something that is really quite awful. I know people who carry out all sorts of swinging motions with their pens in the air before they begin to write—a quite terrible thing when taken to an extreme.

We really ought to get people to write in a way that is akin to painting. Writing in that way is far more hygienic. When writing is accompanied by an aesthetic pleasure, the mechanical aspect is pushed into the body. It is the inner organism rather than the wrist that is writing. And this is most important, because the mechanical aspect is then diverted from the periphery to the whole of the human being. You will notice that when you teach children to write in this painting way, they will also be able to write with their toes. This would, in fact, constitute a triumph, a success—when a child is able to hold a pencil between the toes and form adequate letters. I do not say that this ability should be developed artistically. But we do have in such an instance a shifting of the mechanical activity to the whole human being. You will agree that in this regard most of us are extremely clumsy. Can you think of anyone who is able to pick up a piece of soap from the floor with his or her toes? To do this at least should be possible. It sounds grotesque, but it points to something of great significance.

We should cultivate this painting-like writing. It pushes the actual mechanical activity into the body, and the writer's connection to the writing is brought to and beyond the surface. The human being is imparted into his or her environment. We should really get used to seeing everything we do, rather than doing things thoughtlessly, mechanically. Most people do write mechanically, thoughtlessly. Because writing is thus a many-sided activity, we can, in a certain way, consider it as a significant aspect in our lessons. In arithmetic, on the other hand, the actual writing has a subordinate position, because with that subject it is the thinking that preoccupies the student.

[Education for Adolescents, pp. 60-62.]

2. The Artistic Element in Handwriting

We must consider that until about the age of seven—and children should not really enter school before that age—a child lives entirely by imitation. Our young pupils are beings who strive with their will to be at one with their surroundings. This fact alone should preclude any appeal to the intellect, which depends on the soul's self activity. Nor should we appeal to the child's personal feelings, which in any case are in complete sympathy with the environment. If we bear in mind that every response of such an imitative being bears a will character, we will realize how strongly the innate will nature meets us when we receive a child into school at the time of the second dentition.

Above all, then, we must begin by educating, instructing, training the child's will. This in itself implies an emphasis on an artistic approach. For instance, when teaching writing, we do not immediately introduce the letters of the alphabet in their present form, because these have already become quite alienated from human nature. Rather, we begin by letting the children paint and draw, an activity that is a natural consequence and externalization of their will activities and that in turn leads to writing.

Proceeding in this way, a teacher notices in the children two different tendencies that should be given consideration. For whether we contribute to a child's future health or lack of health depends upon how we deal with these two tendencies. In relation to writing, we find two types of child. This becomes especially evident when we guide them toward writing through a kind of painting. One type of child learns to write in a way that always retains a quality of painting. This child writes "with the eye," observing every line and working with an aesthetic feeling for the beauty of the form—a painterly quality lives in all his or her writing. The other type forms the letters on the paper more mechanically, with a certain compulsion. Even in writing lessons—often given for dubious pedagogical reasons, especially in the case of older persons who believe that they must improve their handwriting—the aim is usually to enable the participants to put their letters on paper with this mechanical kind of compulsion. This is how individual handwriting is developed. Just as people have their

gestures, of which they are unaware, so too they have their handwriting, of which they are equally unaware. Those who write mechanically no longer experience an echo of their writing. Their gaze does not rest upon it with an aesthetic pleasure. They do not bring an artistic element of drawing into their writing.

Each child ought to be guided toward introducing this artistic element into handwriting. A child's eye should always rest on the piece of paper on which he or she is writing and so receive an impression of all that is being put into the writing. This will avoid writing under sheer inner mechanical compulsion, but will allow the child to experience an echo of his or her writing and the various letters. If we do this, we shall be cultivating a certain love in the child for what surrounds it—a sense of responsibility for its surroundings. Although this remark might sound improbable, it is nevertheless true. A caring attitude for whatever we do in life is a direct consequence of this way of learning to write—a method in which writing is a matter not only of manual dexterity but also for the eyes, for aesthetic seeing and willing.

We should not underestimate how such familiar things influence the whole of human life. Many persons who, later in life, appear lacking in a sense of responsibility—lacking in loving devotion to the surrounding world—would have been helped if they had been taught writing in the right way.

We must not overlook such intimate interconnections in education. Anthroposophy therefore seeks to shed light on all aspects of human nature—not just theoretically but *lovingly*. It tries to recognize the inherent soul and spiritual background of all external human traits and this allows it to add a completely practical dimension to the education of the young. If we remember to allow a child's forces of will to flow into such activities as writing, then learning to write—writing lessons— will eventually produce fruits of the kind I previously mentioned.

After writing, we proceed to reading lessons. Reading involves a child's life of feeling to a greater extent than writing and ought to develop from writing. Reading entails a greater element of observation, while writing is more a matter of active participation. But the

starting point in education should always be an appeal to the will element, to active participation, and not only to powers of observation. Three steps should always be followed when teaching children aged from seven to fourteen. First, the aim should be to involve the will; that is, the active participation of the pupils. Second, the aim is gradually to lead toward what becomes an attitude of observation. And only during the last phase of this period do we proceed to the third step, that of making of experiments, to experimentation.

[“Educational Methods II” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, pp. 175-178.]

3. Clumsiness in Writing as an Indicator of Organic Weakness

There is one more thing I want to say. If you notice a child is, in a sense, lost in her organism, that is, does not have the requisite inner firmness—for example, the child suffers a great deal from diarrhea or is clumsy when moving her limbs, so that she dangles her arms and legs when picking up things and then lets them fall again—such things are the first symptoms of what will develop into processes that strongly affect the person’s health later in life. You should never ignore it when a child often has diarrhea or urinates too much or picks things up so clumsily that they fall again or shows any kind of clumsiness in grasping objects. You should never simply ignore such things. A teacher should always keep a sharp eye open for such things as, for example, whether a child dexterously or clumsily holds a pencil or chalk when writing upon the board. In that way, you can act as a hygienic doctor. I mention these things because you cannot accomplish very much by simply reprimanding the child. Only someone who is always active in the class can affect anything. On the other hand, you can achieve a great deal through external therapeutic means. If you give the child in such a case a small dose of phosphorus, you will see that it will become relatively easy to reach the child with reprimands about clumsiness, even with organic weaknesses of the sort I just described. Give the child phosphorus, or if the problem is deeper, for example, when the child tends toward flatulence, use sulfur. If the problem is more visible outwardly, then phosphorus. In such cases, suggest to the parents that they should feed the child foods connected with colorfully flowering plant blossoms. Speaking in an extreme

case, suppose a child often wets the bed. Then you can accomplish a great deal through a therapeutic treatment with phosphorus, but still more by working with the diet. Suggest adding some paprika or pepper to the food as long as the condition persists. You will need to determine that based upon the child's further development.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 537-538.]

4. Dexterity Exercises that Improve Writing

A teacher asks if a child can be placed in the remedial class.

Dr. Steiner: I don't think that is possible. Particularly in the first grade you should not go too far in separating children into the remedial class. I have seen the child, and you are right. But, on the other hand, not so very much is lost if a child still writes poorly in the first grade. If we can do it, it would be very good for all of the children like that if we could do the exercises I discussed previously with you.

If you have her do something like this (*Dr. Steiner indicates an exercise*): Reach your right hand over your head and grasp your left ear. Or perhaps you could have her draw things like a spiral going inward, a spiral going to the right, and another to the left. Then she will gain much. You need exercises that cause the children to enter more into thinking. Then we have writing. There are some who write very poorly, and quite a number who are really first class. The children will not improve much when you want to make them learn to write better by improving their writing. You need to improve their dexterity; then they will learn to write better.

I don't think you will be able to accomplish much with your efforts at improving bad handwriting simply by improving the writing. You should attempt to make the children better in form drawing. If they would learn to play the piano, their writing would improve. It is certainly a truism that this really poor handwriting first started when children's toys became so extraordinarily materialistic. It is terrible that such a large number of toys are construction sets. They really are not toys at all because they are atomistic. If a child has a simple forge, then the child should learn to use it. I wish that children had toys that moved. This is all contained in *Education of the Child*. The

toys today are terrible, and for that reason the children learn no dexterity and write poorly. It would be enough, though we can't do this at school, if we had those children who write poorly with their hands, draw simple forms with their feet. [*Steiner tells how he did this as a child in a lecture of April 12, 1924, GA 353.*] That has an effect upon the hand. They could draw small circles or semicircles or triangles with their feet. They should put a pencil between their toes and draw circles. That is something that is not easy to do, but very interesting. It is difficult to learn, but interesting to do. I think it would be interesting also to have them hold a stick with their toes and make figures in the sand outside. That has a strong effect upon the hands. You could have children pick up a handkerchief with their feet, rather than with their hands. That also has a strong effect. Now, I wouldn't suggest that they should eat with their feet. You really shouldn't do this with everything. You should try to work indirectly upon improving handwriting, developing dexterity in drawing and making forms. Try to have them draw complicated symmetrical forms. (Speaking to Mr. Baumann) Giving them a beat is good for developing reasoned and logical forms. [98-100]



Dr. Steiner: How is Sch. in the trades class? He walks so oddly. Last year I gave some basic exercises for those children who were weak in comprehending so that they had to think about their own bodies. "Touch your left shoulder with your middle right finger." Through such things, you have to think about your own body. I also showed you how to draw something in a stylized way, and then have the children figure out what it is. You can also have them draw a symmetrical picture. Through those things, you form a perspective connected with the structure of the body. When you bring such exercises into your teaching, they work to awaken the sleepy child. That boy is sleepy.

I ask you to accept no laziness in detail with the children. Do not tolerate the children holding chalk like a pen, or doing anything awkwardly. I would pay a great deal of attention to such things. Nearly half the children hold chalk improperly. You should not allow that to pass by. You should be very attentive to such things. I would not

allow the children to shuffle out, like the little girl today. I would try to see that she improves her walk. That has a very wakening effect.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 98-100, 207.]

5. Exercises to Strengthen Comprehension

You can also help the children become skillful and mobile in this pictorial imaginative thinking by saying: “Touch your right eye with you left hand! Touch your right eye with your right hand! Touch your left eye with your right hand! Touch your left shoulder with your right hand from behind! Touch your right shoulder with your left hand! Touch your left ear with your right hand! Touch the big toe of your right foot with your right hand!” and so on. You can thus make the children do all kinds of curious exercises, for example, “Describe a circle with your right hand round the left! Describe a circle with your left hand round the right! Describe two circles cutting each other with both hands! Describe two circles with one hand in one direction and with the other hand in the other direction. Do it faster and faster. Now move the middle finger of your right hand very quickly. Now the thumb, now the little finger.”

So the children can learn to do all kinds of exercises in a quick alert manner. What is the result? Doing these exercises when children are eight years old will teach them how to think—to think for the rest of their lives. Learning to think directly through the head is not the kind of thinking that will last for life. It makes people “thought-tired” later on. But if, on the other hand, they have to do actions with their own bodies that need great alertness in carrying out, and that need to be thought over first, then later on they will be wise and prudent in the affairs of life, and there will be a noticeable connection between the wisdom of such people in their thirty-fifth or thirty-sixth year and the exercises they did as a child of six or seven. Thus it is that the different epochs of life are connected with each other.

[*The Kingdom of Childhood*, pp. 69-70.]

6. Working with a Student with Writing Difficulties

There was that boy, T.L. in the 6B class, who had difficulty writing, who made one stroke into the next. In such cases there is a tendency

to cramp in the central nervous system, which may lead later to writer's cramp. You need to try to counteract it at an early age. You should have this boy do eurythmy with barbells. He should do the movements with barbells. They don't need to be particularly heavy, but he should do eurythmy with barbells. You will notice that his handwriting will improve in that way. You could also do some other things. You could try to get him to hold his pen in a different direction. There are such pens, although I don't know if they are still available now after the war, with the nib set at an angle to the pen. Such a boy needs to become accustomed to a different position. It will help him to become conscious of the way he holds his fingers. Another thing is that the axes of his eyes converge too strongly. Get him to hold the paper further from his eyes so that the axes converge less. You will need to wait to see how his handwriting changes due to the influence of these more organic means. If you observe that he makes some effort, and that he writes something more orderly, then you can begin to guide him and his conscious will can take over.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, p. 221.]

7. Handwriting Styles

A teacher asks about Latin letters and German grammar in the fourth grade.

Dr. Steiner: If you are to teach Latin handwriting, it is perhaps better to first develop German handwriting out of drawings and then develop characteristic Latin letters from the drawings. You can create sentences from poems, but do it in a kind way, don't do it pedantically. [It was still common in 1919 to teach the German cursive forms first and then the Latin form. This was reversed in the 1920s.]

* * *

A teacher asks about vertical and slanting handwriting styles. [These represent two popular trends in German script at the time. – Trans.]

Dr. Steiner: As long as people continue to write with the right hand, it is not desirable to use vertical handwriting. Vertical handwriting is unnatural for the human organism. Handwriting does not need to lie on the line, but it does need to give an artistic impression. Vertical handwriting does not give an artistic impression. I once explained that there are two ways of writing. In the one case, there are people who write automatically and do not use their eyes. They make their body into a mechanism and write directly from their wrists. Penmanship trains this kind of writing. I once knew a man who had to make the letters from a circle when he wrote. He went around in circles. Then there is also artistic writing, where you write with your eyes, and the hand is simply the organ that carries it out. It is not possible to develop vertical handwriting mechanically from the wrist. It would always be slanted handwriting, and thus, vertical handwriting is justifiable as an artistic method. This involves a judgment of taste, but it does not meet an aesthetic requirement. It is never beautiful and always looks unnatural, and for that reason is never justified. There is no real reason for vertical handwriting.

A teacher: I have children who are used to writing vertically. Why should they write at a low angle?

Dr. Steiner: You can't accomplish such a thing by simply saying, "I will now teach slanted handwriting." You cannot do that. You can only work toward no longer having any children who write vertically, but in the upper grades, you cannot pressure them too much.

A teacher: K.L. in my fourth grade class writes vertically.

Dr. Steiner: With him, you could try to get him to gradually use a more slanted handwriting, so that the lines are not vertical, but the whole of his writing is artistically vertical.

A teacher: In my fourth grade class, I do writing exercises while teaching natural history.

Dr. Steiner: You can do that. You should just make sure you do not contradict the block instruction, but keep it as a continuous exercise. It is the same as with arithmetic.

A teacher: Should I continue giving handwriting instruction in my first-grade class when I am teaching arithmetic?

Dr. Steiner: We will have to look at that. It is, of course, desirable that you try to get the children to learn to write themselves. From our perspective, they should be able to write at least a little when they are about eight years old. We need to remember that we must bring them to where they would be in a normal elementary school. [438-439]

* * *

Just as you can get children accustomed to writing in different ways, I do not know why you cannot teach children how to make a poster and how a poster can be beautiful, and how they can recognize the beauty of a beautiful poster. They should also recognize an ugly poster. But people look at such things without becoming angry. We must develop taste. We should develop a feeling for style. Concerning the feeling for style, the instruction, even in the most artistic schools, is terrible.

[Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I, pp. 67, 438-439, 201.]

8. Comments on Students' Handwriting

Something interesting occurred today in the eighth grade. What was the boy's name? He writes exactly like you do, Dr. Stein. He imitates your handwriting exactly. That is certainly an interesting thing. If someone has straight hair, he will learn the handwriting of the teachers. A child with curly hair would not have done that.

* * *

I have not complained that the children cannot yet write. In this period of life, they will learn to do something else. I would like to mention the case of R.F.M. as an example. At the age of nine, she

could not write and learned to write much later than all the other children. She simply drew the letters. Now she is over sixteen and is engaged. She is extremely helpful at work. This is really something else. In spite of how late the girl learned to read, she received a scholarship to the commercial school and has been named the director's secretary. We do not take such things sufficiently into account. When we do not teach such things as reading and modern handwriting at too early an age, we decisively support diligence, for such things are not directly connected with human nature. Learning to read and write later has a certain value.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 74, 224.]

9. Comments Regarding Children with Writing Difficulties

A teacher asks about Th.H. in the fifth grade, who is not doing well in writing.

Dr. Steiner: It is quite clear that with this child certain astral sections of the eye are placed too far forward. The astral body is enlarged, and she has astral nodules before her eyes. You can see that, and her writing shows it also. She transposes letters consistently. That is why she writes, for example, *Gsier* instead of *Gries*. I will have to think about the reason. When she is copying, she writes one letter for another. Children at this age do not normally do that, but she does it consistently. She sees incorrectly.

I will need to think about what we can do with this girl. We will need to do something, as she also does not see other things correctly. She sees many things incorrectly. This is an interesting case. It is possible, although we do not want to do an experiment in this direction, that she also confuses a man with a woman or a little boy with an older woman. If this confusion is caused by an incorrect development in the astral plane, then she will confuse only things somehow related, not things that are totally unrelated. If this continues, and we do nothing to help it, it can lead to grotesque forms of insanity. All this is possible only with a particularly strong development of the astral body, resulting in temporary animal forms that again disappear. She is not a particularly wide-awake child, and you will

notice that if you ask her something, she will make the same face as someone you awaken from sleep. She starts a little, just as someone you awaken does. She would never have been in a class elsewhere, that is something possible only here with us. She would have never made it beyond the first grade. She is a very interesting child. [683]



A teacher: S.T. in the ninth grade is very clumsy in his written expression. Should I have him do some extra work in writing essays?

Dr. Steiner: You should work with his handwriting, very basically, through exercises. As an extra task, you could have him write a quarter page while paying attention to how each letter is formed. If he would do that, if he would pay attention to forming each letter, it would affect his entire character.

Aside from that, his lines of vision converge at the wrong place. His eyes do not properly fix upon the object. We should correct that. Remind him often so that his eyes look in parallel. You can also have him read as though he were shortsighted, although he is not. His eyes droop just like he droops when he walks. He does not walk properly, he drags his feet. Have you ever noticed, for example, that when he is at the playground and wants to run from one place to another, he never does it in a straight line, but always in some kind of zigzag. You should also look at how his hair always falls across his forehead. He also has no sense of rhythm. If he has to read something rhythmic in class, he gets out of breath. In gymnastics, you could have him move firmly, stamp his steps along.

Karmically, it is as though he has two different incarnations mixed together. In his previous incarnation, his life was cut off forcefully. Now, he is living through the second part of that incarnation and the first part of the present incarnation at the same time. Nothing fits. He has already read Kant. He cannot do things any other child can do, but he asks very unusual questions that show he has a very highly developed soul life. Once, he asked me if it is true that the distance between the Sun and the Earth is continually decreasing. He asked

whether the Sun was coming closer to us. He asked such questions without any real reason. You need to show him other perspectives, and have him do odd things in a disciplined way, for instance, some mathematical things that pique his curiosity, that are not immediately clear to him. You could, for example, have him make knots with a closed loop. Oskar Simony discusses that in his paper on forming knots with closed loops.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 683, 693-695.]

LEFT-HANDEDNESS

1. Ambidexterity and Left-Handedness

I would now like to turn to a question I have often been asked, which has some significance, the question of left-handedness and ambidextrousness.

Right-handedness has become a general human habit that we use for writing and other tasks. It is appropriate to extend that by making the left hand more dexterous, in a sense. That has a certain justification. When we discuss such things, however, our discussion will bear fruit only if we have some deeper insight into the conditions of human life.

When we move into a period when the entire human being should be awakened; when, in addition to the capacities for abstraction that are so well developed today, developing the capacities for feeling as well as for doing plays a role, we will be able to speak quite differently about many questions than we can now.

If education continues as it is today and does not help us understand the material through the spiritual, so that people are always stuck in abstractions (materialism is precisely being stuck in abstractions), then after a time you will realize that teaching people to use both hands for writing traps them in a kind of mental weakness. This results in part from how we are as modern human beings, how we presently use the right hand to a much greater extent than the left. The fact that the whole human being is not completely symmetrical also plays a part, particularly in regard to certain organs. Using both hands to write, for example, has a deep effect upon the entire human organism.

I would not speak about such things had I not done considerable research in this area and had I not tried, for example, to understand what it means to use the left hand. When people develop a capac-

ity for observing the human being, they will be able to see through experimenting what it means to use the left hand. When human beings reach a certain level of independence of the spirit and the soul from the physical body, it is good to use the left hand. But the dependence of modern people upon the physical body causes a tremendous revolution in the physical body when the left hand is used in the same manner as the right, for example, in writing. One of the most important points in this regard is that this stresses the right side of the body, the right side of the brain, beyond what modern people can normally tolerate. When people have been taught according to the methods and educational principles we have discussed here, then they may also be ambidextrous. In modern society, we may not simply go on to using both hands; however, these are things that can be said only from experience. Statistics would certainly support what I have said.

If you want an idea of how strongly the effects of the spirit-soul act in parallel with the physical body of the child, then we need to look to the spiritual world. That is why I find eurythmy so promising in educating children, because eurythmy is an ensouled movement and thus increases the activity of the will, in contrast to the normal passivity of the will, which is what normal gymnastics primarily trains.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 213-214.]

2. Introducing Writing to Left-handed Children

Question: How does one introduce writing to left-handed children?

Dr. Steiner. It is necessary for us to do a great deal to change a left-handed to a right-handed person. Even when one sees that, out of one's practice, one has not succeeded, one should continue to go on working with left-handedness. It should be the only, much-desired goal to change 'lefties' to right-handedness; essentially, we will succeed with this, especially in writing, in the 'drawing' of letters. In general, it is, of course, necessary that we strongly observe such a child when we are trying to change from left to right-handedness. One has to observe how, at a certain stage, the child shows a tendency toward

flighty ideas. He can also begin to think too fast and, therefore, bring himself to 'stumbling' with his thoughts. One has to observe this carefully and draw the children's attention to it, because the connection between arm, hand, and speech-center development is much more important for the development of the whole human being than is commonly thought; many other things have an influence on whether a child is right or left-handed.

Question: Is it advisable to let children between the tenth and twelfth year practice mirror writing?

Dr. Steiner: Why it should be advisable to allow children between ten and twelve to practice mirror writing is beyond my comprehension. I cannot imagine that it is desirable in any life circumstances! If one rises toward spiritual vision, one will get, in any case, something like a mirror picture of that which acts like an after-effect of physical life. It is indeed a fact that, if one carries something in a written way into the spiritual world, it will appear there (above) as mirror picture. Let us take an example: let us say I will be quite free in speaking about these things someone would try to turn to someone who has gone through death, and let us try to imagine that one would need something in writing in order to compare what one has experienced with this personality. In such a case, the writing as one knows it here, as it is written here, will appear as if one would be reading mirror writing. Writing as it is normally written in the physical will appear as its mirror picture when one looks into the spiritual world. If one were to teach a child artificially to write mirror writing, one would make it a stranger to the earth, one would especially estrange the child from the use of his head. One should not do this. This could, under certain circumstances, lead to considerable spiritual and psychic disturbances. Anthroposophical pedagogy is especially aimed at preparing people for physical life, not to lead them into cloud-cuckoo-lands. To teach a child to write mirror writing would tear the child out of physical life.

Question: Why is it that the direction in which European languages are written is from left to right; in Hebrew from right to left and, in Chinese, from above down?

Dr. Steiner: We are led into great depths of cultural history when we look at the arrangement of writing from left to right, and so forth. At the most, one can only give a small indication.

In previous ages of human evolution, there was an instinctive vision present in human beings. People, indeed, did not see physical occurrences as intensively as we see them now. Instead they saw more of what lived as spirit in the physical. We usually do not imagine how differently from today the human being looked into the world in olden times. People think so easily that, when an ancient Greek looked up into the sky and saw blue (which is so much more intense in the south than in the north), that he saw the same beauty as the present-day Greek sees. That is not the case. The ancient Greek eye did not have such a living impression of blue. We can prove this by the fact that the word 'blue' is missing for the ancient Greeks. They saw everything more in red and yellow nuances; they saw the sky as more greenish than bluish. The whole life of soul, insofar as it is dependent on the senses, has changed in the course of time.

Hebrew has rightly been called one of the languages which has a living connection with archetypal human writing. Therefore, they have preserved the direction from right to left, which we have only kept in doing sums; we also have this as an inheritance of our civilization, a much older inheritance than our handwriting. But we do not notice this any more. We add and subtract, which is also derived from the Orient; we write numbers from left to right but the nature of the numbers themselves demands that we sum them up from right to left. From this you can see that our numbering system is of much older origin than our writing system. This is what one can say about this.

If you then take Chinese writing: Well, you will then have to keep in mind all the habits of Chinese culture. We have certain things quite alive in us, such as the circling of the earth in the direction from left to right, or from right to left. The Chinese do not have these things

in their feelings in the same way. In the direction from below up or from above down, the Chinese have the very oldest direction into which human feeling can penetrate.

[Questions and Answers to Lecture III of *The Roots of Education* in "The Problem of Left-handedness."]

3. Comments on Left-Handedness

A teacher asks about writing with the left hand.

Dr. Steiner: In general, you will find that those children who have spiritual tendencies can write without difficulty as they will, left- or right-handed. Children who are materialistically oriented will become addled by writing with both hands. There is a reason for right-handedness. In this materialistic age, children who are left-handed will become idiotic if they alternately use both hands. That is a very questionable thing to do in those circumstances that involve reasoning, but there is no problem in drawing. You can allow them to draw with either hand. [100]



A music teacher: I would like to ask about learning to play the piano in connection with using both hands.

Dr. Steiner: That is a very correct perception. It is true that it is possible to correct left-handedness quite easily through practicing the piano. That is something we need to keep in mind. We should always correct left-handedness. However, in this connection, we should also take the child's temperament into account so that melancholics give the right hand preference. You can easily find a tendency with them to play with the left hand. We should emphasize the left hand with the choleric. With phlegmatics you should see to it that they use both hands in balance, and the same is true for the sanguines. That is what is important. It would also be an advantage if you tried as much as possible to train the children away from a simply mechanical feeling when playing the piano, but have them learn to feel the keys

as such. They should learn to feel the various places on the piano, up and down, right and left, so that they feel the piano itself. It is also a good idea to have them play without any written music, at least at the beginning. [345-346]



A teacher asks whether the tendency toward left-handedness should be broken.

Dr. Steiner: In general, yes. At the younger ages, approximately before the age of nine, you can accustom left-handed children to right-handedness at school. You should not do that only if it would have a damaging effect, which is very seldom the case. [See the faculty meeting of December 18, 1923. The notes of one teacher at the December meeting relate the following: "That [the need to switch to the right hand for writing] is not true for clearly left-handed people. Those who are clearly left-handed should be allowed to write with their left hand."] Children are not a sum of things, but exponentially complicated. If you attempt to create symmetry between the right and left with the children, and you exercise both hands in balance, that can lead to weak-mindedness later in life.

The phenomenon of left-handedness is clearly karmic, and, in connection with karma, it is one of karmic weakness. I will give an example: People who overworked in their previous life, so that they did too much, not just physically or intellectually, but in general spiritually, within their soul or feeling, will enter the succeeding life with an intense weakness. That person will be unable to overcome the karmic weakness in the lower human being. (The part of the human being that results from the life between death and a new birth is particularly concentrated in the lower human being, whereas the part that comes from the previous earthly life is concentrated more in the head.) So, what would otherwise be strongly developed becomes weak, and the left leg and left hand are relied upon as a crutch. The preference for the left hand results in the right side of the brain, instead of the left, being used in speech. If you give in to that too much,

then that weakness may perhaps remain for a later, a third, earthly life. If you do not give in, then the weakness is brought into balance.

If you make a child do everything equally well with the right and left hands, writing, drawing, work, and so forth, the inner human being will be neutralized. Then the I and the astral body are so far removed that the person becomes quite lethargic later in life. Without any intervention, the etheric body is stronger toward the left than the right, and the astral body is more developed toward the right than the left. That is something you may not ignore; you should pay attention to it. However, we may not attempt a simple mechanical balance. The most naive thing you can do is to have as a goal that the children should work with both hands equally well. A desire for a balanced development of both hands arises from today's complete misunderstanding of the nature of the human being. [634-635]



A teacher: S.J. in the seventh grade is doing better writing with her left hand than with her right.

Dr. Steiner: You should remind her that she should write only with her right hand. You could try having her lift her left leg so that she hops around on her right leg, that is, have her jump around on her right leg with her left leg drawn up close to her. She is ambidextrous.

If there are children who are clearly left-handed, you will need to decide. That is something you can observe. You need to look at the left hand. With real left-handed children the hands appear as though exchanged; the left hand looks like the right hand in that it has more lines than the right hand. [The notes of one of the teachers contained the following: "That is not true for clearly left-handed people. Those who are clearly left-handed should be allowed to write with the left hand." In other words, only cross-dominant left-handed children were to be taught to write with the right hand.]

This could also be done through the eyes. You could have children who are really left-handed raise the right hand and look at it with both eyes. Observe how their eyes cross as they move their gaze up

their arm until they reach the right hand and then move their gaze back. Then have them stretch their arm. Do that three times.

Additional indications about left-handedness can be found in *The Problem of Left-Handedness*, Ruth Finser, editor, St. George Publications, 1978, which contains excerpts from *Correspondences between Microcosm and Macrocosm* (April 9, 1920, GA 201; *Meditative Observations and Indications to Deepen the Art of Therapy* (January 8, 1924 GA 316); and *Lectures to Workmen* (August 2, 1922 GA 347); February 9, 1924 GA 352); [*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, p. 100, 345–346.]; [*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 634–635, 694–696.]

STENOGRAPHY AND TYPING

1. Shorthand and Stenography

Instead of seeing me here talking to you, imagine that you are in ancient Greece, where a rhapsodist is reciting Homer to an audience in that strange style we no longer use—part song, part speech. Imagine a stenographer sitting by the side of this rhapsodist reciting Homer. What a strange scene—completely impossible. Impossible, if only for the simple reason that the ancient Greeks had a very different memory and did not need anything so far removed from the world as the shapes of shorthand to remember what came to them through speech. You can see from this that an exceedingly destructive element constantly interferes in our culture. We need this destructive element. In the whole of our cultural life we cannot possibly do without shorthand, but we should be aware that there is something destructive in it. What in our cultural life is this awful habit of writing everything down in shorthand? It is as though we were no longer able to regulate our appropriate rhythm between waking and sleeping and were to use our sleep time to carry on all kinds of activities so as to implant in our soul life something that it no longer takes in naturally. By using shorthand, we retain something in our culture that, if left to ourselves with our present natural aptitudes, we would cease to notice and, in fact, forget. We thus keep something artificially awake in our culture that destroys it just as much as all-night studying ruins the health of overzealous students. For this reason, our culture is no longer truly healthy.

We must realize that we have already crossed the Rubicon—that was in ancient Greek times. Humankind has passed the point when we had an absolutely healthy culture. Now our culture will become ever more unhealthy, and human beings will more and more have to find within education a healing process against all the things that make them sick in their environment. We must not allow ourselves to

indulge in illusions about this. For this reason it is infinitely important to connect writing with drawing and to teach writing before reading.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 131-132.]

2. Shorthand and Stenography II

Dr. Steiner: If we add stenography to our curriculum, we need to start now. [10th grade]

A teacher: Most of them already do it.

Dr. Steiner: That doesn't concern us. We need to ask ourselves if we should use these two periods a week to teach stenography in the tenth grade and, then, which system. Gabelsberger? The boundary for that is here. Gabelsberger predominates here and in Bavaria also. I think the Gabelsberger method would do the least damage. If only stenography had never been created! But now that it exists, people cannot live without it, just like the telephone. Well, Gabelsberger it is. Two periods of stenography. [275]

The only class that is suffering less from a lack of concentrated instruction is foreign language. It suffers the least. The main lesson and art class suffer not only from a psychological perspective, there is something in human nature that is actually destroyed by piecemeal teaching. The children do not need to do handwork, knitting or crochet, for a week at a time. That is something they can do later. We don't need to be pedantic. I could imagine finding it very intriguing to knit on a sock every Wednesday at noon for a quarter of an hour, so that it would be done in a half year. To work every Wednesday on a sculpture is something else again. But, you can learn to knit socks in that way. You need to simply find a solution for these things.

A handwork teacher: I find it very pleasant to have the children once a week.

Dr. Steiner: If it does not involve crafts, then the pauses are unimportant. However, when it does involve crafts, then we should try to maintain a certain level of concentration. When we have the

children learn bookbinding, that certainly requires a concentrated level of work. This is something that is coming. In the tenth grade we already have practical instruction. In such a class, we wouldn't do any other crafts.

You should learn stenography in your sleep, that is without any particular concentration. Teaching stenography at all is basically barbaric. It is the epitome of Ahrimanism, and for that reason, the ideal would be to learn stenography as though in sleep. The fact that is not possible makes it significant when it is being done so poorly, as though there was no concentration given to it while learning it. It is simply all nonsense. It is cultural nonsense that people do stenography. [300]

A teacher: The children have asked if they are required to learn stenography.

Dr. Steiner: There are a number of reasons why it should be required. Stenography only begins in the tenth grade. We could change things so that they have stenography for one period a week in the afternoons, but it would be required. It would be quite good if the children learned stenography. [426]

I work so hard to unburden the teachers because I must admit to feeling that you do not always have the necessary enthusiasm to really put something into your teaching. We need more fire, more enthusiasm in our teaching. So much depends upon that. If, for example, a boy does not want to participate in handwork, you need to give some thought to giving him something he finds interesting. I know stenography can be learned in nothing flat, without much homework. I have, unfortunately, not been able to see what you do there. How do you explain stenography to the children?

A teacher: I gave an introductory lecture on the history of stenography, then taught them the vowels.

Dr. Steiner: You can generate much more excitement if you also teach abbreviations when you teach them the vowels. All that relates

to what we must overcome. What is that supposed to mean, "The children don't want to?"

A teacher: One girl told me she does not need stenography. She is interested only in art.

Dr. Steiner: One thing must support the other. The students do not need to consider the question, "Why do I need to learn this?" We must direct our education toward being able to say to the student, "Look here, if you want to be an artist, there are a number of things that you need. You should not imagine you can simply become an artist. There are all kinds of things you need to learn that are not directly connected with art. As an artist, you may well need stenography. There was once a poet, Hamerling, who once said he could not have become what he was without stenography." We must learn to teach so that as soon as the teacher says something, the children become interested. That should simply happen. We begin teaching stenography in the tenth grade. By now, the children should be so far that they understand they should not question their need to learn what we teach.

A teacher: The children asked before we even began. Some of them had already learned the Stolze-Schrey method.

Dr. Steiner: That is a real problem. If there were enough children, it might lead to needing a special course for those who want to learn the Stolze-Schrey method. [475-476]

A teacher asks about difficulties with new students in the stenography class.

Dr. Steiner: The only thing we can do is to make stenography an elective. We will make it something the children should learn.

Suppose a student comes into the eleventh grade. In previous years, he had a Catholic teacher for natural history. Now he comes and says he wants to learn only Catholic natural history. There is

nothing we can do to free him of that. We are teaching the best stenographic system, Gabelsberger's, and it is obligatory because in our modern times it is needed for a complete education. I do not think it is prejudice at all. It is the only system that has some inner coherence. The others are all simply artificial. We need to think about having this class in a lower grade. [758-759]

[Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner.]

3. The Effects of Typing Seen from a Spiritual Scientific Perspective

One aspect, so often omitted nowadays, is that of the relationship of a specific area to life as a whole. In our advanced stage of civilization everything has come to depend on specialization. Certainly for a time this was necessary, but we now have reached a stage where, for the sake of mankind's healthy development, we must never lose sight of the totality of life. To do so, we must keep an open mind for what spiritual investigation has to tell us about the human being. To believe that Anthroposophists are always railing against new achievements of technology would be a serious misunderstanding of what this movement could contribute towards knowledge of man. For it is necessary to look upon the complexities of life from a holistic point of view. To give you an example: I have not the slightest objection to the use of typewriters. Typing, of course, is a far less human activity than writing by hand but, as just said, I do not remonstrate against it. Nevertheless I find it important for us to realize its implications, because everything we do in life has its repercussions. Therefore you must forgive me if, in order to illustrate my point, I say something about typewriting from the point of view of anthroposophical spiritual insight. Anyone unwilling to accept it, is perfectly free to dismiss this aspect of life's realities as foolish nonsense. But what I have to say does agree with actual facts.

You see, if one is aware of spiritual processes which, like those in ordinary life, are always happening around us, typewriting creates a very definite impression. After I have been typing as you see, I am not fulminating against it at all, but am only pleased if I have time for it when during the day I have been typing, this activity

continues to affect me for quite a long time afterwards. This in itself does not disturb me, but the aftereffects are noticeably there. And when, finally, I reach a state of inner quietude, the activity of typing, seen in imaginative consciousness, becomes transformed into self-beholding. This seeing of oneself stands there before the seer, who is then able to witness outwardly what is happening inwardly. All this must occur in full consciousness which enables one to recognize that what has thus appeared in form on an outer image is nothing but the projection of what is, or has been, taking place possibly at a much earlier time as an inner organic activity. One can clearly see what is happening inside the human body when one has reached the stage of clairvoyant Imagination. In such objective beholding, every pressing of a typewriter key is changed into a flash of lightning. And what appears during the state of Imagination as a human heart, is constantly being struck and pierced by these flashes of lightning. Now, as you know, the typewriter keys are not arranged according to any spiritual principle, but only according to frequency of use in order to facilitate greater speed in typing. The result is that, whenever the fingers hit the various keys, these flashes of lightning become completely chaotic. In short, a frightful thunderstorm is raging when typewriting is seen with spiritual eyes!

And what does this mean? It means nothing less than that here we have an explanation of why so many people walk about with weak hearts, for they were unable to balance the damaging effects of typing by appropriate counter measures. This is specially the case if people started typing at too early an age, at a time when the heart is most liable to be adversely affected. And if typing should spread more and more, one will soon see how all kinds of heart complaints will be on the increase.

Causes and effects of this kind are part of the pattern of life. There is no wish on our part to run down any of the new technical inventions, but one ought to be able to look with open eyes at what they do to us. One ought to find the means of compensating for any possible harmful effects. Such matters are of special importance for teachers because they have the task of relating education to practical life. What we do at school or in the company of children is not the

only thing that matters. What is of paramount importance is that school and everything pertaining to education is related to life in the fullest sense. And this implies that whoever chooses to be an educator must be familiar with what is happening in the big wide world, must know and recognize life in its widest context.

In Germany the first railway was built from Fürth to Nürnberg in 1835. Before this happened, the health authorities of Bavaria were approached for their opinion as to whether, from a medical point of view, the building of such a railway could be recommended. Before embarking on major projects of this kind, it had always been the custom to seek expert advice. In answer, the Bavarian health authorities stated and documentary evidence is available that expert medical opinion could not recommend the building of railways because of the severe strain upon the nervous system which traveling on trains would inflict upon passengers and railway staff alike. However, so the report continued should railways be built despite the warning of the authorities concerned, all railway lines should at least be fenced off by high wooden walls in order to protect farmers in fields or any others, likely to be near traveling trains, from suffering concussion of the brain.

These were the findings of medical experts employed by the Bavarian health authorities. Today we laugh about them and many other similar examples could be quoted. Nevertheless, there are at least two sides to each problem and from a certain point of view one could even agree with some aspects of this report, made not so long ago, in fact not even a century ago. The fact is that people have become more nervous since the arrival of rail travel. And if we were to make the necessary investigation to find out the difference between people living in our present age of the train and those who still traveled in the old, venerable but rather philistine stagecoach, we would definitely be able to ascertain that the constitutions of the latter were different. Their nervous system behaved quite differently! Though the officials of the Bavarian health authorities have made fools of themselves, from a certain point of view they were not entirely wrong.

When new inventions make their impact on modern life, we must take steps to balance any possible ill effects by finding appropriate

countermeasures. We must aim at compensating for any weakening of man's constitution due to outer influences, by strengthening him from within. But, in this age of ever-increasing specialization, this is only possible through a new art of education, based on true knowledge of man.

The only safe way of introducing writing to the young child is the one advocated just now, because at that age all learning must proceed from the will sphere, and the child's inclination towards the world of rhythm and measure springs from the will sphere. We must satisfy this inner urge of the child by allowing him controlled will activities and not by appealing to his sense of observation and an ability to make mental images. From this it follows that it would be wrong to teach reading before the child has been introduced to writing, for reading already represents a transition from a will activity to an abstract observation. The first step is to introduce writing artistically, imaginatively, and then to let the child read what he has written. The last step, since modern life demands it, would be to help the child to read from printed texts. Only by applying a deepened knowledge of man, based upon the realities of life, is the teacher able to discern what needs to be done.

[*Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, pp. 151-154.]

READING

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1. The Benefits of Waiting to Introduce Reading

We receive the children into our school from their parental homes. Today, we live in an age when writing and reading have produced conventional symbols no longer bearing any direct inner relationship to the human being. Compare the abstract letters of our alphabet with the picture writing used in ages past. What was fixed into written forms in ancient times still bore a resemblance to people's mental images. But writing nowadays has become quite abstract. If we introduce children directly to these abstract letters in reading and writing lessons, we introduce them to something alien to their nature, or at least something inappropriate for six-, seven-, or eight-year-olds. For this reason, we use a different method in our Waldorf school. Instead of beginning with the letters of the alphabet, we engage our young pupils in artistic activity by letting them paint and draw; that is, work with colors and forms. In this activity, not only the head is engaged—which would have a very harmful effect—but the child's entire being is involved. We then let the actual letters emerge out of these color-filled forms. This is how our Waldorf pupils learn writing. They learn writing first. And only afterward do they learn to read, for printed letters are even more abstract than our handwritten ones. In other words, only gradually do we develop the abstract element, so necessary today, from the artistic element which is more closely allied to life. We proceed similarly in other subjects, too. And we work in this way toward a living, artistic pedagogy that makes it possible to reach the very soul of the child. As for the nature of what we usually think of as plant, mineral, and so forth, this can be fruitfully taught only after the child has passed the turning point just characterized and can differentiate itself from its surroundings.

Working along these lines, it might well happen that some of our pupils learn to read and write later than pupils in other schools. But this is no drawback. On the contrary, it is even an advantage. Of course, it is quite possible to teach young children reading and writing by rote and get them to rattle off what is put before their eyes, but it is also possible to deaden something in them by doing this, and anything killed during childhood remains dead for the rest of one's life. The opposite is equally true. What we allow to live and

what we wake into life is the very stuff that will blossom and give life vitality. To nurture this process, surely, is the task of a real educator. [“Education and Practical Life” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, pp. 46-48.]

2. The Effects of Reading and Listening to Stories

We must now be quite clear about the processes taking place during reading. The activity of reading is initially spiritual and then continues into the physical body. It is especially the activities that are of a cognitive, mental/spiritual nature that considerably tax the delicate parts of the physical organization. You can picture, physiologically, the deeper parts of the brain, the white matter. The white matter is the actual, the more perfectly organized part of the brain. It is organized toward the more functional tasks, whereas the gray matter at the surface—which is especially well developed in humans—provides the brain’s nourishment. The gray matter has remained behind, in a very early stage of evolution. In regard to evolution, it is the deeper part of the brain that is more perfect.

If we teach a child to observe well, as in reading, we greatly tax the gray matter, engendering a very delicate metabolic process. And this delicate metabolic process then spreads throughout the organism. It is especially when we believe ourselves to be occupying the children mentally and spiritually that we affect their physical organism most strongly. The observation and comprehension during the reading of and listening to stories engender metabolic processes that tax the children to an inordinately strong degree. We could call what is happening the impression of the spiritual into the physical. A kind of incorporation of what we observe and comprehend during a story is necessary. Something akin to a physical phantom must develop and then impart itself into the whole organism. The organism is filled with delicate salt deposits. Not coarsely, of course. A salt phantom is imparted into the whole organism, and the necessity arises to dissolve it again through the metabolism.

This process takes place when the children read or listen to stories. When we believe ourselves to be occupying the mind and spirit in our lessons, we really evoke metabolic processes. And this must be

considered. We cannot do anything else but to see to it that our stories and reading material are faultless in two respects. First, the children must be interested in the subject. Genuine interest is connected with a delicate feeling of pleasure that must always be present. That feeling expresses itself physically in very subtle glandular secretions that absorb the salt deposits caused during reading and listening. We must endeavor never to bore the children. Lack of interest, boredom, leads to all sorts of metabolic problems. This is especially the case with girls. Migraine-like conditions are the result of a one-sided stuffing of material that must be learned without pleasure. The children are then filled with tiny spikes that do not get dissolved. They tend toward developing such spikes. Yes—we must be aware of these problems.

Second, immediately connected with the metabolic problems arising from boredom is the unhappy situation that does not allow us enough time for everything we ought to do. We should really see to it that the currently available readers—which can drive you up the wall—are not used. The books I have seen in the classrooms are really quite awful.

We must not forget that we are preparing the children's physical constitutions for the rest of their lives. If we make them read the trivial stuff contained in most readers we affect their delicate organs accordingly. The children will turn into philistines rather than into complete human beings. We must know that the reading material we give our children strongly affects their development. The results are unavoidable in later life.

I really would like to ask you to compile your own anthologies, including the classics and other worthwhile authors, and to refrain from using the available books. This additional effort is necessary. We must do something. It is, after all, the task of the Waldorf school to use methods different from those practiced elsewhere. What matters is that in reading or storytelling, and also in the presentation of the natural sciences, we take great care not to harm the children in these two ways.

[*Education for Adolescents*, pp. 63-64.]

3. Working Hygienically with Reading

When we receive a child into our school, we are expected to teach and train the youngster. We introduce all kinds of activities, such as writing, reading, and arithmetic, but really we are assaulting the child's nature. Suppose that we are to give reading lessons. If taught in the traditional way, they are certainly one-sided, for we make no appeal to the child's whole being. Essentially, we are actually cultivating a malformation, even a predisposition toward illness. And, when teaching writing, we are cultivating a tendency toward illness in another direction. In teaching young children, we are making assaults on them all of the time, even if this is not always evident because the illness lies hidden and dormant. Nevertheless, we have to make continual attacks upon the children. At our stage of civilization there is no other way. But we must find ways and means of making amends for those continual assaults on our children's health. We must be clear that arithmetic represents a malformation, writing a second malformation, and reading a third malformation, not to speak of history or geography! There is no end to it and it leads us into a real quandary. To balance out those malformations, we must constantly provide what will make good the damage; we must harmonize what has been disturbed in the child. It is most important to be aware of the fact that, on one hand, we must teach children various subjects but that, on the other, we must ensure that, when we do so, we are not hurting them. The right method in education therefore asks: How do I heal the child from the attacks which I continually inflict? Awareness of this must be present in every right form of education.



How often have I emphasized that anthroposophical spiritual science addresses itself to the whole human being! In anthroposophy, the whole human being enters into a relationship to what a specific branch of spiritual science can contribute. If teachers are introduced to both healthy and sick development of children in a living way, if they can harmonize those two aspects of child development, then

their own feeling life will at once be motivated. They will face each individual child with his or her specific gifts as a whole human being. Even if teachers teach writing in an artistic way, they can still be guiding their children in a one-sided way that comes very close to malformation. But, at the same time, they also stand there as whole human beings, who have a rapport with their children's whole beings and, in this capacity, as whole human beings, they themselves can be the counter-force to such one-sidedness.

If, as a teacher who has a living relationship with everything that has to do with the human being, I *must* lead the child in a one-sided way when I teach reading or writing, then I must go about it in such a way that, precisely through leading the child into one-sidedness, I at the same time bring about an inner harmonization of the child's being. The teacher who always has to work toward the wholeness of all things must stand there as a whole person, whatever subject is taught. There are two things that must always be present in education. On one hand, the goal of each particular subject and, on the other, the 1,001 imponderables which work intimately between one human being and another. If teachers are steeped in knowledge of the human being and the world—and if their knowledge begins to live in them when they face their children—we have a situation similar to that of the plant. As the entire formative force shoots into a single organ in a plant, only to withdraw again in the right way and shoot into another organ, so the teacher holds this totality, this unifying force, in his or her own being, while guiding the child from stage to stage. Spiritual science can stimulate this way of guiding the child, for spiritual science is related to all branches of outer, natural science in the same way as the soul is related to the human body. And, as, according to the old saying, a healthy soul is to be found in a healthy body, so, too, in and through a healthy science of nature there should be found a healthy science of the spirit, a healthy anthroposophy.

[“Knowledge of Health and Illness” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, pp. 76-77, 86-87.]

4. The Need for Artistic Work Prior to Learning to Write and Read

[Knowledge of the human soul] is what matters above all if we wish to found a living method of education, as distinct from one based on mere principles and intellectual theories. This living method of education then guides us to observe the child from year to year. It is this *How*, this individual treatment of each child even within a larger class, that matters. It is possible to achieve it. The Waldorf school has already demonstrated this fact during the first few years of its existence.

Here I can only give broad outlines, which can be supplemented by more detailed examples. First of all, we receive the child into our first grade where she is supposed to learn writing and reading, perhaps also the beginnings of arithmetic and so on. Let us first discuss reading. Reading in our present culture is really quite alien to a young child. If we go back to ancient times, we find that a kind of picture writing existed in which each letter word still retained a pictorial connection with the object it represented. In our present system of writing or printing, there is nothing to link the child's soul to what is written. For this reason, we should not begin by immediately teaching children writing when they enter primary school in their sixth or seventh year. In the Waldorf school, all teaching—and this includes writing, which we introduce before reading—appeals directly to a child's innate artistic sense. Right from the start, we give our young pupils the opportunity of working artistically with colors, not only with dry crayons but also with watercolors. In this simple way, we give the child something from which the forms of the letters can be developed. Such things have been done elsewhere, of course. But it is again a matter of *how*. The main thing is that we allow the child to be active without in any way engaging the forces of the intellect but by primarily activating the will. On the basis of drawing and painting, we gradually lead a child's first will activities in writing toward a more intellectual understanding of what is written. We lead our children, step by step, developing everything in harmony with their own inherent natures. Even down to the arrangement of the curriculum, everything that we do at school must be adapted to the

child's evolving nature. But, for this, anthroposophical knowledge of human beings is necessary.

[“Fundamentals of Waldorf Education” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, pp. 116-118.]

5. Preparation for Reading through Artistic Experiences

But there are even further implications. If you prevent children from having an intensive experience of color perspective, they will not develop the necessary incentive while learning to read (always remembering the reservation expressed yesterday, that it is unnecessary to push a child into reading at the earliest possible time). These color experiences will stimulate mobility in the child's mental imagery, suppleness in feelings, and flexibility in the will activities. The child's entire soul life will become more sensitive and pliable. It may well be that, if you use the method of painting-drawing and drawing-painting, the child will not learn to read as quickly. But when the right time comes, reading will not be anchored too loosely, which can happen, nor too tightly, as if each letter were making a kind of a scratch upon the tender soul-substance of the child. The important thing is that whatever is comprehended through soul and spiritual faculties should find its proper realm within the human being. We should never ask: What is the point of teaching the child to paint, if it will never be used in later life? This represents an entirely superficial view of life because, in reality, a child has every need for just this activity; if one wants to understand the complexity of a child's needs, one just has to know something about the spiritual background of the human being. Just as the expression: “You can't understand this” should never be used when talking to children, so also there should never be a skeptical attitude among adults concerning what a child needs or does not need. These needs should be recognized as flowing from the human constitution itself; and if they are, one will respond with the right instinct. One will not worry unduly, either, if a child forgets some of what has already been learned, because knowledge is transmuted into capacities, and these are truly important later in life. Such capacities will not develop if you overload a child with knowledge. It is essential to realize—and actually practice—that one should

impress in the student's memory only what is demanded by social life, that there is no purpose in overburdening the student's memory.

[*The Child's Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education*, pp. 117-118.]

6. The Effects of Early Reading

When reading—well, one just sits, one has already become like a timid mouse, because only the head has to work. Reading has already become abstract. It should be evolved by degrees as part of the whole process.

But if one adopts this method in order to work harmoniously with human nature, it can become extraordinarily difficult to withstand modern prejudices. Naturally, pupils will learn to read a little later than expected today, and if they have to change schools they appear less capable than the other students in their new class. Yet, is it really justified that we cater to the views of a materialistic culture with its demands concerning what an eight-year-old child should know? The real point is that it may not be beneficial at all for such a child to learn to read too early. By doing so, something is being blocked for life. If children learn to read too early, they are led prematurely into abstractions. If reading were taught a little later, countless potential sclerotics could lead happier lives. Such hardening of the entire human organism—to give it a simpler name—manifests in the most diverse forms of sclerosis later in life, and can be traced back to a faulty method of introducing reading to a child. Of course, such symptoms can result from many other causes as well, but the point is that the effects of soul and spirit on a person's physical constitution are enhanced hygienically if the teaching at school is attuned to human nature. If you know how to form your lessons properly, you will be able to give your students the best foundation for health. And you can be sure that, if the methods of modern educational systems were healthier, far fewer men would be walking around with bald heads!



However, as previously mentioned, it is relatively easy to work with this compromise during the first three years. Admittedly, if

one or another student has to leave the Waldorf school for another school during this time because of circumstance, one is usually told that such students are behind in reading and writing. They may be considered far ahead in artistic subjects, such as in drawing or eurythmy, but these, so we are told, are not generally considered to be very important.

[*The Child's Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education*, pp. 76, 148.]

7. Reading as a Means of Developing the Intellect

We should always remember that, during that period of the child's life, we should always consider the child's developing soul forces. During this time, we make many mistakes by giving more attention to the school subjects demanded by life and by the state than we do to the developing human being. Common, everyday things, such as reading and writing, lack the inner basis of, say, geometry and arithmetic. The fact that we have the language we have is not fundamentally connected with anything external or generic. The existence of written letters doesn't have much to do with relationships in the world, whereas the existence of a triangle is based on the fact of its three sides, and that the sum of its angles is 180 degrees. All conventions, such as reading and writing, are primarily useful for developing the intellect and, in particular, reasoning. For now, it would be too much to fully explain that statement in a way acceptable to a genuine psychologist, but those who consider life fully will certainly see the truth of that statement. By comparison, everything that corresponds to general relationships in the world or appeals to human memory—such as history or geography—is more connected, oddly enough, with the feeling forces. It forms feeling. Everything we teach young children about art forms the will. We should teach individual subjects with an eye on the developing human being and always remember that we form thinking with one thing, feeling with another, and willing with yet another thing. The important thing is the developing human being, not any particular collection of knowledge.

When we use these principles, children learn something seldom learned these days. They learn many things today, such as geography, arithmetic, drawing, and so on, but I don't want to speak about them.

Children should learn as I just described, but there is not enough being taught about *how* to learn. Life itself is the greatest teacher. We leave school properly only if we leave with the capacity to learn from life for the rest of our years. But this is impossible if, in school, we are merely filled with facts. It becomes possible only when we use school to develop in the human soul the forces of thinking, feeling, and willing. That's how we learn to learn from life.

[“The Tasks of Schools” in *Education as a Force for Social Change*, pp. 199-200.]

8. Reading and Writing as Conventions

My dear friends, first we must make the distinction that the lectures on education in general differ from those in this course, which will deal more with specific teaching methods. I would also like to say a few words as an introduction, since the methods we will use differ from the prevalent teaching methods, which are based on premises very different from ours. Our own methods will certainly not differ from the other methods applied so far merely out of obstinacy, for the sake of being new or different. They will be different because we must begin to see the special tasks of our age and how we must teach so that future humanity can fulfill the developmental impulses prescribed by the universal cosmic order.

We must realize above all that by employing our method we will, in a certain way, harmonize the higher human being (the human spirit and soul) with the physical body (our lower being). The subjects you teach will not be treated as they have been up to now. In a way, you must use them to develop the soul and physical forces of the individual correctly. The important thing for you is not to transmit information as such but to utilize knowledge to develop human capacities. First and foremost, you must begin to distinguish between the conventional subject matter of tradition (though this may not be stated clearly and concisely) and knowledge based on the recognition of universal human nature.

When you teach children reading and writing today, simply consider the place of reading and writing in culture as a whole. We read, but the art of reading evolved through the development of culture. The shapes of our letters and the connections among their shapes

are purely a matter of convention. By teaching children reading as it exists today, we teach them something that means absolutely nothing to them as human beings, apart from its context within a particular cultural period. We must be aware that nothing we practice in terms of material culture has any direct significance whatsoever for supraphysical humankind or for the supraphysical world. The belief advocated in certain quarters (especially among spiritualists) is that spirits use human script to bring the suprasensory into the physical world; in reality, this is incorrect. Human writing is derived from human activity and convention on the physical plane. Spirits are not the least interested in complying with such physical conventions. Although it is true that spirits communicate with us, they do so only through the medium of a person who fulfills a kind of translation function; spirits do not themselves directly transform what lives in them into a form that can be written and read. The reading and writing you teach children is based on convention; it came about within the realm of physical life itself.

Teaching children arithmetic is a very different matter. You get the sense that the most important thing in arithmetic is not the shapes of the numbers but the reality living in them. This living reality has much more meaning for the spiritual world than what lives in reading and writing. Finally, if we begin to teach children various activities that we may call artistic, we enter an area that has a definite, eternal meaning—something that reaches up into the activity of the human spirit and soul. In teaching children reading and writing, we work in the most exclusively physical domain; in arithmetic our teaching becomes less physical; and in music or drawing, or in related fields, we really teach the children's soul and spirit.

In a rationally conducted lesson we can combine these three impulses of the supraphysical in artistic activity, the partially supraphysical in arithmetic, and the completely physical in reading and writing. In this way, we harmonize the human being.



So we begin to teach writing by using art and by drawing forms; we use the forms of consonants when we want to reach back far enough that children will be moved by the differences in the forms. It is not enough to tell the children merely through speaking, which is exactly why people are the way they are today. By removing the shapes of letters from the current convention and showing their source, we move the whole being of the child, who thus becomes very different than would otherwise be the case if we appeal only to the intellect. We must not allow ourselves to think only in abstractions. Instead, we must teach art in drawing and so on, teach soul substance in arithmetic, and teach reading and use art to teach the conventional in writing. In other words, we must permeate all of our teaching with an element of art.

From the very beginning we will have to greatly emphasize our encouragement of children's artistic capacities. The artistic element especially affects the human will in a powerful way. So we arrive at what is related to the whole human being, whereas everything related to convention remains in the realm of the head. So we proceed in a way that enables every child to draw and paint. We start with the simplest level, with drawing and painting. We also begin by cultivating music so that children quickly become accustomed to handling a musical instrument; this also generates an artistic feeling in children. From this, children also learn to sense in their whole being what would otherwise be mere convention.

Our task is to find teaching methods that continually engage the whole human being. We would not succeed in this endeavor if we failed to concentrate on developing the human sense of art. By developing this sense we lend strength to the future inclination of children to become interested in the world in ways that are appropriate to each individual's total being. The fundamental flaw so far has been the way people inhabit the world with only the head, and the rest of their being merely trails along behind. Consequently, those other human aspects are now guided by animal urges that indulge only untamed emotions, which we are currently experiencing in what we see spreading so strangely from the eastern part of Europe. This phenomenon arose because people have not been nurtured in

their wholeness. It is not simply a matter of cultivating the artistic aspect; our teaching itself, in every subject, must be drawn from the artistic realm. Every method must be permeated by the artistic element. Education must become a true art. The subject of the lesson itself should not become more important than the underlying basis. Drawing thus provides first the written forms of letters and then their printed forms. Based on drawing, we build up to reading. As you will see, this is how we strike a chord with which the souls of children happily vibrate, because they are then no longer interested in the external aspects but see, for example, how a breathed sound is expressed in reading and writing.

Consequently, we will have to rearrange much of how we teach. You will find that what we aim at in reading and writing today cannot, of course, be established exclusively as indicated here; all we can do is awaken the necessary forces as a basis. If we were to base our teaching only on the process of drawing evolving toward reading and writing (modern life being what it is), we would have to keep the children in school until they were twenty. The normal period of education would not be enough. All we can do now is accomplish our method in *principle* while continuing to educate the children and retaining the artistic element.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 1-3.]

9. Introductory Conversations about Reading

The point is not that children should immediately form strong beliefs about everything, but that between their seventh and fifteenth years they should learn out of love for their teacher, out of a sense of the teacher's authority. For this reason, the suggested conversation with the children, which you can expand on as you wish, should continue along the following lines: "Look how grown-ups have books and can read. You can't read yet, but you will learn to read. When you have learned how to read you will also be able to take books and learn from them as grown-ups learn from them. Adults can write letters to each other; in fact, they can write down anything they like. Soon you will also be able to write letters, because you will also learn to write. Besides reading and writing, grown-ups can also do arithmetic. You don't yet know what doing arithmetic means. But you have to

be able to do arithmetic when you go out into life, for instance, if you want to buy something to eat or to wear or if you want to make something to wear.” This is the kind of conversation you must have with the children. Then you say: “You will also learn to calculate.” It is useful to draw the children’s attention to this thought once and then, perhaps the next day, draw their attention to it again, so that you repeat the idea a number of times. It is vital to raise to consciousness what the children will learn in this way.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 49-50.]

10. Preparation for the Introduction of Reading

Only when you have taught the children in this way to use their hands and ears is the time ripe for progressing to the first elements of reading, in particular reading handwriting. (We shall pay greater attention to the details later. Today, in this preparatory talk, I want to suggest the points of view according to which we can proceed, rather than pedantically examining one aspect after another.) With respect to method, it will have had an extraordinarily good effect on the children to have spoken to them as early as the first lesson about writing, reading, and arithmetic and about how they cannot do these things yet but will learn them all in school. As a result of this discussion, a certain hope, wish, and resolve will form in the children, and through what you yourself do, they will find their way into a world of feeling that, in turn, acts as an incentive to the realm of the will. As an educational measure you do not present the children directly with what you want to teach them; instead, you leave them for a while in a state of expectation. This has an extraordinarily positive effect on the development of the will in the growing human being.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 54-55.]

11. Developing Reading from Writing

Educationally, it is an enormously important moment when we allow the written forms that are the basis of reading to spring out of what we have created artistically. Thus instruction in the Waldorf School begins from a purely artistic point of view. We develop writing from art and then reading from writing. In that way, we completely develop

the children in relation to those forces that slowly want to develop out of their nature. In truth we bring nothing foreign into the child. As a matter of course, around the age of nine the children are able to write from what they have learned in drawing and then go on to reading. This is particularly important, because when people work against rather than with the forces of human nature, they damage children for the rest of their lives. If, however, we do exactly what the child's nature wants, we can help human beings develop something fruitful for the rest of their lives. [*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 90-91.]

12. Teaching Writing before Reading

We can say that the first stage of schooling lasts until the ninth year. What do we do during that period of time? Our starting point will be the artistic realm. We shall work musically and in painting and drawing with the children in the way we have discussed. We shall allow writing to proceed gradually out of painting and drawing. Step by step the forms of writing will arise out of the forms of our drawings, and then we shall move on to reading.

It is important for you to understand the reasons for this sequence so that you do not start with reading and then link it with writing but rather progress from writing to reading. Writing is, in a sense, more alive than reading. Reading isolates human beings very much and draws them away from the world. [See Steiner's lectures on curriculum in *Discussions with Teachers*.] In writing we have not yet ceased to imitate universal forms if we let it arise out of drawing. Printed letters have indeed become extraordinarily abstract, but they are derived from written letters, and so we, too, let them arise from the written letters of our lessons. It is entirely right if, at least for writing lessons, you keep the thread intact that leads from the drawn shape to the written letter, so that the children still sense the original drawn form in the letters. In this way you overcome what is so alien to the world in writing. In the process of finding their way into writing, the children assimilate an element that is very alien to the world. But when we link the written shapes to the universal forms—when we say, for example, that *f* stands for *fish* and so on—we lead them back toward the world. And it is so very important that

we do not sever the children's links with the world. As we go farther back in civilization, the links we find that bind the human being to the world become more alive. You need only look with your souls at one particular image to understand what I mean.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 130–131.]

13. Teaching Writing before Reading II

From the change of teeth until puberty, we must form all our teaching artistically; we must begin everywhere from an artistic perspective. If we teach children letters, from which they are to learn to read and write as is now commonly done, then they will have absolutely no relationship to those characters. We know, of course, that the letters of the alphabet arose in earlier civilizations from a pictorial imitation of external processes in things. Writing began with pictograms. When we teach the letters of the alphabet to the child, we must also begin with pictures. Thus, in our Waldorf school in Stuttgart, we do not begin with letters; we begin with instruction in painting and drawing. That is difficult for a child of six or seven years, just entering school, but we soon overcome the difficulties. We can overcome those difficulties by standing alongside the child with a proper attitude, carried within our authority in such a way that the child does indeed want to imitate what the teacher creates with form and color. The child wants to do the same as the teacher does. Children must learn everything along that indirect path. That is possible only, however, when both an external and an internal relationship exists between the teacher and pupil, which occurs when we fill all our teaching with artistic content. An unfathomable, impenetrable relationship exists between the teacher and child. Mere educational techniques and the sort of things teachers learn are not effective; the teacher's attitude, along with its effect on the feelings of the child, is most effective; the attitude carried within the teacher's soul is effective. You will have the proper attitude in your soul.

It is important that we do not simply stuff abstract ideas into children, but that we know how to proceed with children when we want to create within their souls something fruitful for all of life. Therefore, we do not abstractly teach children to read and write, but

begin artistically with writing and allow all the abstraction within letters to arise from pictures. In that way, we teach children to write in a way appropriate to the child's needs. We do not simply appeal to the child's capacity to observe, to the head alone, but to the entire human being. First, we teach children to write. When the child has learned to write in this way—so that the child's entire being, and not simply the head, participates in the picture—then what we give the child is appropriate. After children learn to write, they can learn to read. Anyone caught up in today's school system might say that such children would learn to read and write more slowly than otherwise. However, it is important that the tempo of learning is proper. Basically, children should learn to read only after the age of eight, so that we can develop reading and writing pictorially and artistically.

9. The Origin of Language in Relation to Vowels and Consonants

The most damaging effects, just during the age of seven to nine, are caused by one-sided illusions, by fixed ideas about how certain things should be taught. For example, the nineteenth century—but this was already prepared for in the eighteenth century—was tremendously proud of the new phonetic method of teaching reading that superseded the old method of making words by adding single letters—a method that was again replaced by the whole-word method. And because today people are too embarrassed to openly respect old ways, one will hardly find anyone prepared to defend the old spelling method. According to present opinion, such a person would be considered an old crank, because enthusiasm about an old-fashioned spelling method is simply not appropriate. The phonetic and the whole-word method carry the day. One feels very proud of the phonetic method, teaching the child to develop a feeling for the quality of sounds. No longer do young pupils learn to identify separate letters, such as *P*, *N*, or *R*; they are taught to pronounce the letters as they sound in a word.

There is nothing wrong with that. The whole-word method is also good, and it sometimes even begins by analyzing a complete sentence, from which the teacher progresses to separate words and then to single sounds. It is bad, however, when these things become

fads. The ideas that underlie all three methods are good—there is no denying that each has its merits. But what is it that makes this so? Imagine that you know a person only from a photograph showing a front view. The picture will have created a certain image within you of that person. Now imagine that another picture falls into your hands, and someone tells you that this is the same person. The second picture shows a side view and creates such a different impression that you may be convinced that it could not be the same person. Yet in reality both photographs show the same individual, but from different angles. And this is how it always is in life: everything has to be considered from different angles. It is easy to fall in love with one's own particular perspective because it appears to be so convincing. And so one might, with good reasons, defend the spelling method, the phonetic method, or the whole-word method to the extent that anyone else with an opposite opinion could not refute one's arguments. Yet even the best of reasons may prove to be only one-sided. In real life, everything has to be considered from the most varied angles.

If the letter forms have been gained through painting drawings and drawing paintings, and if one has gone on to a kind of phonetic or whole-word method—which is now appropriate because it leads the child to an appreciation of a wholeness, and prevents it from becoming too fixed in details—if all this has been done, there is still something else that has been overlooked in our materialistic climate. It is this: the single sound, by itself, the separate *M* or *P*, this also represents a reality. And it is important to see that, when a sound is part of a word, it has already entered the external world, already passed into the material and physical world. What we have in our soul are the sounds as such, and these depend largely on our soul nature. When we pronounce letters, such as the letter *M*, for example, we actually say “*em*.” Ancient Greeks did not do this; they pronounced it “*mu*.” In other words, they pronounced the auxiliary vowel *after* the consonant, whereas we put it *before* the consonant. In Middle Europe today, we make the sound of a letter by proceeding from the vowel to the consonant, but in ancient Greece only the reverse path was taken. This indicates the underlying soul condition of the people concerned.

Here we have a significant and important phenomenon. If you look at language, not just from an external or utilitarian perspective (since language today has become primarily a way of transmitting thoughts or messages, and words are hardly more than symbols of outer things), and if you return to the soul element living in the word—living in language as a whole—you will find the way back to the true nature of the so-called sound; every sound with a quality of the consonant has an entirely different character from a vowel sound. [In several European languages the vowel sound added to a consonantal letter is pronounced either before or after the consonant (that is, *em*, but *dee*). It is conceivable that here the stenographer may have omitted the word “often,” and the text may have read “In Middle Europe today we *often* make the sound of a letter by proceeding from the vowel to the consonant. . . .” — Trans.]

As you know, there are many different theories explaining the origin of language. (This is a situation similar to photographs taken from different angles.) Among others, there is the so-called *Bow-Wow Theory*, which represents the view that words imitate sounds that come from different beings or objects. According to this theory, when people first began to speak, they imitated characteristic external sounds. For example, they heard a dog barking, “bow-wow.” If they wanted to express a similar soul mood they produced a similar sound. No one can refute such an idea. On the contrary, there are many valid reasons to support the Bow-Wow Theory. As long as one argues only from this particular premise, it is indisputable. But life does not consist of proofs and refutations; life is full of living movement, transformation, living metamorphosis. What is correct in one particular situation can be wrong in another, and vice versa. Life has to be comprehended in all its mobility.

As you may know, there is another theory, called the *Ding-Dong Theory*, whose adherents strongly oppose the bow-wow theory. According to this second theory, the origin of language is explained in the following way: When a bell is struck, the ensuing sound is caused by the specific constitution of its metal. A similar mutual relationship between object and sound is also ascribed to human speech. The Ding-Dong Theory represents more of a feeling into the materiality

of things, rather than an imitation of external sounds. Again, this theory is really correct in certain respects. Much could be said for either of these theories. In reality, however, language did not arise exclusively according to the Ding-Dong Theory nor the Bow-Wow Theory, although both theories have elements of truth. Many other related factors would also have to be considered, but each theory, in isolation, gives only a one-sided perspective. There are many instances in our language that exemplify the Ding-Dong Theory, and many others where sound represents an imitation, as in “bow-wow,” or in the “moo” of lowing cattle. The fact is, both theories are correct, and many others as well. What is important is to get hold of life as it actually is; and if one does this, one will find that the Bow-Wow Theory is more related to vowels, and the Ding-Dong Theory related more to consonants. Again, not entirely, however; such a statement would also be one-sided, because eventually one will see that the consonants are formed as a kind of reflection of events or shapes in our environment, as I have indicated already in the little book *The Spiritual Guidance of the Individual and Humanity*. Thus the letter *F* is formed as a likeness of the fish, *M* as a likeness of the mouth, or *L* like leaping, and so on.

To a certain extent, the origin of the consonants could be explained by the Ding-Dong Theory, except that it would have to be worked out in finer detail. The vowels, on the other hand, are a way of expressing and revealing a person’s inner nature. The forms of the letters that express vowel sounds do not imitate external things at all, but express human feelings of sympathy and antipathy. Feelings of joy or curiosity are expressed, therefore, by the sound; amazement or wonder; “I am astonished!” is expressed by *AH*; *A* [as in *path*] expresses “I want to get rid of something that irritates me.” *U* [as in *you*] expresses “I am frightened.” *I* [as in *kind*] conveys “I like you.” Vowels reveal directly feelings of sympathy and antipathy. Far from being the result of imitation, they enable human beings to communicate likes and dislikes. When hearing a dog’s threatening bark, human beings—if their feelings are like those of the dog—adapt their own experiences to the *bow-wow* sound of the dog, and so on. Vocalizing leads outward from within, whereas forming consonants represents a

movement inward from outside. Consonants reproduce outer things. Simply by making these sounds, one is copying outer nature. You can confirm this for yourselves if you go into further detail.

[*The Child's Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education*, pp. 78-84.]

15. Strengthening Reading Comprehension

Experimental psychologists have recently been particularly interested in what they call the process of comprehension, for instance, the process of comprehension in reading, in the reading of a given passage. In order to determine the nature of the process of comprehension, they have tried to work with people whom they designate “experimental subjects.” Put briefly, the very lengthy experiments take the following course. An experimental subject, a child or an older person, is presented with a written passage to read, and investigations are then made into what the child, for instance, should most profitably do first in order to achieve the most rapid comprehension. It is noted that the most expedient method is first to introduce the person to the subject matter of the passage.

A further series of experiments shows that the experimental subject then carries out a process of “passive assimilation.” After the content has been introduced, it is then passively assimilated. Out of this passive assimilation of a written passage is supposed to arise the faculty of “anticipatory learning,” the ability to reproduce what was first introduced and then passively assimilated in a free spiritual activity. And the fourth act of this drama is then the recapitulation of all the points that are still uncertain, in other words, that have not entered fully into the person’s life of soul and spirit. If you let the experimental subject carry out in proper sequence first the process of becoming acquainted with the content of the passage, then passive assimilation, then anticipatory learning, and finally, recapitulation of whatever is not fully understood, you will come to the conclusion that this is the most expedient method of assimilating, reading, and retaining. Do not misunderstand me—I am putting this idea forward because I *must*, in view of the fact that people talk at cross-purposes so much these days; it is possible to want to express an identical point with diametrically opposed words.

Accordingly, the experimental psychologists will maintain that by such painstaking methods we can learn what we ought to be doing in education. But those who recognize more deeply the life of the human being as a whole know that you cannot arrive at a real educational activity by these means any more than you can put together a live beetle after you have dissected it. This is just not possible. It is equally impossible when you anatomize the human being's soul activity. Of course, it is interesting, and in other connections, can also be most fruitful to study the anatomy of human soul activity. But it does not make teachers. This experimental psychology will not, in fact, lead to a renewal of education, which can arise only out of an inner understanding of the human being. I had to say this lest you should misunderstand a statement I now want to make, a statement that will very much irritate those who are attached to the present-day climate of opinion. The statement is naturally one-sided in the way I shall put it, and its one-sidedness must, of course, be counterbalanced. What do the experimental psychologists discover when they have anatomized, or should we say tortured (for the procedure is not pleasant), the soul of their experimental subject? They have discovered what is, in their opinion, an extraordinarily significant result that is written boldly again and again in educational handbooks as a final conclusion. Put in clear language, the result, roughly, is that a passage to be read and learned is more easily retained if the content is understood than if it is not understood. To use the scientific idiom, it has been determined by research that it is expedient first to discover the meaning of a passage, for then the passage is easier to learn. Now I must make my heretical statement. If the conclusion of these experiments is correct, then I could have known it anyway. I should like to know what person equipped with ordinary common sense would not already realize that a passage is easier to remember if you have understood the sense of it than if you have not. There is no doubt that results of experimental psychology bring to light the most obvious truths. The truisms you find in the textbooks of experimental psychology are on occasion such that no one who has not been trained in the pursuit of science to accept the fascinating along with the absolutely tedious could possibly be persuaded to

bother with them. People do, in fact, become inured to this kind of thinking even by the way they are drilled in their early school days, for the phenomenon is present even then, though it is less pronounced by far than in the universities.

This heretical statement, namely, that you have to know the meaning of something that you are supposed to remember, is aimed particularly at teachers. But there is another point to consider: What is assimilated as meaning works only on the faculty of observation, the faculty of cognizing through thought; by laying emphasis on the meaning, we educate a person one-sidedly merely to observe the world, to know it through thought. If we were to teach only in accordance with that statement, the result would be nothing but weak-willed individuals. Therefore the statement is correct in a way and yet not entirely correct. To be absolutely correct, we would have to say that if you want to do the best you can for an individual's faculty of cognizing through thought, you would have to analyze the meaning of everything that the person is to take in and retain.

It is indeed a fact that by first one-sidedly analyzing the meaning of everything we can go a long way in the education of the human being's observation of the world. But we would get nowhere in educating the will, for we cannot force the will to emerge by throwing a strong light on the meaning of anything. The will wants to sleep; it does not want to be awakened fully by what I might call the perpetual unrestrained laying bare of meaning. It is simply a necessity of life that penetrates beyond the simple truth about the revelation of meaning and gives rise to the fact that we must also do things with the children that do not call for the elucidation of meaning. Then we shall educate their will.

The unseemly practice of one-sidedly using the revelation of meaning has run riot; this can be seen particularly in movements like the theosophical movement. You know how much I have protested over the years against a certain bad habit in theosophical circles. I have even had to see *Hamlet*, a pure work of art, explained in theosophical jargon. It is said that this represents *manas*, something else the I, and another the astral body. One character is one thing, another something else. Explanations of this kind have been particularly

avored. I have fulminated against this sort of practice because it is a sin against human life to interpret symbolically a work that is meant to be taken in directly as pure art. A meaning is thus read into things in an unseemly fashion that raises them up as objects of mere observation to a position they should not occupy.

All this stems from the fact that the theosophical movement is a decadent movement. It is the ultimate remnant of a declining culture, not something that has, in its whole attitude, anything to do with anthroposophy. Anthroposophy aims at the opposite—an ascending movement, the beginning of an ascent. This is radically different. That is why in the theosophical realm so much comes to the fore that is fundamentally a manifestation of extreme decadence. That there are people who can actually perpetrate the symbolical interpretation of the different characters in *Hamlet* is the consequence of the atrocious education we have had and of the way we have striven to be educated only in the realm of meaning.

Human life calls for more than education in the realm of meaning; it calls for education in what the will experiences in its sleeping condition—rhythm, beat, melody, harmony of colors, repetition, any kind of activity that does not call for a grasp of meaning. If you let the children repeat sentences that they are nowhere near ready to understand because they are too young, if you make them learn these sentences by heart, you are not working on the faculty of understanding, since you cannot explain the meaning that will emerge only later on. In this way, you are working on the children's will, and that is what you should do, indeed, you must do. On the one hand, you must try to bring to the children whatever is preeminently artistic—music, drawing, modeling, and so on. But, on the other hand, you must introduce the children to things that have an abstract meaning. You must introduce them in such a way that even though the children cannot understand the meaning as yet, they will be able to do so later on, when they are more mature, because they have taken them in through repetition and can remember them. If you have worked in this way, you have worked on the children's will. You have also worked on the children's feeling life, and that is something you should not forget. Just as feeling lies between willing and thinking—and this is

revealed from the point of view of both the soul and the spirit—so do the educational measures for the feeling life lie between those for the faculty of cognizing through thought and those for the will and its development. For thinking and knowing we must certainly undertake measures that involve the revelation of meaning: reading, writing, and so on. For willed activity we must cultivate everything that does not involve just the interpretation of meaning but needs to be directly grasped by the whole human being—everything artistic. What lies between these two will work mainly on the development of the feeling life, of the heart forces. These heart forces are quite strongly affected if the children are given the opportunity of first learning something by rote without understanding it and without any explanations of the meaning though, of course, there is a meaning. When they have matured through other processes, they will remember what have learned and will then understand what they took in earlier. This subtle process must be very much taken into account in teaching if we want to bring up human beings who have an inward life of feeling. For feeling establishes itself in life in a peculiar manner. People ought to observe what goes on in this realm, but they do not do so effectively. *[Practical Advice to Teachers, pp. 76-82.]*

16. Comments regarding Reading from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*

Dr. Steiner: You should develop reading from pictorial writing. You should develop the forms from the artistic activity. [38] Also, in foreign languages, you should teach reading by way of writing. [58]

A teacher asks about a reading book.

Dr. Steiner: In the reading lesson, not all of the children need to read. You can bring some material and hand it around, allowing the children to read it, but not all need do so. However, the children should read as little as possible about things they do not understand very well. The teachers are reading aloud to the children too much. You should read nothing to the children that you do not know right into each word through your preparation. [62]

A teacher asks how to handle the present perfect tense.

Dr. Steiner: I would speak with the children about various parallels between the past and the complete. What is a perfect person, a table? I would speak about the connections between what is complete and finished and the perfect present tense. Then I would discuss the imperfect tense where you still are in the process of completion.

If I had had time today, I would have gone through the children's reading material in the present perfect. Of course, you can't translate every sentence that way, but that would bring some life into it.

[81-82]

A teacher: The children have asked about a student library, and whether they could read Dr. Steiner's books. Should the older children get something socially directed?

Dr. Steiner: When we have the tenth grade, we can use reading to educate. In general, it is too early to give them such things. On the other hand, perhaps you could give them some cycles if they are appropriately printed. *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, perhaps. Or, maybe *Theosophy*. We would have to work out the preliminaries.

A teacher asks whether students could attend Dr. Steiner's lectures.

Dr. Steiner: Do you think that such a lecture would be helpful? We will probably not be able to get around leaving such things up to the parents. We cannot make any rule about it. The parents need to do that themselves and also be responsible for it. [255-256]

A question is asked about the reading primer.

Dr. Steiner: I don't have the primer. I haven't had it for a long time. I have nothing against it if it is done tastefully. If I am to do the lettering, then I will have to have it again. [303]

A question is asked about four students in the 7A class.

Dr. Steiner: Will the children go into an apprenticeship? They are all nearly the same type. I would hope that things would become better if, with these children, you were to introduce a reading of a speech by Buddha objectively and formally, with all the repetitions, and then had them memorize short passages. You could also use *The Bhagavad Gita*. You could do that with the whole class. Go through it with the whole class and have those children copy it, then do it a second time and they should be able to present it. You should particularly aim at those children. This could also be done in teaching history and language. You could do that every day. [324]

A teacher presents a draft reader.

A teacher: We thought it would contain some legends.

Dr. Steiner: You could do that. Why don't you include them? We need to write a good Jesus legend. This will be a very exciting reading book, and we should discuss these pictures a lot with the children. If you were to print it, I do not think it could be done for less than 20,000 marks. It would have to be very expensive. It is a reading book and would have to cost at least 100 marks. [372]

An eighth-grade teacher: Twenty-five children will be leaving at Easter, but they have not really reached the goals of elementary school. Perhaps we should take them aside and teach them the basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Dr. Steiner: I would agree with that. Do it. It would also be nice if Graf Bothmer could help you. [458]

LITERATURE

1. Engaging Children's Feelings Through Story Telling from *Practical Advice to Teachers*, p. 193
2. Story Telling in Main Lesson from *Discussions with Teachers*, p. 195
3. Introducing Literature to Children—Working with Fables and Poetry from *Discussions with Teachers*, p. 197
4. How to Introduce Stories in order to Engender Understanding from *Spirit of the Waldorf School*, p. 204
5. Stories in the Early Grades from *Kingdom of Childhood*, p. 205
6. Bible Stories for Third Grade from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 207
7. Enlivening Nature Study through Stories from *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, p. 209
8. Working on the Etheric Body through Pictures from *The Education of the Child*, p. 210
9. The Importance of Parables from *The Education of the Child*, p. 211
10. Reading Suggestions for the Middle Elementary Grades from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 214

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES THAT ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS VOLUME:

Teaching Literature

Notes for a Lecture on Education and Drama from “Education and Drama” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, pp. 214–216

The Role of the Plastic, Poetic and Musical Arts in Education from “Education and Art” *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy, II*, pp. 59–60

The Effect of Poetry and Imagination on the Etheric Body from “Why Base Education on Anthroposophy?” in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy II*, pp. 105–106

The High School Literature Curriculum

Ninth grade: *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 176-177, 194-195

Tenth grade: *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 264-265, 352-353, 602-603, 670.]

Eleventh grade: *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 357, 480-483, 644-645

Twelfth grade: *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 362, 600-602, 607, 661, 689-690, 741-742

Literature in the Foreign Language Curriculum

Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner, pp. 753-757, 764-769

LITERATURE

1. Engaging Children's Feelings Through Story Telling

It would be good to consider this: the physical and etheric bodies, in particular, are always cultivated from the head down. In fact, the head rays out what creates the physical human being. If we practice education properly in relation to the head, we serve the growth processes in the best way possible. When we teach children in such a way that the head aspect is drawn out of the whole being, then what is appropriate moves from the head to the limbs; that person grows better, learns to walk better, and so on. Consequently, we can say that if we develop everything related to the upper human being in the appropriate way, the physical and the etheric will flow downward. If, when we teach reading and writing in a more intellectual way, we have the feeling that the child is open to us while absorbing what we offer, it is sent out from the head into the rest of the body.

The I-being and astral body, on the other hand, are formed from below upward when the child's whole being is encompassed by education. A strong feeling of the I arises, for example, when we offer children elementary eurythmy between their third and fourth years. This claims the whole person and a proper feeling of I takes root in the child's being. Furthermore, when we often tell them things that bring them joy and other things that cause pain, the astral body takes form from the lower being up. For a moment, just consider your own experiences a little more intimately. I suspect that you have all had this experience: while walking along the street, something startled you. As a result, you found that not only were your head and heart shocked, but the feeling of shock lingered on even in your limbs. You can conclude, therefore, that in surrendering to something, feelings and excitement are released and affect your whole being, not just the heart and head. Educators must keep this truth very

clearly in mind. They must make sure that the child's whole being is moved. Consider, from this point of view, telling legends and fairy tales. If you have the right feeling for the stories and tell them from your own inner qualities, the way you tell them enables children to feel something of what is told with the whole body. Then you really address the child's astral body. Something radiates from the astral body up into the head, something that the child should feel there. You should have the sense that you are gripping the whole child and that, from the feelings and excitement you arouse, an understanding of what you are saying comes to the child. Thus, you may consider that the ideal when telling legends or fairy tales, or while drawing or painting with children, is not to explain anything or work with concepts, but to move their whole being. As a result, later on when they leave you, out of themselves they will understand what you told them. Try therefore to educate the I-being and astral body from below upward so that the head and heart follow later. Try not to tell the stories in a way that causes children to reflect and understand them in the head. Tell them in a way that evokes a kind of silent, thrilled awe (within limits) and in a way that evokes pleasures and sorrows that continue to echo after the child has left you, gradually to be transformed into understanding and interest. Try to allow your influence to arise from your intimacy with the children. Try not to arouse interest artificially by counting on sensation; instead, attempt to achieve an inner relationship with the children and then allow interest to arise from their own being.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 14-15.]

2. Story Telling in Main Lesson

In such "main lessons" we should also include stories. In the first school year these will be mainly fairy tales. In the second year we try to introduce animal life in story form. From the fable we pass on to speaking of how the animals behave toward each other in real life. But in any case, our lessons will be arranged so that the attention of the children will be concentrated for several weeks on the same thing. Then at the end of the school year we allow time to recapitulate so that what was learned at the beginning will be revived. The

only thing that will be kept apart and carried continuously is the artistic work. Either in the afternoons or, if there is enough time, in the mornings we should have art lessons, treating them as a special training of the will.

It would be ideal in school education if concentrated teaching, which require the child to exert the head forces, could be limited to an hour and a half a day. Then we could have another half hour for telling fairy tales—and besides that, it would always be possible to add about another hour and a half for artistic work. This would amount to no more than three and a half hours teaching in the day for children up to the age of twelve. Out of these three and a half hours we could then, on any given day, allow the short time necessary for the religion lesson, and in this way we could teach the children in relays. Thus, if we have a large number of children in one class we could arrange for one group of children from 7 A.M. to 10 A.M., and another group from 10:15 A.M. until 1:15 P.M. , and in this way we could manage with the available classroom space.

Our ideal would be, therefore, not to occupy any child for longer than three and a half hours. Then the children would always be fresh, and our only other problem would be to think of what we could do with them in the school gardens when there are no lessons. They can play outside during the summer, but during the winter, when they have to be inside, it is difficult to keep them occupied all the time in the gymnasium. One eurythmy lesson and one gymnastics lesson should be arranged each week. But it is good to keep the children at school even when there are no lessons, so they can play and amuse themselves. I do not think it makes much difference if lessons are begun first thing in the morning or later, so that we could very well divide certain classes into two groups.

Now you must realize that there are all kinds of tasks before you. Over time we will have to discuss the whole organization of our work, but first let's take this question of story-telling lessons. It would be good if you could consider what you really want to foster in the children by means of these lessons. Our study of the general educational principles will give you what you need for the actual class teaching, but for the story-telling lessons you will have to find

the material yourselves to be given to the children during all of their school life, from seven to fourteen years of age, in a free narrative style.

To this end, in the initial school years you should have a number of fairy tales available. These must be followed by stories from the animal world in fables; then Bible stories taken as general history, apart from the actual religion lessons; then scenes from ancient, medieval, and modern history. You must also be prepared to tell about the different races and their various characteristics, which are connected with the natural phenomena of their own countries. After that you must move on to how the various races are mutually related to each other—Indians, Chinese, or Americans, and what their peculiarities are: in short, you must give the children information about the different peoples of the Earth. This is particularly necessary for our present age.

These are the special tasks I wanted to give you today. You will then see how discussions can help us. All I wanted to do today was to lay down the general lines for our discussions.

[During the session Rudolf Steiner had written up the following summary on the blackboard:

1. A fund of fairy tales
2. Stories from the animal realm in fables
3. Bible stories as part of general history (Old Testament)
4. Scenes from ancient history
5. Scenes from medieval history
6. Scenes from modern history
7. Stories of the various races and tribes
8. Knowledge of the races

[*Discussions with Teachers*, pp. 22-24.]

3. Introducing Literature to Children— Working with Fables and Poetry

One of Lessing's fables was read.

Rudolf Steiner: You have to remember that prose can be read in varying tone according to the reader's personality. Also, the title of a fable of this kind is not very important and should not be emphasized particularly

The Nightingale and the Peacock

A friendly nightingale found among the singers of the wood enviers galore, but no friend. "Perhaps I shall find one among a different species," she thought, and flew down trustfully to the peacock. "Beautiful Peacock, I admire you very much." "I you, too, dear Nightingale." "Then let us be friends," the nightingale continued, "we ought not to be envious of each other. You are as pleasing to the eye as I am to the ear." The nightingale and the peacock became friends.

Kneller and Pope were better friends than were Pope and Addison.

Rudolf Steiner: Now there is an educational matter I would like to talk over with you. I want to point out that you should never spoil the contents of a "passage" by first reading it aloud yourself, or reading it through with your students, and then pedantically explaining it, because this will destroy the powers of feeling and perception in the children. A teacher with insight will not work this way, but will feel that hearing a bit of prose or poetry should produce a sense of contentment in the soul—a satisfaction should arise from hearing a passage of prose or poetry read. The children will then fully understand every shade of meaning. Within their feelings, in any case, they will instinctively understand what the poem contains. It is unnecessary to go into subtleties or to make learned comments about a poem or prose passage, but through your teaching the children should rise to a complete understanding of it through feelings.

Rudolf Steiner jokingly added an alternate example: France and Italy are better friends than Italy and England. Thus you see that the fable can be applied in the most varying ways actual reading of a piece

until last, first dealing with everything you can give the children to help them understand it. If you prepare for the reading as well as you can ahead of time, then you will not work like a pedant, but help make the whole piece clear and understandable, and thus enhance the children's enjoyment and satisfaction.

I would therefore take something like the following with the children (but you would have to work it out in greater detail). I would say: "Now look, boys and girls, you have certainly seen some dogs at some time or other in your life. If any of you have never seen a dog then you must have been hiding in some dark corner! And you must have noticed that not all dogs are alike. They are very, very different from one another. There are tiny little dogs, small dogs, larger dogs, and great, big dogs. You have probably always been afraid of the very large dogs; but you have not been afraid of the tiny little dogs—or maybe you have, because sometimes they bite people's calves.

"Now today we will look at some of these dogs. You have probably often seen a meat cart in the streets pulled by a butcher's dog. If you have looked carefully, you have probably noticed that the rest of the time this dog sits in front of the butcher's stall and makes sure no one steals the meat. If anyone comes who isn't allowed and takes the meat, the dog must bite that person, or at least bark. Now, you see a butcher's dog cannot be a tiny little animal; no, he must be a big dog. You will also notice that small dogs are never harnessed to a butcher's cart, nor do they watch a butcher's stall.

"You can compare a butcher's dog with a person who has to guard something. You can often compare animals with people. Animals have to do things through instinct, and people must often do the same things because it is their duty. People and animals have to do similar things and therefore they can be compared.

"Suppose a man has to guard something just like a butcher's dog does at the meat stall; the man will form a certain habit. If someone comes and tries to steal something, he will take hold of him by the hair. Yes, when someone is doing something wrong, you take hold of such a person 'by the comb.' But a person has hair, not a real comb. You pull the hair, and that hurts, so the person doesn't try to get away; that is why you do it. You don't say this kind of thing point

blank. If you said straight out, 'I will pull your hair,' it wouldn't be as much fun. There must always be a little fun in life, so you say that you take someone 'by the comb.' A person has hair, and is sometimes insolent; a rooster is almost always insolent, and has a comb; that's why you say, 'I'll take you by the comb.' You can imagine that if, for example, another insolent creature came along, wanting to take a piece of meat out of the stall, the butcher's dog might say, 'I'll take you by the comb!' Then you would have made a very good comparison between a person and a dog.

"Now you know, children, there are also other dogs, small dogs, who are mostly lazy creatures; they are miserably lazy. They lie on cushions or sometimes even on laps. Basically, they are idle fellows. They are 'cushion-dogs,' those 'lapdogs.' They are not as useful as the butcher's dog. The butcher's dog is of some service; the lapdogs, they only play; they are basically useless. But if anyone does anything wrong, the butcher's dog will take that person by the comb—the dog will seize that person and give a thorough shaking. This is of some use, because the other creature will not be able to steal the meat.

"The lapdog doesn't do anything useful like that, but only yaps, yaps at everybody; and especially when big dogs come along, the little lapdog rushes out and yaps and yaps and yaps. But their bark is worse than their bite; that is what the proverb says and that is what the large dogs think as they pass by. You can also see how large dogs go by very calmly; they let the little yappers yap, and think to themselves: Yapping dogs don't bite, they are not brave, they are cowardly. But a butcher's dog must always have courage. The lapdogs run after the big dog and yap, but if the butcher's dog turns round and looks at them, they immediately run away. So you see these little dogs are certainly lazy; they only do what is unnecessary and they are good for nothing. They are like certain people whom we should not listen to, even though they very often yap at us.

"These lapdogs are very small, the butcher's dog is large. But there are other dogs in between—not as big as the butcher's dog, but larger than the lapdog. Among the medium-sized dogs is the sheep-dog. The sheep-dog has to guard the sheep. In many districts it is a more difficult job than here. In many places—in Russia, for example—there are wolves, and the dog has to keep the wolves or any other animals

away from the sheep; and so the sheepdog has gotten into the habit of continually running round the flock. In our country too it is good to have dogs who run round the flock all the time, because the shepherd is often asleep, and any evil-minded creature could come and steal some of the flock. So the sheepdog runs round and guards the flock. Even when there are no wolves, it is good for the sheepdog to run round and guard the flock; and sometimes the sheepdog guards the shepherd, as well, who is then awakened. It might even happen that a shepherd could be stolen while asleep!

“Thus the shepherd’s dog, the sheepdog, is of service; the sheepdog is a useful animal and can be compared with people who have found their proper work in life, people who are not useless like the idlers, the lapdogs. Yes, in human life too there is this difference between those who are like sheepdogs and those who are like butcher’s dogs. They are both useful, although the latter, like the butcher’s dog, are at times rather rough. Sometimes they say exactly the right thing in a few words and straight to the point, to guard something, to ward off an enemy. You can make a comparison with the sheepdogs also; they are like people who work quietly, waiting calmly until difficulties are upon them. The sheepdog runs round and round for a long time; he has nothing to do, but he must always be prepared for action, so that when the wolf or another enemy appears the sheepdog will be strong and courageous and well prepared to attack at the right moment. There are also people who have the duty to watch and wait until they are called on to fulfil some task. They must not allow themselves to be harassed by petty things in life, but always have to be ready for the moment when they must act, and act correctly.” This is how I would speak to children, choosing some particular example from the animal world and leading their thoughts to analogies between animals and people. After speaking somewhat in this way you can read aloud the following passage, and when you have read it explanations will be unnecessary. If you were to give the children this little story first without any explanation they would not be fully prepared, because their perceptions and feelings would not be directed to what it contains. If on the other hand you do not explain until afterward, you would pedantically pull the passage apart, and so they would not be able to read it properly either.

The Sheepdog

One evening an old sheepdog who was a faithful keeper of the master's sheep was on the way home. As he went down the street, some little lapdogs yapped at him. He trotted on without looking around. When he came to the meat stall, a butcher's dog asked him how he could stand such constant barking and why he didn't take one of them by the scruff of the neck. "I won't," said the herdsman's dog, "none of them are worrying me or biting me; I must save my teeth for the wolves."

You do not need to say another word to the children. The preparation must come first so that they understand what is read.

Another time you can say to the children, "My dear children! You have often gone for a walk; you have certainly gone for a walk in a meadow, in the fields, also in woods, and sometimes on the edge of the woods where the trees and meadow meet. While you walk in the wood you are right in the shade, but when you are on the edge of the woods the Sun can still shine very brightly on one side. When you find a meadow that borders the woods, you should stand quietly and watch, and see how the flowers grow. It's always good when during your walks you look especially for the places where the trees meet the meadow, because then you can always be looking for something, sometimes in the woods, and sometimes in the meadow; you can continually notice afresh how the grass grows, and how the plants and the flowers grow in the grass.

"But you know, it is especially beautiful and lovely—a real delight—when you can go, not just through woods and fields, but somewhere where the meadows lie among mountains and valleys. Here you'll find much more interesting things than in the meadows, which often get too much sun. Valley meadows that are protected by the mountains have very beautiful flowers, which we can often find among the moss growing in great abundance in these valley meadows. Violets especially are always found with moss growing near them."

Then you can continue talking to the children about moss and violets, perhaps calling on a child to describe a violet and another to talk about moss. And when it is the right season you might even bring some violets and moss to school with you, because they can be

gathered at the same time of year. Then you could continue, "But look, dear children, if you have a valley of this kind near your home, maybe you could go there one day and only see moss. Then a week later you could go there again. What would you see this time? Violets growing in the moss! Yes, they have just appeared; when you were there before, they were hidden in the moss. Remember this, and next year when you go there you can have even greater pleasure, because now you think to yourselves: Last spring there weren't any violets showing here yet, we didn't see one. And then you try to separate the moss with your fingers. Ah! A violet! There it is!

"In nature, my dear children, it is often just as it is with people. There, too, much is often hidden that is good, much that is beautiful. Many people are not noticed because the good in them is concealed, it has not yet been found. You must try to awaken the feeling that will enable you to find the good people in the crowd.

"Yes, dear children, and there is still another way that you can compare human life with nature. Think of a really good person whom you know, and you will always find that person's words to be honest and good. Now some people are modest and others are proud and arrogant. Modest people don't attract much attention, but the pushy ones always like to be noticed. "Now a violet is certainly very beautiful, but when you look at this violet and see how it stretches up its lovely little petals, you cannot fail to see that the violet wants to be noticed, it wants to be looked at. So I could not compare the violet with a modest little child who keeps in the corner out of the way. You could only compare it with a child who is really very anxious to be seen. You will say: That may be, but it doesn't show itself when it's hidden in the moss, does it? Yes, but look; when you see how the violet comes out among its leaves and then again how the whole plant creeps out of the moss, it is just as though the violet not only wanted people to see it and smell it, but to search for it as well. 'Yes, yes! Here I am, here I am but you have to look for me!' And so the violet is like a person who is certainly not modest but rather a sly rascal."

It is good to discuss comparisons of this kind with the children, and to show them analogies between nature and human beings so that everything around them becomes alive. You should have these

talks with the children ahead of time, so they can enjoy the reading when it comes. *After* the reading no more explanations of any kind should be given. You will agree it would not make sense if I were now to begin giving you a lecture in Chinese. You would say, “That is senseless, because we never learned Chinese.” But if you all knew Chinese when I gave my lecture, you would find it extremely dull if afterwards I wanted to explain it all to you. You should have the same feeling about a piece of reading and do everything you can to make it enjoyable.

Talks such as these about modesty and conceit in people— and affectation, as well—can be developed in greater detail than we have done today, and you must let the children take a lively share. Then you can read them the following poem:

What’s gleaming in the sunshine though fast asleep?
Oh, those are tiny violets that bloom in valley deep.
Bloom quite hidden in moss-covered ground,
So that we children no violets have found.
And what’s this little head that stretches silent there?
What whispers in the moss so still and quiet here?
Search and you will find me, search for me still!
Wait, violet, wait, and find you we will!

– Hofmann von Fallersleben

When you teach children a poem in this way, they can enter its every nuance, and it will be unnecessary to spoil the impression with commentary and pedantry afterward. This is the method I want to recommend to you with regard to your treatment of selections for reading, because it will give you the opportunity to talk over many things that belong in your teaching, and further, the children will have a real feeling of satisfaction when such passages are read. This then is what I wish to lay upon your hearts about reading.

[*Discussions with Teachers*, pp. 69-78.]

4. How to Introduce Stories in order to Engender Understanding

If you examine the didactic instructions of the present, which should tend to relate the subject matter to human nature, then you could be driven to despair. A certain correct instinct is there, but these instructions are so narrow-minded and banal that they dreadfully harm the developing child. We would do well at this stage if we consider, for instance, animals or plants in a way such that a certain moralizing appears. For example, you can bring fables to children in a way that helps them to understand the animal world. You should be careful not to bring such “pabulum” during the main lesson, as is so often done. Above all, you should take care not to tell a story to the children and then to follow it with all kinds of explanations. You destroy everything you want to achieve through telling the story by following it with interpretations. Children want to take stories in through feeling. Without outwardly showing it, they are dreadfully affected in their innermost being if they must listen afterwards to the often quite boring explanations.

What should we do in this situation, if we do not want to go into the real details of the art of storytelling? We might say, “Leave out the explanation and simply tell the children the story.” Fine. Then the children will not understand the story and will surely not enjoy it if they do not understand it. If we want to speak Chinese to people, we must first teach them Chinese; otherwise they cannot have the right relationship to what we tell them in Chinese. Thus, we gain nothing by saying, “Leave out the explanations.”

You must try to provide an explanation *first*. When you want to tell the children a story such as “The Wolf and the Lamb,” simply speak with the children about the wolf’s and the lamb’s characteristics. (We could also apply this to plant life.) As much as possible, speak of these characteristics in relationship to people. Gather everything that you feel will help the children form pictures and feelings that will then resonate when you read the story. If, in an exciting preliminary talk, you offer what you would give afterward as an explanation, then you do not kill the sensations as you would in giving that explanation afterward. On the contrary, you enliven them. If the children

have first heard what the teacher has to say about the wolf and the lamb, then their sensations will be all the more lively, and they will have all the more delight in the story. Everything that is necessary for understanding should happen beforehand. The children should not hear the story first. When they hear the story, you must bring them to the heights of their souls for them to understand it. This process must conclude in reading the story, telling the tale, doing nothing more than allowing the children's sensations, already evoked, to take their course. You must allow the children to take their feelings home.

[*Spirit of the Waldorf School*, pp. 37-39.]

5. Stories in the Early Grades

Let me therefore give you an example of something that can sink into the child's soul so that it grows as the child grows, something that you can come back to in later years and use to arouse certain feelings. Nothing is more useful and fruitful in teaching than to give the children something in picture form between the seventh and eighth years, and later, perhaps in the fourteenth and fifteenth years, to come back to it again in some way or other. Just for this reason we try to let the children in the Waldorf School remain as long as possible with one teacher. When they come to school at seven years of age the children are given over to a teacher who then takes the class as far as possible, for it is good that things that at one time were given to the children in germ form can again and again furnish the content of the methods used in their education.

Now suppose for instance that we tell an imaginative story to a child of seven or eight. The child does not need to understand at once all the pictures contained in the story; I will describe later why this is not necessary. All that matters is that the child takes delight in the story because it is presented with a certain grace and charm. Suppose I were to tell the following story:

Once upon a time in a world where the sun peeped through the branches there lived a violet, a very modest violet under a tree with big leaves. And the violet was able to look through an opening at the top of the tree. As she looked through this broad opening in the treetop the violet saw the blue sky. The little violet saw the blue sky for

the first time on this morning, because she had only just blossomed. Now the violet was frightened when she saw the blue sky—indeed she was overcome with fear, but she did not yet know why she felt such great fear. Then a dog ran by, not a good dog, a rather bad snappy dog. And the violet said to the dog: “Tell me, what is that up there, that is blue like me?” For the sky also was blue just as the violet was. And the dog in his wickedness said: “Oh, that is a great giant violet like you and this great violet has grown so big that it can crush you.” Then the violet was more frightened than ever, because she believed that the violet up in the sky had got so big so that it could crush her. And the violet folded her little petals together and did not want to look up to the great big violet any more, but hid herself under a big leaf that a puff of wind had just blown down from the tree. There she stayed all day long, hiding in her fear from the great big sky-violet.

When morning came the violet had not slept all night, for she had spent the night wondering what to think of the great blue sky-violet who was said to be coming to crush her. And every moment she was expecting the first blow to come. But it did not come. In the morning the little violet crept out, as she was not in the least tired, for all night long she had only been thinking, and she was fresh and not tired (violets are tired when they sleep, they are not tired when they don't sleep!) and the first thing that the little violet saw was the rising sun and the rosy dawn. And when the violet saw the rosy dawn she had no fear. It made her glad at heart and happy to see the dawn. As the dawn faded the pale blue sky gradually appeared again and became bluer and bluer all the time, and the little violet thought again of what the dog had said, that it was a great big violet and it would come and crush her.

At that moment a lamb came by and the little violet again felt she must ask what that thing above her could be. “What is that up there?” asked the violet, and the lamb said, “That is a great big violet, blue like yourself.” Then the violet began to be afraid again and thought she would only hear from the lamb what the wicked dog had told her. But the lamb was good and gentle, and because he had such good gentle eyes, the violet asked again: “Dear lamb, do tell me, will the great big violet up there come and crush me?” “Oh no,” answered

the lamb, “it will not crush you, that is a great big violet, and his love is much greater than your own love, even as he is much more blue than you are in your little blue form.” And the violet understood at once that there was a great big violet who would not crush her, but who was so blue in order that he might have more love, and that the big violet would protect the little violet from everything in the world that might hurt her. Then the little violet felt so happy, because what she saw as blue in the great sky-violet appeared to her as divine Love, which was streaming toward her from all sides. And the little violet looked up all the time as if she wished to pray to the God of violets.

Now if you tell the children a story of this kind they will most certainly listen, for they always listen to such things. But you must tell it in the right mood, so that when the children have heard the story they somehow feel the need to live with it and turn it over inwardly in their souls. This is very important, and it all depends on whether discipline can be maintained in the class through the teacher’s own feeling.

[*Kingdom of Childhood*, pp. 57-60.]

6. Bible Stories for Third Grade

A teacher: You gave Biblical stories as the story material for the third grade. I don’t know how I should do that.

Dr. Steiner: Look at one of the older Catholic editions of the Bible. You can see there how to tell the stories. They are very well done, but of course you will have to do it still better. Here you have the opportunity to improve upon the terrible material in Luther’s translation. The best would be to use the Catholic translation of the Bible. In addition, I would recommend that you work somewhat with the translations before Luther’s, so that you can get past all of those myths about Luther’s Bible translation. There is something really wrong about all the laurels Luther has earned regarding the formation of the German language. That lies deep in the feeling of Middle European people. If you go back to the earlier Bible translations and look at longer passages, you will see how wonderful they are in comparison to Luther’s translation which, actually, in regard to the development of the German language, held it back. There is an edition of the Bible

for students, the Schuster Bible. You can get it anywhere there is a Catholic majority. Before the story of Creation, you should begin with the fall of the angel. The Catholic Bible begins with the fall of the angel and only afterward with the creation of the world. That is quite beautiful, simple, and plain storytelling. [The texts of Schuster's stories were the basis for the book *Und Gott sprach: Biblisches Lesebuch für das dritte Schuljahr der Freien Waldorfschule* (And God spoke: Bible reader for the third grade of the Independent Waldorf School) by Caroline von Heydebrand and Ernst Uehli, 1930.] [312-313]



A religion teacher asks about the difference between working with the Bible stories in religion class and in the main lesson of the third grade.

Dr. Steiner: You can learn a great deal if you recall the principle for working with Bible stories in these two different places. When we teach Bible stories in the main lesson, that is, in the actual curriculum, we treat them as something generally human. We simply acquaint the children with the content of the Bible and do not give it any religious coloring at all. We treat the stories in a profane way; we present the content simply as classical literature, just like all other classical literature.

When we work with the Bible in religion class, we take the religious standpoint. We use these stories for teaching religion. If we approach this difference with some tact, that is, without giving any superficial explanations in the main lesson, then we can learn a great deal for our own pedagogical practice by working with this subtle difference. There is a difference in the *how*, an extraordinarily important difference in *how*.

What was told before is then read so that it is firmly seated. I cannot believe the Schuster Bible is poor reading material. The pictures are quite humorous and not at all bad. Perhaps a little cute, but not really sentimental. It is good enough as reading material for the third grade and can also serve as an introduction to reading

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, pp. 312-313.]

7. Enlivening Nature Study through Stories

I have to make a rather drastic remark: After the change of teeth a child would experience a conceptual method of thinking as if spikes were being driven through its whole being, especially if such concepts came from the inorganic or lifeless realm. Anything taken from the soulless realm in itself, will estrange the child. Therefore those whose task it is to teach children of this age need an artistic ability of imbuing everything they bring with life. Everything must live. The teacher must let the plants speak, he or she must let the animals act as moral beings. The teacher must be able to turn the whole world into a fairy tale, into fables and legends. And in this context something else of great significance also must be taken into account.

What would an easygoing teacher do, when faced with such a pedagogical challenge? Most likely he would go to libraries to find books containing legends, animal stories, and other kindred subjects. These he would read up for use in the classroom. Of course, sometimes one has to make do with second-best arrangements, but this method is far from ideal. The ideal would be for the teacher to have prepared himself so well for his task—and this kind of approach does need very thorough preparation—that a conversation between plants or a fairy tale about the lily and the rose will come to the children as their own creation. Ideally, such a conversation between the sun and the moon should be the product of the teacher's individual imagination. And why should this be so? Let me answer in a picture. If one tells pupils what one has found in books however lively one may be as a person if one tells them what one has read and possibly even memorized, one talks to them like a dry and desiccated individual. It is as if one did not have a living skin, but were covered with parchment instead, for there always remain death-like traces in one's own being of what was thus learned from the past. If, on the other hand, a teacher is creative in his work, his content will radiate growing forces, it will be fresh and alive, and this is what feeds the souls of the children.

There has to be a creative urge to clothe the world of plants and animals, of sun and moon, into living stories, if the teacher wishes to reach children of this age. And when having engrossed himself in

such imaginative work which demands a great deal of inner effort, he hurries to school, his steps already betraying his eagerness to share his offering with his class, the effects of his endeavor will doubtlessly be wholesome for all the children. Such a teacher knows only too well that his story will remain incomplete until he has seen the radiant faces of his young listeners.

Up to the end of the ninth year everything the child learns about plants, animals, and stones, about sun, moon, and stars or clouds, mountains and rivers, should be clothed in such a picture form, for the child feels at one with the world. In those young days, child and world are one united whole.

[*Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, pp. 168-170.]

8. Working on the Etheric Body through Pictures

With the change of teeth, when the etheric body lays aside its outer etheric envelope, the time begins when the etheric body can be worked on through external education. We must be very clear about what works on the etheric body from the outside. The formation and growth of the etheric body means the shaping and developing of inclinations and habits, of the conscience, character, memory, and temperament. The etheric body is worked on through pictures and examples—that is, through a child's carefully guided imagination. Just as before the age of seven we have to give the child the actual physical pattern to copy, so between the time of the change of teeth and puberty we must bring into the child's environment things that have the proper inner meaning and value. Growing children will now take guidance from the inner meaning and value of things. Whatever is filled with deep meaning that works through pictures and allegories is proper for these years. The etheric body will unfold its forces if a well-ordered imagination is allowed to take guidance from the inner meaning it discovers for itself in pictures and allegories—whether seen in real life or communicated to the mind. It is not abstract concepts that work in the right way on the growing etheric body, but rather what is seen and perceived—indeed, not with external senses, but with the mind's eye. Such seeing and perceiving is the proper means of education for these years.

[*The Education of the Child*, p. 23.]

9. The Importance of Parables

In another connection, for the period between the change of teeth and puberty, it is important to present living pictures—or symbols, as it were—to the mind. It is essential that the secrets of nature, the laws of life, be taught to children, not in dry intellectual concepts, but as far as possible in symbols. Parables of the spiritual connections of things should be brought before the souls of children in such a way that behind the parables they divine and feel, rather than understand intellectually, the underlying law in all existence. “Everything passing is but a parable,” must be the maxim guiding all of our education during this time. It is of vast importance for children that they receive the secrets of nature in parables before they are brought before their souls as “natural laws” and so on. An example may serve to make this clear. Let us imagine that we want to tell a child of the immortality of the soul, of the coming forth of the soul from the body. The way to do this is to use a comparison—for example, the butterfly coming out of the chrysalis. As the butterfly soars up from the chrysalis, so after death the human soul comes forth from the house of the body. No one can properly understand this fact in intellectual concepts who has not first received it through such a picture. By a parable such as this we speak not just to the intellect but to the feelings of children, to their whole soul. Children who have experienced this will approach the subject with a completely different mood of soul when later it is taught to them in the form of intellectual concepts. It is a very serious matter indeed for anyone who is not first given the ability to approach the problems of existence through feeling. It is therefore essential that educators have at their disposal parables for all the laws of nature and secrets of the world.

Here we have an excellent opportunity to observe the effects that spiritual-scientific knowledge works to affect in life and practice. When teachers come before their children in class, ready with the parables they “made up” out of an intellectual materialistic way of thinking, in general, they will make little impression upon them, for teachers first have to puzzle out the parables for themselves with all their intellectual cleverness. Parables that first have to be conde-

scended to have no convincing effect on those who listen to them. When one speaks in parables and pictures, it is not just what is spoken and shown that works on the hearer, but a fine spiritual stream that passes from the one to the other, from the one who gives to the one who receives. If the one who tells does not have the warm feeling of belief in the parable, no impression will be made on the other. For true effectiveness, it is essential to believe in one's parables as one does in absolute realities. And this can only be so when one's thought is alive with spiritual knowledge. Take, for example, the parable we have been speaking of. True students of spiritual science need not torment themselves to get it out. For them it is reality. In the coming forth of the butterfly from the chrysalis they see at work, on a lower level of being, the very same process that is repeated, on a higher level, at a higher stage of development, when the soul comes forth from the body. They believe in it with all their might; and this belief streams, as it were, unseen from speaker to hearer, carrying conviction. Life flows freely, unhindered, back and forth from teacher to pupil. But for this it is necessary that teachers draw from the full fountain of spiritual knowledge. Their words, everything that comes from them, must have feeling, warmth, and color from a truly spiritual-scientific way of thought.

A wonderful prospect is thus opened throughout the field of education. If it will only let itself be enriched from the well of life that spiritual science contains, education will also be filled with life and understanding. There will no longer be the groping so prevalent now. All art and practice of education that does not continually receive fresh nourishment from roots such as these is dry and dead. The spiritual-scientific knowledge has appropriate parables for all the secrets of the world—pictures taken from the very being of the things, pictures not first made by human beings, but put in place by the forces of the world within things themselves, through the very act of their creation. Therefore this spiritual knowledge must form the living basis for the whole art of education.

The world of *feeling* is developed in the proper way through parables and pictures, which we have spoken of, and especially through the pictures of great men and women, taken from history

and other sources and brought before children. A correspondingly deep study of the secrets and beauties of nature is also important for the proper formation of the world of feeling. Last but not least, there is the cultivation of a sense of beauty and the awakening of the artistic feeling. The musical element must bring to the etheric body the rhythm that will then enable it to sense in everything the rhythm otherwise concealed. Children who are denied the blessing of having their musical sense cultivated during these years will be the poorer because of it for the rest of their lives. If this sense were entirely lacking, whole aspects of the world's existence would necessarily remain hidden, nor should the other arts be neglected. The awakening of the feeling for architectural forms, for molding and sculpting, for line and design, for color harmonies—none of these should be left out of the plan of education. No matter how simple life must be under certain circumstances, the objection can never be valid that the situation does not allow something to be done in this way. Much can be done with the simplest resources, if only the teacher has the proper artistic feeling, joy, and happiness in living, a love of all existence, a power and energy for work—these are among the lifelong results of the proper cultivation of a feeling for beauty and art. The relationship of person to person—how noble, how beautiful it becomes under this influence! Again, the moral sense is also being formed in children during these years through the pictures of life placed before them, through the authorities whom they look up to—this moral sense becomes assured if children, from their own sense of beauty, feel that the good is beautiful, and also that the bad is ugly.

Thought in its proper form, as an inner life lived in abstract concepts, must still remain in the background during this period of childhood. It must develop of itself, as it were, without external influences, while life and the secrets of nature are being unfolded in parable and picture. Thus between the seventh year and puberty, thought must be growing, the faculty of judgment ripening, in among the other experiences of the soul; so that after puberty is reached, young people may be able to form independently their own opinions about the things of life and knowledge. The less direct the influence

is on the development of judgment in earlier years, and the more a good indirect influence is exercised through the development of the other faculties of soul, the better it is for all of later life.

[*The Education of the Child*, pp. 26-28, 35.]

10. Reading Suggestions for the Middle Elementary Grades

Dr. Steiner: It would be a good idea if the Waldorf teachers would work on creating decent textbooks that reflect our pedagogical principles. I would not like to see the current textbooks in the classroom. It would be somewhat destructive to put such reading books in the classes. There are, of course, collections that are really not too bad. One such collection is by a Mr. Richter. It is a collection of sagas. It is neither trivial nor beyond the children's grasp. Even in Grimm's fairy tales, you always have to be selective, as there are some that are not appropriate for school.

A teacher mentions a book of sagas.

Dr. Steiner: What do you know about the things in it? If it contains *Gerhardt the Good*, then it is good. [A middle-high German story by Rudolf von Erns (ca. 1230), translated into modern German by Simrock (1848), and retold by Rudolf Treichler (1955).]

[That is something you can use appropriately for the fourth grade. It even has some good remarks for teachers. *Gerhardt the Good* is wonderful reading material for that age. I discussed it from an anthroposophical perspective in a lecture in Dornach, December, 25-26, 1916, GA 173.]

A teacher: The children also enjoy ballads.

Dr. Steiner: We need to make a good collection of ballads, otherwise people will think Wildenbruch is a poet. Some people say that there is a poet, Wildenbruch. [Ernst von Wildenbruch (1845–1909) wrote "*Heldenlieder*" (Songs of heroes) in 1874 and a series of historical dramas popular at the turn of the century.]

A teacher: Could we also use the book of legends in the third grade?

Dr. Steiner: You will need to tell them. In fourth grade they can read it themselves. In the third grade, let them read it only after you have told it.

A teacher asks about reading material for the fifth grade.

Dr. Steiner: There is nothing that has not been made boring. Try a few of the Greek sagas by Niebuhr. [Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831), diplomat, historian, and author of *Griechische Heroengeschichten. An seinen Sohn erzählt* (Stories of Greek heroes, astold to his son) 1842.]

His book is not very new, but perhaps the best. Maybe a little too long, but well written.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 440-441.]

SPEECH AND RECITATION

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2. The Chest in Relation to the Head and the Limbs from *The Foundations of Human Experience*, p. 219
3. The Development of Speech in the Young Child from *A Modern Art of Education*, p. 220 , 1972 edition
4. Learning Speech Through Imitation from *The Education of the Child*, p. 224
5. Young Children's Relationship to Speech from *The Education of the Child*, p. 225
6. The Effect of Speech on the Young Child from *The Roots of Education*, p. 227
7. The Development of Language and Speech in the Various Stages of Child Development from *The Renewal of Education*, p. 228
8. The Development of Speech in Adolescence from *A Modern Art of Education*, 1972, p. 232
9. Speech as an Expression of the I-Being from *The Essentials of Education*, p. 236
10. The Sense of Speech from *The Foundations of Human Experience*, p. 239
11. Speech as the Expression of Conclusions from *The Foundations of Human Experience*, p. 240
12. Speech as an Expression of Our Thought Orientation from *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, p. 241
13. How Speech Affects the Brain from *The Education of the Child*, p. 242
14. The Integration of Willing, Feeling, and Thinking into the Nervous System from *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, p. 243

15. The Connection of the Sounds of Speech to the Soul from *Human Values in Education*, p. 245
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17. Moral Education through Speech from *Human Values in Education*, p. 247
18. Eurythmy as an Expression of the Movements of the Larynx from *The Renewal of Education*, p. 250
19. The Effect of Music and Speech on Breathing from *The Essentials of Education*, p. 251
20. Speech in Relation to Right Breathing from *The Renewal of Education*, p. 252
21. Repetition as a Basis for Elementary Education from *Education as a Source for Social Change*, p. 252
22. Indications Regarding the Morning Verses from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, p. 253
23. Recitation of Poetry Before and After Puberty from *The Renewal of Education*, p. 255
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26. Speaking and Conversation in the Early Grades from *Practical Advice to Teachers*, p. 258
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1. Speech as an Expression of Sympathy and Antipathy

Consider for a moment what I pointed out to you an hour ago. If you think about what I presented, you will realize that human beings carry three inner focal points, and within each, affinity and aversion meet. We can say that aversion and affinity even meet in the head. We can simplify it schematically. Imagine that in a certain part of the head, the nervous system is first interrupted while sensory perceptions enter, and they encounter aversion arising from the individual. This example demonstrates how we must view each individual system anew in the whole human being. Sensory activity itself is essentially a kind of delicate limb activity; it occurs in such a way that affinity dominates the senses, and the nervous system sends aversion to meet it. In the activity of seeing, a kind of affinity occurs in the eye's blood vessels. Aversion flows through that affinity in its nervous system. This is how seeing takes place.

And more important to us, for the moment, a second meeting takes place between affinity and aversion in the central part of the human being. Affinity and aversion also meet there; thus, in the middle system, the chest region, there is another meeting of affinity and aversion. Again, the whole human being is active as affinity and aversion meet, with our awareness, in the middle system. You also know that this meeting can be expressed in response to an impression—a rapid reflex involving very little thought, since it is simply an evasive, instinctive act directed against a perceived threat. These subconscious reflexes are also mirrored in the brain and the soul, and so the whole again acquires a kind of pictorial nature. With images, we accompany what occurs in the chest (the respiratory and rhythmic system) in relation to the meeting between affinity and aversion. Something happens in the breast that is intimately related to the whole life of a human being. There is a meeting between affinity and aversion that has an extraordinarily significant connection with our outer life.

In our whole being, we develop a certain activity that becomes affinity. We cause this affinity to interact continually in our chest organization with the cosmic activity of aversion. Human speech is the expression of these sympathetic and antipathetic activities that

meet in this way. And the brain complements this meeting of affinity and aversion in the breast through our understanding of speech; we follow speech with understanding. Fundamentally, in speech there is an activity in the breast, and there is a parallel activity in the head. In the breast the activity is far more real, whereas the activity in the head fades to an image. In fact, when you speak, you have a constant breast activity that you accompany with an image through the head activity. This makes it obvious that speaking is based on the constant rhythm of sympathetic and antipathetic activity, just as feeling is. Indeed, speech originates in feeling. The way we accompany the feeling with the knowledge or image causes the content of speech to be identical with thoughts. We understand the speech phenomenon only when we truly understand how it is rooted in human feeling.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 17-19.]

2. The Chest in Relation to the Head and the Limbs

The human chest is head and limb nature as well. The limb and head aspects mix into the nature of the chest. The chest at its upper end always has a tendency to become head and at the lower end, the tendency to adjust itself to the stretched out limbs, to the external world. In other words, the lower end of the torso tends to take on the nature of the limbs. The upper portion of the chest tends to become head and the lower portion tends to become limbs. Although the upper portion of the human torso always wants to become head, it cannot do so. The other head inhibits this, and the chest can only bring forth a likeness of the head, something we might call the beginning of a head. Can we clearly recognize that the upper part of the chest makes a start toward the formation of a head? Yes, the larynx, which people intuitively call the “throat-head,” is there [the German, *Kehlkopf*, for larynx, is literally “throat-head”]. The human larynx is, without a doubt, a stunted human head, a “head” that cannot quite become head and, therefore, can only live out its “head” nature through human speech. Human speech is a continual attempt to become a head in the air. When the larynx attempts to become uppermost in the head, it produces the sounds that human nature holds back most strongly. When the larynx attempts to take on the characteristics of the nose, it cannot truly become a nose because

the real nose hinders it. It thus brings forth nasal sounds when it attempts to become a nose. In nasal sounds, the actual nose constricts the arising air-nose. It is particularly significant that human speech continually attempts to create parts of the head in the air, and that these parts of the head expand in wave-like movements that the physical head then constricts. This is human speech.

It will certainly not amaze you that the moment the head is physically complete—around the age of seven—the change of teeth presents the opportunity for the soul-head to arise from the larynx, permeated with a kind of skeleton. However, it must be a “soul-skeleton.” We do this by ending the wild development of language by imitation and, instead, begin to control speech development through grammar. We must be aware that when we receive children in elementary school, we need to practice an activity on the soul similar to what is practiced by the body when it produces the second set of teeth. We make the development of speech firm in the soul aspect when we include grammar in a reasonable way, so that what comes from speech enters into writing and reading. We will achieve a proper relationship of feeling to human speech if we know that the words people form tend to become the head.

[*The Foundations of Human Experience*, pp. 206-208.]

3. The Development of Speech in the Young Child

It is just with children that all education is at the same time physical education. We cannot educate the physical in children merely physically, for all that is of soul and spirit in education works at the same time upon the physical, is indeed physical education. When we observe how the child’s organism adjusts itself to attain the upright position, and to walk, and we lovingly watch this wonderful mystery enacted by the human organism as it passes from the horizontal to the vertical position; when out of religious feeling we approach the child with reverence for the creative, divine powers which are placing him rightly into space; when, in other words, we are there as helpers of the child in its learning to walk and balance itself, as helpers who inwardly love the human nature in the child, who follow every manifestation of this human nature with love, then we generate

health-bringing forces which can then reappear as healthy metabolic activities between the ages of fifty and sixty, a time of life when we especially need control of the processes of metabolism.

Herein lies truly the mystery of human evolution: *All that is of the nature of soul and spirit at one stage of life manifests itself physically in later life.* Years later it makes itself evident in the physical body.

So much, then, for learning to walk. A child who is lovingly guided to walk develops into a healthy man, and to apply this love in the process of learning to walk is to add much to the healthy education of the body.

Now speech develops from this process of orientation in space. Modern physiology knows something of this, but not very much. It knows that the movements of the right hand correspond to a certain activity of the left side of the brain, which is related to speech. Physiology admits the correspondence between the right hand movements and the so-called convolution of Broca at the left side of the brain. The hand moves, makes gestures; forces pour into it, pass into the brain, where they become the impulse of speech. Science knows only a fragment of the process, for the truth is this: Speech does not arise merely because a movement of the right hand coincides with a convolution in the left portion of the brain; speech arises from the entire motor-organism of the human being. How the child learns to walk, to orientate himself in space, to transmute the first erratic and uncontrolled movements of the arms into gestures definitely related to the outer world—all this is carried over by the mysterious processes of the human organism to the head, and manifests as speech.

Anyone who is able to understand these things, realizes that children who shuffle their feet at they walk pronounce every sound, and especially the palate sounds, quite differently from those whose gait is firm. Every nuance of speech is derived from the organization of movement; life to begin with is all gestures, and gesture is inwardly transformed into speech.

Speaking, then, is an outcome of walking that is to say, of orientation in space. And the degree to which the child is able to control speech will depend very largely upon whether we give him loving help while he is learning to walk.

These are some of the finer connections revealed by a true knowledge of man. Not without reason have I described in detail the process of bringing the spirit to the human organism. Thus one brings the spirit to the body: for with every step that is taken, the body follows the spirit, if the spirit is brought to the child in the right way.

Again, it is a fact that, to begin with, the whole organism is active when the child is learning to speak. First there are the outer movements, the movements of the legs these produce the strong contours of speech; the more delicate movements of the arms and hands determine the inflection and plastic form of the words. In short, outer movements are transformed into the inner movements of speech.

Just as the element of love should pervade the help we give to the child as he learns to walk, so as we help him to speak we must also be inwardly true. The greatest untruthfulness of all in after life is generated during the time when a child is learning to speak, for in those years the element of truth in speech is absorbed by the whole bodily organism. A child whose teachers are filled with inner truthfulness will, as he imitates his environment, so learn to speak that the subtle activity constantly generated in the organism by the processes of in-breathing and out-breathing will be strengthened. Naturally, these things must be understood in a delicate and not in a crude sense. The processes are indeed delicate, but are nevertheless revealed in every manifestation of life. We breathe in oxygen and exhale carbonic acid. Oxygen has to be changed into carbonic acid in the body by the breathing process. We receive oxygen from the cosmos, and give back carbonic acid. Truth or untruthfulness in those around us while we are learning to speak determines whether, in the more subtle functions of life, we are able to change the oxygen within us into carbonic acid in the right way. This process is a complete transmutation of the spiritual into the physical.

One of the most common and untruthful influences brought to the child is the use of baby-language. Unconsciously the child does not like this; he wants to listen to true speech, the speech of grown men and women. We should speak in ordinary language to the child and avoid the use of this baby-language. At first the child will naturally only babble in imitation of words, but we ourselves must not copy

this babbling. For that is the greatest mistake. To use to the child its own babbling, imperfect speech is to injure his digestive organs. Once more the spiritual becomes physical, and works directly into the bodily organs. And all that we do spiritually near the child is also a physical training. Many later defects in the digestive system are caused by a child having learned to speak in a wrong way.

Just as speech arises from walking and grasping, in short from movement, so thought develops from speech. In helping the child as he learns to walk we must be pervaded by love; in helping the child to gain the power of speech we must be absolutely truthful, and since the child is one great sense organ and in his inner physical functions also copies the spiritual, our own thinking must be clear if right thinking is to develop in the child from the forces of speech.

No greater harm can be done to the child than by the giving of orders, and then causing confusion by reversing them. Confusion that exists in the child's surroundings as the result of inconsequent thinking is the actual root of the many so-called nervous diseases prevalent in our modern civilization.

Why have so many people "nerves" today? Simply because in childhood there was no clarity and precision of thought around them during the time when they were learning to think after having learnt to speak. The physical condition of the next generation, as evinced by its gravest defects, is a faithful copy of the preceding generation. When we observe the faults in our children which develop in later life, we should be prompted to a little self-knowledge. All that happens in the child's environment expresses itself in the physical organism though in a subtle and delicate sense. Loving treatment while the child is learning to walk, truthfulness while he learns to speak, clarity and precision as he begins to be able to think all these qualities become a part of the bodily constitution. The organs and vessels develop after the models of love, truth, and clarity. Diseases of the metabolic system are the result of unkind treatment while the child is learning to walk. Digestive disturbances may arise from untruthful actions during the time the child is beginning to speak. Nerve trouble is the outcome of confused thinking in the child's environment.

When we see the prevalence of nervous disease in this third decade of the twentieth century, we cannot but conclude that there must have been much confused thinking on the part of the educators about the beginning of the century. Many diseases of the nerves to-day are really due to confused thinking, and again, the nerve troubles from which people suffered at the beginning of the century were equally the result of the confused thought of the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

Now these matters can be handled in such a way that physiology, hygiene, and psychology no longer need to remain shut off from each other as specialized branches of knowledge, so that today the teacher must call in the doctor the moment any question of health arises. Physiological education, school hygiene, and the like, can be so united, that then the teacher's spiritual mission will come to include an understanding of the activity of the soul and spirit in the physical organism. But since everyone has, in a certain sense, to educate children from birth up to the seventh year, a social task stands before us, inasmuch as a true knowledge of man is necessary for all if humanity is to follow an ascending, and not a descending, path.

[A Modern Art of Education, 1972, pp. 109-113.]

4. Learning Speech through Imitation

The strength of children's tendency to imitate can be recognized by observing how they paint and scribble written signs and letters long before they understand them. Indeed, it is good that they paint the letters first by imitation and only later learn to understand their meaning. For imitation belongs to the time when the physical body is developing, while meaning speaks to the etheric, and the etheric body should not be worked on until after the change of teeth, after the outer etheric envelope has fallen away. All learning associated with speech in these years should be especially through imitation. Children will best learn to speak through hearing; no rules or artificial instruction of any kind can be good for this. It is important to realize the value of children's songs, for example, as a means of education in early childhood. They must make pretty and rhythmical impressions on the senses; the beauty of sound is of greater value than the meaning.

The more alive the impression on eye and ear the better. Dancing movements in musical rhythm have a powerful influence in building up the physical organs, and this should also not be undervalued.

[*The Education of the Child*, pp. 22-23.]

5. Young Children's Relationship to Speech

We have already alluded to Jean Paul's excellent book on education; a passage from it relating to this subject of the deeper foundations of the understanding may well be quoted here. Indeed, Jean Paul's book contains many golden words on education, and deserves far more attention than it has received. It is of greater value for the teacher than many of the educational works currently held in highest regard. One passage follows:

Have no fear of going beyond the childish understanding, even in whole sentences. Your expression and the tone of your voice, aided by the child's intuitive eagerness to understand, will light up half the meaning and with it, in the course of time, the other half. With children as with the Chinese and people of refinement, the tone is half the language. Remember, children learn to understand their own language before they ever learn to speak it, just as we do with Greek or any other foreign language. Trust to time and the connections of things to unravel the meaning. A child of five understands the words "yet," "even," "of course," and "just." But now try to explain these—not just to the child, but to the father! In the one word "of" there lurks a little philosopher! If an eight-year-old child with developed speech is understood by a child of three, why do you want to narrow your language to the little one's childish prattle? Always speak to a child some years ahead—do not those of genius speak to us centuries ahead in books? Talk to one-year-olds as if they were two, to two-year-olds as if they were six, for the difference in development diminishes in inverse ratio with age. We are far too prone to credit teachers with all that children learn. We should remember that the chil-

dren whom we have to educate bear half their world within them, all there and ready-taught—that is, the spiritual half, including, for example, the moral and metaphysical ideas. For this very reason, language, equipped as it is with material images alone, cannot give the spiritual archetypes; all it can do is to illumine them. The very brightness and decisiveness of children should give us brightness and decisiveness when we speak to them. We can learn from their speech as well as teach them through our own. Their word-building is bold, yet remarkably accurate! For example, I have heard the following expressions used by children three or four: “the barreler” (for the maker of barrels); “the sky-mouse” (for the bat); “I am the looking-through person” (standing behind a telescope); “I’d like to be a gingerbread eater”; “he joked me down from the chair”; “see how one o’clock it is?”

It’s true that our quotation refers to something other than our immediate subject; but what Jean Paul says about speech has its value in the present connection also. Here there is also an understanding that precedes intellectual comprehension. Little children receive the structure of language into the living organism of their souls and, for this process, do not require the laws of language formation in intellectual concepts. Similarly, for the cultivation of the memory, older children must learn much that they cannot master with their intellectual understanding until years later. Those things are afterward best apprehended in concepts that have first been learned simply from memory during this period of life, just as the rules of language are best learned in a language one can already speak.

[*The Education of the Child*, pp. 29-31.]

6. The Effect of Speech on the Young Child

Between the change of teeth and puberty, the forces of comprehension and the whole activity of soul have a pictorial quality. It is a kind of aesthetic comprehension that may be characterized in this way: until the change of teeth children want to imitate what happens around them, what is done in front of them. Their motor systems

are exerted in such a way—both in general and individually—that they enter an inner, loving relationship with all that surrounds them. This alters at the change of teeth, when the child no longer goes by what is seen, but by what is revealed in the feelings and soul mood of the educator or teacher. The young child’s soul before the change of teeth is not yet guided by the authority of a teacher. Naturally, such transitions are gradual rather than sudden; but, typically, a small child pays little attention to the subject or meaning of what is said; a child lives much more in the *sound* of words—in the whole way the speech is formulated. Closer observation shows that when you simply lay down the law and say to a child, “You must not do this,” it makes very little impression. But when, with its own conviction, as it were, your mouth says, “Do this,” or another time, “Don’t do that,” there should be a noticeable difference in *how* these words are spoken. The child will notice the difference between saying “You should not do that” with a certain intonation, and “That’s right, you may do that.” The intonation reveals the activity of speech, which acts as a guide for the very young child.

Children are unconcerned with the meaning of words and, indeed, with any manifestation of the world around them, until after the change of teeth. Even then, it is not yet the intellectual aspect that concerns them, but an element of feeling. They take it in as one takes anything from acknowledged authority. Before puberty, a child cannot intellectually determine right and wrong. People may speculate about these things as much as they like, but direct observation shows what I have said to be true. This is why all moral concepts brought before a child must be pictorial in nature.

[*The Roots of Education*, pp. 54-55.]

7. The Development of Language and Speech in the Various Stages of Child Development

Someone who has sharpened their vision to see a certain connection between the soul-spirit and the physical body until the change of teeth will also notice something extraordinarily important for the following period. We, of course, need a certain amount of time to grow our first baby teeth. That is a relatively short time. We then need a longer

period to exchange those first teeth for permanent teeth. In the course of these lectures, we will hear how the permanent teeth have a much closer connection with the individual than the baby teeth, which are based more upon heredity. This is true not only with teeth; there is another place where we, in a certain way, reproduce those things we have received through heredity out of our own nature. This principle is also true for human speech.

At this point I would like to introduce something that I will describe more fully in the following lectures: The secret of the development of human speech is hidden in its most important aspects from the entirety of modern science. People are unaware that just as we receive our first teeth through a kind of inheritance from our parents, we receive language through the influences of our external surroundings. That is, we receive language through the principle of imitation, which, however, becomes an organic principle.

In the first years of our lives, we learn to speak from our surroundings. However, the language we learn then, that we speak until the age of four, five, or six, has the same relationship to the entire human being as baby teeth have to the entire human being. What people speak after they have reached the age of puberty, that is, after the age of fourteen or fifteen, what is active within them as they speak is something they achieve for a second time. It is something they very recently achieved, something they accomplished for themselves in just the same way that they grew their second set of teeth. In boys, we can see this externally in their change of voice. In girls, the development is more inward. It is nevertheless present. Since these forces act differently upon the larynx of a boy, they are externally visible. This is a revelation of what occurs in the entire human being during these important elementary school years, not simply in the human body nor in the human soul, but in the entire soul-body, in the body-soul. It occurs continuously from year to year, from month to month, and is connected with the inner development of what we already learned as language from our environment during our early childhood. Those who understand how the spirit-soul acts upon the human being until the age of fourteen or fifteen, those who can, through a direct, instinctive intuition, observe elementary school children, will see

this directly. Such a person might say that here we have a student; he makes throaty sounds in this way, sounds with his lips in this way, and with the gums in this way. This student can make sounds with his gums more easily than lip sounds and so forth. This can become a very intensive science; however, it is a science that points in all its details to what develops as a soul-body or body-soul in the child.

Those capable of observing them can see the transformations that speech undergoes between the ages of seven and fifteen, which people normally do not notice, as accomplished by the soul acting upon language. This is something that is lost if you have learned to observe without the help of spiritual science. Those who can observe this will then find that in the first years of life until the change of teeth, conceptualization was completely occupied with the forming our teeth; after the change of teeth, it can then act to form itself. At that time conceptualization, our ability to picture our thoughts, in a sense pulls back from the physical body and becomes something independent in the soul. Later, from the change of teeth until puberty, although this can sometimes be seen earlier, it is what we call the will that withdraws from the entirety of the child and becomes localized in the larynx, in the organs of speech. Just as the imaginative life withdraws and becomes an independent part of the soul, in the same way around the age of fourteen or fifteen the element of will localizes and concentrates in what becomes speech and its associated organs. The transformation a boy's larynx undergoes is where the will culminates. We will speak more about the corresponding phenomenon in girls.

In other words, if we look at things from a spiritual-scientific perspective, conceptualization and will cease to be so abstract. We cannot, of course, form a connection between these abstractions and a quite differently formed body. If, however, we learn to observe and recognize how very different the nature of a child is, where we see how the child speaks quite differently with the lips than with the gums and the throaty sounds are quite different also, we can recognize how the forces of conceptualization work in the physical body during the first seven years of life. We can recognize the external, physical revelation of a spirit-soul aspect and to recognize that the will is localized in the

larynx. We can learn to observe how will enters human speech. The will is thus developed and conceptualization is no longer abstract, but something we can observe in the real processes of life. In much the same way, we observe gravity in water falling from the mountains and see the speed of the flowing water in the weight of the water meeting its resistances. Thus we can learn to recognize how the body develops from the spirit-soul week by week when we first learn to observe that spirit-soul in its work upon the body.

In what I have just said, you can see guidelines for observing the development of the human being. Spiritual science speaks of human nature in a somewhat difficult and complicated way. You can contrast that with modern science, which simply does not take into account the fact that the human being is a wonderful being that draws into itself the rhythms of the entire world, that is an entire world in itself, that holds within itself a microcosm corresponding to a macrocosm. If I say the human being consists of a physical body and also an etheric body, that means you should learn to observe how the physical body develops during the first seven years of childhood. But you should learn this not only on corpses—not only anatomically or physiologically. You should learn to observe how human beings are soul-spirit and how this soul-spirit, whether we call it an etheric body or something else, acts upon the physical body. In that way you can learn to recognize how it forms the physical body by forming the teeth that arise out of the entire body, and then how it works upon its conceptualizations so that they can remain. Thus we can say that at the time of the change of teeth, the etheric body is born. Until the change of teeth, it is still active in the physical body and forms what culminates in the change of teeth. Then it becomes free and works upon the formation of concepts that can remain in memory. Later we speak of an independent I primarily concentrated in the will but which we can perceive in the development of speech when we look in the proper way. We can recognize the will if we do not simply compare it with conceptualization, but instead see it in its activities in the development of speech, that is, in a concrete form. In that development of will, we recognize the development of the I, which needs to be followed further. But we see something lying

between the etheric body and the I that is expressed through speech. This is particularly important to observe educationally in the early years of elementary school.

There we see the actual soul aspect of the human being. When the child begins elementary school and is still under the influences of the forces involved in the change of teeth, the intellectual aspect is not yet present. However, by becoming more localized, the will aspect becomes from week to week and from month to month more enclosed in the body during the period of elementary school. If you know that, you will include in the elementary school curriculum those things lying in the proper direction to support the development of the will in the intellect. If you understand what will and intellect are, and can observe how from month to month and from year to year the will becomes localized in the child's speech, and the intellect that has withdrawn into the spirit-soul—if you understand how these interact, you will understand what you must do in teaching the children for their physical and soul upbringing. Then you will consider education an art and will recognize that you first need to understand the material, human nature. Just as a sculptor has clay and works with it the way a painter works with colors, so must an artist in education understand how to work the will into the intellect. A pedagogical artist must understand how to act in order to create the proper interpenetration, the proper artistic form, of the intellect that was born at the age of seven, and how to approach the will that is to develop through the hands of the elementary school teacher until puberty.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 28-32.]

8. The Development of Speech in Adolescence

Just as the period of life at about the seventh year is significant in earthly existence on account of all the facts which I have described, so, similarly, is there a point in the earthly life of man which, on account of the symptoms which then arise in life, is no less significant. The actual points of time indicated are, of course, approximate, occurring in the case of some human beings earlier, in others later. The indication of seven yearly periods is approximate. But round

about the fourteenth or fifteenth year, there is once more a time of extraordinary importance in earthly existence. This is the period when puberty is reached. But puberty, the emergence of the life of sex, is only the most external symptom of a complete transformation that has taken place in the being of man between the seventh and fourteenth year. Just as we must seek in the growth-forces of the teeth in the human head for the physical origin of thought that frees itself about the seventh year of life, and becomes a function of soul, so we must look for the activity of the second soul-force, namely feeling, in other parts of the human organism.

Feeling releases itself much later than thinking from the bodily nature, from the physical constitution of the human being. And between the seventh and fourteenth year the child's feeling-life is still inwardly bound up with its physical organization. Thinking is already free; feeling is still inwardly bound up with the body. All the feelings of joy, of sorrow, and of pain that express themselves in the child still have a strong physical correlation with the secretions of the organs, the acceleration or retardation, speed or slackening of the breathing system. If our perception is keen enough, we can observe in these very phenomena the great transformation that is taking place in the life of feeling, when the outer symptoms of the change make their appearance. Just as the appearance of the second teeth denotes a certain climax of growth, so the close of the subsequent life period when feeling is gradually released from its connection with the body and becomes a soul function is expressed in speech. This may be observed most clearly in boys. The voice changes; the larynx reveals the change. Just as the head reveals the change which lifts thinking out of the physical organism, the breathing system, the seat of the organic rhythmic activity, expresses the emancipation of feeling. Feeling detaches itself from the bodily constitution and becomes an independent function of soul. We know how this expresses itself in the boy. The larynx changes and the voice gets deeper. In the girl different phenomena appear in bodily growth and development, but this is only the external aspect.

Anyone who has reached the first stage of exact clairvoyance already referred to, the stage of imaginative perception, knows for he

perceives that the male physical body transforms the larynx at about the fourteenth year of life. The same thing happens in the female sex to the etheric body or body of formative forces. The change withdraws to the etheric body, and the etheric body of the female takes on as etheric body a form exactly resembling the physical body of the male. Again, the etheric body of the male at the fourteenth year takes on a form resembling the physical body of the female. However extraordinary it may appear to a mode of knowledge that clings to the physical, it is nevertheless the case that from this all important period of life onwards, the man bears within him etherically the woman, and the woman etherically the man. This is expressed differently in the corresponding symptoms in the male and female.

Now if one reaches the second stage of exact clairvoyance it is described in greater detail in my bookshelf, beyond Imagination, one attains to Inspiration the actual perception of the independently spiritual that is no longer bound up with the physical body of man then one becomes aware how, in actual fact, in this important period round about the fourteenth and fifteenth years, a third human member develops into a state of independence. In my books I have called this third being the astral body, according to an older tradition. (You must not be jarred by expressions, words have to be employed for everything.) This astral body is more essentially of the nature of soul than the etheric body; indeed the astral body is already of the soul and spirit. It is the third member of man and constitutes the second supersensible member of his being.

Up to the fourteenth or fifteenth year this astral body works through the physical organism and, at the fourteenth or fifteenth year, becomes independent. Thus there devolves upon the teacher a most significant task, namely to help the development to independence of this being of soul and spirit which lies hidden in the depths of the organism up to the seventh or eighth year and then gradually for the process is successive frees itself. It is this gradual process of detachment that we must assist, if we have the child to teach between the ages of seven and fourteen. And then, if we have acquired the kind of knowledge of which I have spoken, we notice how the child's

speech becomes quite a different thing. The crude science of today, if I may call it so, concerns itself merely with the crude soul-qualities of the human being, and speaks of the other phenomena as secondary sexual characteristics. To spiritual observation, however, the secondary phenomena are primary, and vice versa.

These metamorphoses, the whole way in which feeling withdraws itself from the organs of speech, are of extraordinary significance. And as teachers and educators it is our wonderful task—a task that really inspires one's innermost being—gradually to release speech from the bodily constitution. How wonderful in a child of seven are the natural, spontaneous movements of the lips which come from organic activity! When the seven-year-old child utters the labial sounds, it is quite different from the way in which the child of fourteen or fifteen utters them. When the seven-year-old child utters the labial sounds it is an organic activity; it is the circulation of the blood, of the fluids, which involuntarily shoots into the lips. When the child reaches his twelfth, thirteenth or fourteenth years, this organic activity is transferred into the organism proper and the soul activity of feeling has to emerge and to move the lips voluntarily, which bring the element of feeling in speech to expression.

Just as the thought-element in speech, the hard thought-element, is manifested in the teeth, so is, the soft, loving element of feeling manifested in the lips. And it is the labial sounds which impart warmth and loving sympathy to speech sympathy with another being and the conveying of it. This marvelous transition from an organic activity of the lips to an activity brought into play by the soul, this development of the lips in the organic-psychological nature of the human being is a thing which the teacher can accompany, and thereby a most wonderful atmosphere can be brought into the school. For just as we see the supersensible, etheric element that permeates the body emerging at the seventh year of life as independent thinking-power, so do we see the element of independent soul and spirit emerging at the age of fourteen or fifteen. As teachers we help bring the soul and spirit to birth. [82-87]



Some time in the future it will be just as natural to speak of the human being with knowledge as it is mostly natural nowadays to speak with ignorance. Some day it will be known, even in general civilization, how thinking is connected with the force which enables the teeth to grow. Some day people will be able to observe how the inner force of feeling is connected with that which comes from the chest organs and is expressed in the movement of the lips. The change in the lip movements and the control of them by feeling which sets in between the seventh and fourteenth year will be an outer significant sign of an inner development of the human being. It will be observed how the consolidation of the forces flowing from below upwards, which occurs in the human being between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, takes place and is checked in the human head itself. Just as the quality of thought is made manifest in the teeth and that which comes from feeling in the lips, so a true knowledge of man will see in the highly significant organism of the palate which bounds the cavity of the mouth at the back, the way in which the upward-flowing forces work and, arrested by the gums, pass over into speech. If at some future time people do not only look through the microscope or the telescope when they want to see the most minute or the greatest, but observe all that confronts them outwardly in the world, and this they do not see today, in spite of microscope and telescope, then they will perceive how thinking lives in the labial sounds, willing in the palatal sounds which particularly influence the tongue, and how through the labial and palatal sounds, speech, like every other function, becomes an expression of the whole human being.

Attempts are made today to “read” the lines of the hand and other external phenomena of this kind. People try to understand human nature from symptoms. These things can only be rightly understood when it is realized that one must seek for the whole human being in what he expresses, when people perceive how speech, which makes man as an individual being into a social being, is in its inner movement and configuration, a reflection of the whole man. Dental sounds, labial sounds, palatal sounds do not exist in speech

by accident; they are there because in the dental sounds the head, in the labial sounds the breast system, in the palatal sounds the rest of the being of man wins its way into speech.

[*A Modern Art of Education*, 1972, pp. 82–87, 96–97.]

9. Speech as an Expression of the I-Being

The astral body is not natural history, natural science, or physics; it is *music*. This is true to the extent that, in the forming activity within the human organism, it is possible to trace how the astral body has a musical formative effect in the human being. This formative activity flows from the center between the shoulder blades, first into the tonic of the scale; as it flows on into the second, it builds the upper arm, and into the third, the lower arm. When we come to the third we arrive at the difference between major and minor; we find two bones in the lower arm—not just one—the radius and ulna, which represent minor and major. One who studies the outer human organization, insofar as it depends on the astral body, must approach physiology not as a physicist, but as a musician. We must recognize the inner, formative music within the human organism.

No matter how you trace the course of the nerves in the human organism, you will never understand what it means. But when you follow the course of the nerves musically—understanding the musical relationships (everything is audible here, though not physically)—and when you perceive with spiritual musical perception how these nerves run from the limbs toward the spine and then turn upward and continue toward the brain, you experience the most wonderful musical instrument, which is the human being, built by the astral body and played by the I-being.

As we ascend from there, we learn how the human being forms speech through understanding the inner configuration of speech—something that is no longer learned in our advanced civilization; it has discarded everything intuitive. Through the structure of speech, we recognize the I-being itself if we understand what happens when a person speaks the sound “*ah*” or “*ee*”—how in “*ah*” there is wonder, in “*ee*” there is a consolidation of the inner being; and if we learn how the speech element shoots, as it were, into the inner structure; and

if we learn to perceive a word inwardly, not just saying, for example, that a rolling ball is “rolling,” but understand what moves inwardly like a rolling ball when one says *rolling*. We learn through inner perception—a perception really informed by the spirit of speech—to recognize what is active in speech.

These days, information about the human organism must come from physiologists and anatomists, and information about what lives in language comes from philologists. There is no relationship, however, between what they can say to each other. It is necessary to look for an inner spiritual connection; we must recognize that a genius of speech lives and works in language, a genius of speech that can be investigated. When we study the genius of speech, we recognize the human I-being. We have now made eurythmy part of our Waldorf education. What are we doing with eurythmy? We divide it into *tone* eurythmy and *speech* eurythmy. In tone eurythmy, we evoke in the child movements that correspond to the form of the astral body; in speech eurythmy we evoke movements that correspond to the child’s I-being. We thus work consciously to develop the soul by bringing physical elements into play in tone eurythmy; and we work consciously to develop the spirit aspect by activating the corresponding physical elements in speech eurythmy.

Such activity, however, only arises from a complete understanding of the human organization. Those who think they can get close to the human being through external physiology and experimental psychology (which is really only another kind of physiology) would not recognize the difference between beating on a wooden tray and making music in trying to evoke a certain mood in someone. Similarly, knowledge must not remain stuck in abstract, logical rules, but rise to view human life as more than grasping lifeless nature—the living that has died—or thinking of the living in a lifeless way. When we rise from abstract principles to formative qualities and understand how every natural law molds itself sculpturally, we come to understand the human etheric body. When we begin to “hear” (in an inner, spiritual sense) the cosmic rhythm expressing itself in that most wonderful musical instrument that the astral body makes of the human being, we come to understand the astral nature of the human being.

What we must become aware of may be expressed this way: First, we come to know the physical body in an abstract, logical sense. Then we turn to the sculptural formative activity with intuitive cognition and begin to understand the etheric body. Third, as a physiologist, one becomes a musician and views the human being the way one would look at a musical instrument—an organ or violin—where one sees music realized. Thus, we understand the astral human being. And when we come to know the genius of speech as it works creatively in words—not merely connecting it with words through the external memory—we gain knowledge of the human I-being. These days, we would become a laughing stock if in the name of university reform—medical studies, for example—we said that such knowledge must arise from the study of sculpture, music, and speech. People would say: Sure, but how long would such training take? It certainly lasts long enough without these things. Nevertheless, the training would in fact be shorter, since its length today is due primarily to the fact that people don't move beyond abstract, logical, empirical sense perception. It's true that they begin by studying the physical body, but this cannot be understood by those methods. There is no end to it. One can study all kinds of things throughout life—there's no end to it—whereas study has its own inner limits when it is organically built up as a study of the organism in body, soul, and spirit.

The point is not to map out a new chapter with the help of anthroposophy, adding to what we already have. Indeed, we can be satisfied with what ordinary science offers; we are not opposed to that. We are grateful to science in the sense that we are grateful to the violin maker for providing a violin. What we need in our culture is to get hold of all of this modern culture and permeate it with soul and permeate it with spirit, just as human beings themselves are permeated with soul and spirit. The artistic must not be allowed to exist in civilization as a pleasant luxury next to serious life, a luxury we consider an indulgence, even though we may have a spiritual approach to life in other ways. The artistic element must be made to permeate the world and the human being as a divine spiritual harmony of law.

We must understand how, in facing the world, we first approach it with logical concepts and ideas. The being of the universe, how-

ever, gives human nature something that emanates from the cosmic formative activity working down from the spheres, just as earthly gravity works up from the central point of the Earth. And cosmic music, working from the periphery, is also a part of this. Just as the shaping activity works from above, and physical activity works from below through gravity, so cosmic music works in the movements of the starry constellations at the periphery.

The principle that really gives *humanity* to the human being was divined in ancient times when words were spoken—words such as “In the primal beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and a God was the Word.” That Cosmic Word, Cosmic Speech, is the principle that also permeates the human being, and that being becomes the I-being. In order to educate, we must acquire knowledge of the human being from knowledge of the cosmos, and learn to shape it artistically.

[*The Essentials of Education*, pp. 46-50.]

10. The Sense of Speech

The next sense we have to consider is separate from the I-sense and all the other senses. I call it the sense of thought. The sense of thought is not a sense for perceiving our own thoughts, but for perceiving the thoughts of other people. Psychologists have developed grotesque ideas about it. As a whole, people are so impressed by the connection between speech and thinking that they believe we apprehend thoughts with speech. That is ridiculous, since through your sense of thought you can perceive thoughts in gestures just as you can perceive them in speech. Speech only transmits thoughts. You must perceive thoughts through your sense of thought. When we have finally created all the sounds of speech as movement forms in eurythmy, then someone would need only to perform them eurhythmically and out of these movements you could read the thoughts just as you can hear them through speech. In short, the sense of thought is something different from what is active in the sense of speech. There we have the specific sense of speech.

Now you can see the deeper meaning of our relationship to the world. If we did not have twelve senses, we would look at our surroundings like idiots and could not experience inner judgment.

However, because we do have twelve senses, we have a large number of possible ways to reunite what has been separated. What the sense of I experiences, we can connect with the other eleven senses, and the same is true for each sense. In this way we have a large number of combined relationships between the senses. Besides that, we also have a large number of possibilities when, for example, we connect the sense of I with both the senses of thought and speech. In this way, we can see the mysterious way human beings are connected with the world. The twelve senses separate things into their basic elements, and the human being must be able to put them back together again. In this way, people participate in the inner life of things. You can, therefore, understand how immensely important it is that we educate children and develop each of the senses in balance, since we can then systematically and consciously seek the relationships between the senses and perceptions.

I need to add that the sense of I and the senses of thought, hearing, and speech are more cognitive senses, because the will in them is more the sleeping will, the really sleeping will that vibrates in cognitive activity. Thus, will, feeling, and cognition live in the I region of human beings with the help of waking and sleeping.

[*The Foundations of Human Experience*, pp. 141, 145.]

11. Speech as the Expression of Conclusions

When we act logically, that is, when we act in a thinking, cognitive manner, this activity always exists in three parts. First, in our thinking cognition we always have what we call conclusions. Normally, we express thinking in speech. If you look at the structure of speech, you will find that when you speak, you continually create conclusions. In human beings, the most conscious activity is that of forming conclusions. People could not express themselves through language if they did not continually speak of conclusions, and they could not understand others if they did not continually receive conclusions. Theoretical logic usually dissects conclusions and thereby falsifies the conclusions that occur in normal life.

[*The Foundations of Human Experience*, pp. 148-149.]

12. Speech as an Expression of Our Thought Orientation

There may be justifiable reasons for looking upon eurythmy as a conversion of one art form into another, rather than considering it as a new form of art. But whenever one deals with an artistic medium or with the artistic side of life, it is not the *what* that matters, but the *how*. In my opinion, there is no real meaning in the statement that sculpture, music, speech, rhythm, and so on, are only the means of expression, while the underlying ideas are the real substance. There seems little point in making such abstract discriminations when one is dealing with life itself. Naturally, if one is keen on finding unifying ideas in the abstract, one can also find different media through which these are expressed. But in real life, these modes or media do represent something new, something different. To give an example: According to Goethe's theory of plant metamorphosis, a colored flower petal, when seen in the abstract, is inherently the same as a green plant leaf. Goethe sees the flower petal as a metamorphosed green leaf. And yet, from a practical point of view, a petal is something altogether different from a leaf. Whether eurythmy is a new form of expression or a conversion of one art form into another, is not the point at all. What matters is this: During the course of human evolution, speech and also singing though the latter is less noticeable sound, speech and singing, have become more and more a means of expressing what works through the human head. (Again, this is putting it rather radically but, from a certain point of view, it does represent the truth.)

Today, human language, human speech, is no longer expressive of the whole human being. Speech has become thought-oriented. Among modern nations it has become closely linked to the life of thought and through this development, speech reveals what springs from man's egoism. Eurythmy, on the other hand, goes back again to man's will nature and, by doing so, it engages the whole human being. Through eurythmy man is revealed as standing within the entire macrocosm. And while, for example, during certain primeval times, gesture and miming always accompanied the spoken word, especially during artistic activities, so that word and gesture combined into a single form of expression and the two became inseparable,

today word and gesture have fallen far apart. Therefore a need is felt to engage the whole human being again by calling into play also what belongs more to his will sphere and in this way to relate him again to the macrocosm.

[*Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, pp. 302–303.]

13. How Speech Affects the Brain

If, for example, we realize that our tasks as teachers are connected to a human soul that steps into earthly existence and, from hour to hour and week to week, increasingly develops its inner capacities, and if we stand before a growing human being as before a sacred riddle to be solved, a being who has come to us from the endless distances of the cosmos so that we can give that being the possibility to unfold and develop, then many new tasks, outlooks, and possibilities will arise for all of human life. We thus see a human being entering existence through birth and assume that, in a certain sense, that being's essential nature is brought into earthly existence through birth. Conventional science shows us—if we ignore slogans and theories and look instead to the facts—how the spirit and soul essence of the human being works on within the child after birth, and how what appears to us as physical structure is changed and fashioned under the influence of the spirit-soul.

Conventional science can also show us, for example, how we should initially view the tool for external activity, the brain. It shows us that the human brain is still undefined and very pliable when human beings first enter earthly existence through birth. It shows us how the child then endeavors to absorb the cultural treasures of its environment and how that treasure shapes and creates the brain like an artist working with pliable material. As I have often mentioned in other connections, a newborn human being left helpless on a deserted island could not acquire the ability to speak. We must then say that the spirit and soul content of language comes to us after birth and does not arise from within the human being. It is not something connected only with a person's character or received without the influences of the environment, as with the second set of teeth. Speech acts on the human being. It is truly a sculptor that fashions

the human brain. Through conventional science, we can follow the formation of the child's brain during the first period of life and even over years. Even if we can offer anatomical or physiological proof that the human capacity to speak and to remember linguistic concepts is connected with one or another organ, and that we collect every word in something like a library book, we would still have to ask, "What initially formed the brain that way?" The answer is: the spirit and soul content of the language spoken in the person's environment.

[*The Education of the Child*, pp. 90-91.]

14. The Integration of Willing, Feeling, and Thinking into the Nervous System

Science today speaks of forces and interrelationships of substances in the inorganic realm, but scientists do not yet dare to use such exact methods to deal with phenomena in the human realm. Consequently, what is said of body, soul, and spirit remains abstract and leaves those three aspects of the human being standing beside one another, as it were, with no real interconnection. We can observe the child growing up until the change of teeth and, if we do so without preconceptions, we can detect how, just after this event, the child's memory assumes a different character; how certain faculties and abilities of thinking begin to manifest; how memory works through more sharply delineated concepts, and so on. We can observe that the inner soul condition of the child undergoes a definite change after the second dentition. But what exactly happened in the child?

Today, I can only point in certain directions. Further details can be found with the help of natural science. When observing a child growing up from the earliest stage until the second teeth appear, one can discern the gradual manifestation of an inner quality, emerging from the depths and surfacing in the outer organization. One can see above all how, during those years, the head system develops. If we observe this development without preconceptions, we can detect a current flowing through the child, from below upward. At first, a young baby, in a state of helplessness, is unable to walk. It has to lie all the time and be carried everywhere. Then, as months pass,

we observe a strong force of will, expressed in uncoordinated, jerky movements of the limbs, that gradually leads to the faculty of walking. That powerful force, working upward from the limb system, also works back upon the entire organization of the child.

And, if we make a proper investigation of the metamorphosis of the head, from the stage when the child has to lie all the time and be carried everywhere to the time when it is able to stand on its own legs and walk—which contemporary science also clearly shows us and is obvious physiologically, if we learn to look in the right direction—then we find how what manifests in the child's limb system as the impulse for walking is related to the area of the brain that represents the will organization. We can put this into words as follows. As young children are learning to walk, they are developing in their brains—from below upward, from the lower limbs and in a certain way from the periphery toward the center—their will organization. In other words: when learning to walk, a child develops the will organization of the brain through the will activity of its lower limbs.

If we now continue our observation of the growing child, we see the next important phase occur in the strengthening of the breathing organization. The breathing assumes what I should like to call a more individual constitution, just as the limb system did through the activity of walking. And this transformation and strengthening of the breathing—which one can observe physiologically—is expressed in the whole activity of *speaking*.

In this instance, there is again a streaming in the human organization from below upward. We can follow quite clearly what a young person integrates into the nervous system by means of language. We can see how, in learning to speak, ever greater inwardness of feeling begins to radiate outward. As a human being, learning to walk becomes integrated into the will sphere of the nervous system, so, in learning to speak, the child's feeling life likewise becomes integrated.

A last stage can be seen in an occurrence that is least observable outwardly and that happens during the second dentition. Certain forces that had been active in the child's organism, dwelling in it, come to completion, for the child will not have another change of teeth. The coming of the second teeth reveals that forces that have

been at work in the entire organism have come to the end of their task. And so, just as we see that a child's will life is inwardly established through the ability to walk, and that a child's feeling life is inwardly established by its learning to speak so, at the time of the change of teeth, around the seventh year, we see the faculty of mental picturing or *thinking* develop in a more or less individualized form that is no longer bound to the entire bodily organization, as previously. These are interesting interrelationships that need to be studied more closely. They show how what I earlier called the etheric body works back into the physical body. What happens is that, with the change of teeth, a child integrates the rest of its organization into the head and the nerves.

[*Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, pp. 154-156.]

15. The Connection of the Sounds of Speech to the Soul

Let us now take a well-trained observer of life, someone schooled in anthroposophy to know human beings, and place this person beside a child who is going through the process of learning to speak. If we have really learned to look into a child's soul life, recognizing the imponderables at play between adult and child, we can learn more about children's psychology by observing real-life situations than, for example, the eminent psychologist Wilhelm Preyer did by means of statistical records. For instance, we learn to recognize the immense difference between, let us say, when we hear a mother or father speaking to a child to calm her down and saying, "Ee Ee," and when we hear someone who is speaking to a child about something more outward in its immediate environment and says, "Hsh, hsh!" With every vowel sound, we speak directly to a child's feeling life. We address ourselves to the innermost being of the child's soul. With the help of spiritual science, we learn to know how to stimulate a particular soul area. And in this way, we bring about a certain connection between adult and child that generates a close relationship between teacher and pupil, allowing something to flow from the teacher directly to the child's inmost feeling.

If, for example, we speak to a child about how cold it is outside, that child is taken into the realm of consonants (as in "Hsh-Hsh"),

where we work directly on the child's will. We can thus observe that we stimulate in one instance a child's feeling life, and in another the child's life of movement, which lives in will impulses.

With this example, I merely wanted to indicate how light can be shed upon everything, even the most elementary things, provided we have a comprehensive knowledge of life. Today, there exists a magnificent science of language from which education certainly can benefit a great deal. That science, however, studies language as if it were something quite separate from human beings. But, if we are schooled in anthroposophical spiritual science, we learn to look at language not as something floating above human beings who then take hold of it and bring it into their lives; we learn that language is directly connected with the whole human being, and we learn to use this knowledge in practical life. We learn how a child's inner relationship to the vowel element is connected with a warming glow in the feeling life, whereas the consonantal element—whatever a child experiences through consonants—is closely linked to the movements of the will.

The point is that one learns to observe the child more intimately. This kind of observation, this empathy with the child, has gradually been lost. So often today, when attempts are made to educate young human beings, it is as if we were actually circumventing the child's real being—as if our modern science of education had lost direct contact with the child to be educated.

We no longer recognize that speech is organically linked to all processes of growth and to all that happens in a child. Fundamentally, we no longer know that, in raising a child to become an imitator in the right way, we are helping it become inwardly warm and rich in feelings. Until the change of teeth, around the seventh year, children depend entirely on imitation and all upbringing and education during those early years depends basically upon this faculty. Only if we gain a clear understanding of this faculty of imitation during the first years of life and can follow it closely from year to year will the hidden depths of a child's inner nature be revealed to us, so that we can educate our pupils in ways that, later on, will place them fully into life.

[The Connecton of the Sounds of Speech to the Soul.]

16. The Relationship of the Etheric and Astral Bodies in Speech

In the case of a child learning to speak, the following premise is useful. We must observe not only what belongs to the stream of heredity but also what develops in the child from spiritual depths. Language is part of this. When one observes human beings in the light of anthroposophical spiritual science—discriminating between the more inward, astral body and the more outward etheric body—one comes to know the nature of the human will in quite a new way. One sees the will as more allied to the astral body while thinking, for instance, is seen to be more closely connected with the etheric body. One learns to know how these members interact in speaking. For in observing and experiencing life, we have to do not only with outer facts but with placing these facts in the right light.

[*Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy*, p. 105.]

17. Moral Education through Speech

In a delicate way a similar relationship to the outer world is still present in children also. It lives in the child and should be reckoned with. Education in the kindergarten should therefore never depend on anything other than the principle of imitation. The teacher must sit down with the children and just do what she wishes them to do, so that the child has only to copy. All education and instruction before the change of teeth must be based on this principle.

After the change of teeth all this becomes quite different. The soul life of the child is now completely changed. No longer does he perceive merely the single gestures, but now he sees the way in which these gestures accord with one another. For instance, whereas previously he only had a feeling for a definite line, now he has a feeling for coordination, for symmetry. The feeling is awakened for what is coordinated or uncoordinated, and in his soul the child acquires the possibility of perceiving what is formative. As soon as this perception is awakened there appears simultaneously an interest in speech. During the first seven years of life there is an interest in gesture, in everything connected with movement; in the years between seven

and fourteen there is an interest in everything connected with the pictorial form, and speech is pre-eminently pictorial and formative. After the change of teeth the child's interest passes over from gesture to speech, and in the lower school years from seven to fourteen we can work most advantageously through everything that lies in speech, above all through the moral element underlying speech. For just as the child before this age has a religious attitude towards the gesture which meets him in the surrounding world, so now he relates himself in a moral sense, his religious feeling being gradually refined into a soul experience, to everything which approaches him through speech.

So now, in this period of his life, one must work upon the child through speech. But whatever is to work upon him in this way must do so by means of an unquestioned authority. When I want to convey to the child some picture expressed through speech, I must do so with the assurance of authority. I must be the unquestioned authority for the child when through speech I want to conjure up before him some picture. Just as we must actually show the little child what we want him to do, so we must be the human pattern for the child between the change of teeth and puberty. In other words, there is no point whatever in giving reasons to a child of this age, in trying to make him see why we should do something or not do it, just because there are well-founded reasons for or against it. This passes, over the child's head. It is important to understand this. In exactly the same way as in the earliest years of life the child only observes the gesture, so between the change of teeth and puberty he only observes what I, as a human being, am in relation to himself. At this age the child must, for instance, learn about what is moral in such a way that he regards as good what the naturally accepted authority of the teacher, by means of speech, designates as good; he must regard as bad what this authority designates as bad. The child must learn: What my teacher, as my authority, does is good, what he does not do is bad. Relatively speaking then, the child feels: When my teacher says something is good, then it is good; and if he says something is bad, then it is bad. You will not attribute to me, seeing that 30 years ago I wrote my *Philosophy of Freedom* [Also called *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*], a point of view which upholds the principle of authority as

the one and only means of salvation. But through the very fact of knowing the true nature of freedom one also knows that between the change of teeth and puberty the child needs to be faced with an unquestioned authority. This lies in the nature of man. Everything is doomed to failure in education which disregards this relationship of the child to the unquestioned authority of the personality of the teacher and educator. The child must be guided in everything which he should do or not do, think or not think, feel or not feel, by what flows to him, by way of speech, from his teacher and educator. At this age therefore there is no sense in wanting to approach him through the intellect. During this time everything must be directed towards the life of feeling, for feeling is receptive to anything in the nature of pictures and the child of this age is so constituted that he lives in the world of pictures, of images, and has the feeling of welding separate details into a harmonious whole. This is why, for instance, what is moral cannot be brought to the child by way of precept, by saying: You should do this, you should not do that. It simply doesn't work. What does work is when the child, through the way in which one speaks to him, can feel inwardly in his soul a liking for what is good, a dislike of what is bad. Between the change of teeth and puberty the child is an aesthete, and we must therefore take care that he experiences pleasure in the good and displeasure in what is bad. This is the best way for him to develop a sense of morality.

(Further indications regarding the development of morality through stories are included in the section on pictorial instruction.)

[Human Values in Education, pp. 57-59.]

18. Eurythmy as an Expression of the Movements of the Larynx

Eurythmy has an enormous effect upon the nature of the child. We need only recall that speaking is simply a localization of the entire activity of a human being. In speaking, the activities of thinking and will come together. In encountering one another, they also become an activity of feeling. The intellectual activity, which in our civilized language is very abstract, is left out in eurythmy so that everything flows out of the human will. Thus the will is what is actually utilized

in eurythmy. Eurythmy is the opposite of dreaming. Dreaming brings human beings into experiencing the world of thought. People simply lie there and the movements that they imagine do not actually exist. They may travel through a large area of land, but in reality they do not move. All this is only present in the person's imagination. In eurythmy, it is just the opposite. In dreaming a human being is half asleep, whereas in eurythmy a person is more fully awake than he or she is during normal wakeful life. In eurythmy, a person does just what is left out in dreams and suppresses what is the main aspect of dreaming. Thus each thought is immediately carried out as a movement. For many children, this activity is not always what they want to do. I am convinced that while simple physiological gymnastics achieves its intended effects, it does nothing to strengthen those activities of the will that begin in the soul, or at best it strengthens them indirectly in that people more easily overcome a certain physical clumsiness. However, simple physiological gymnastics does not actually do anything to strengthen the will. This is a conviction that I have from the short time in which we have divided the required time for gymnastics between normal gymnastics and eurythmy. Of course, this is a question that must be considered further. Nevertheless I believe it has major social significance.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 104-105.]

19. The Effect of Music and Speech on Breathing

It is essential, therefore, that we take hold, as it were, of the continual shaping process—a kind of further development of what takes place until the change of teeth—and meet it with something that proceeds from the breathing rhythm. This can be done with various music and speech activities. The way we teach the child to speak and the way we introduce a child to the music—whether listening, singing, or playing music—all serve, in terms of teaching, to form the breathing rhythm. Thus, when it meets the rhythm of the pulse, it can increasingly harmonize with it. It is wonderful when the teacher can observe the changing facial expressions of a child while learning to speak and sing—regardless of the delicacy and subtlety of those changes,

which may not be so obvious. We should learn to observe in children between the change of teeth and puberty, their efforts at learning to speak and sing, their gaze, physiognomy, finger movements, stance, and gait; with reverence, we should observe, growing from the very center of very small children, unformed facial features that assume a beautiful form; we should observe how our actions around small children are translated into their developing expressions and body gestures. When we can see all this with inner reverence, as teachers we attain something that continually springs from uncharted depths, an answer in feeling to a feeling question.

The question that arises—which need not come into the conscious intellect—is this: What happens to all that I do while teaching a child to speak or sing? The child’s answer is: “I receive it,” or, “I reject it.” In body gestures, physiognomy, and facial expressions we see whether what we do enters and affects the child, or if it disappears into thin air, passing through the child as though nothing were assimilated. Much more important than knowing all the rules of teaching—that this or that must be done in a certain way—is acquiring this sensitivity toward the child’s reflexes, and an ability to observe the child’s reactions to what we do. It is, therefore, an essential intuitive quality that must develop in the teacher’s relationship with the children. Teachers must also learn to read the effects of their own activity. Once this is fully appreciated, people will recognize the tremendous importance of introducing music in the right way into education during the elementary years and truly understand what music is for the human being.

[*The Essentials of Education*, pp. 43-45.]

20. Speech in Relation to Right Breathing

In the same way, speaking serves to regulate the human breathing rhythm. In school we need to work so that the children learn how to bring their speech into a peaceful regularity. We need to require that the children speak syllable for syllable, that they speak slowly and that they properly form the syllables so that nothing of the word is left out. The children need to grow accustomed to proper speech and verse,

to well-formed speech, and develop a feeling rather than a conscious understanding of the rise and fall of the tones in verses. We need to speak to the children in the proper way so that they learn to hear.

During childhood the larynx and neighboring organs adjust to the hearing. As I said, the methods common today may be appropriate for adults, as what results from those methods will be included or not included in one way or another by life itself. In school, however, we need to eliminate all such artificial methods. Here what is most needed is the natural relationship of the teacher to the student. The loving devotion of the child to the teacher should replace artificial methods. I would, in fact, say that intangible effects should be the basis of our work. Nothing would be more detrimental than if all the old aunts and uncles with their tea-party ideas of music and methods were to find their way into school. In school what should prevail is the spirit of the subject. But that can only occur when you, the teacher, are enveloped by the subject, not when you want to teach the subject to the children through external methods.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 176-177.]

21. Repetition as a Basis for Elementary Education

Again, as a result of poor modern psychology, people would not believe how bad it is for a human being when the memory is so mistreated during the first period of life that they immediately forget what they are forced to remember. This is why we should, whenever possible, use repetition and similar means. Repetition should be the basis of education between the age of seven and fourteen or fifteen. Whenever possible, we should summarize in short sentences things previously presented in detail so that they can be remembered, so that children really retain certain things in a way similar to how Christ remembered the Lord's Prayer. They should repeat something again and again and thus make it a part of the soul life.

[*Education as a Force for Social Change*, p. 199.]

22. Indications Regarding the Morning Verses

A teacher suggests beginning the morning with the Lord's Prayer.

Dr. Steiner: It would be nice to begin instruction with the Lord's Prayer and then go on to the verses I will give you. For the four lower grades I would ask that you say the verse in the following way:

The Sun with loving light
 Makes bright for me each day;
 The soul with spirit power
 Gives strength unto my limbs;
 In sunlight shining clear
 I reverence, O God,
 The strength of humankind,
 That thou so graciously
 Hast planted in my soul,
 That I with all my might
 May love to work and learn.
 From Thee come light and strength,
 To Thee rise love and thanks.

[When in October 1923 Rudolf Steiner visited Marth Häbler's new fifth-grade class, he recommended that the children say the Lord's Prayer in addition to the morning verse.]

The children must feel that as I have spoken it. First they should learn the words, but then you will have to gradually make the difference between the inner and outer clear to them. The Sun with loving light Makes bright for me each day; The soul with spirit power Gives strength unto my limbs; The first part, that the Sun makes each day bright, we observe, and the other part, that it affects the limbs, we feel in the soul. What lies in this portion is the spirit-soul and the physical body. In sunlight shining clear I reverence, O God, The strength of humankind, That thou so graciously Hast planted in my soul, That I with all my might May love to work and learn. Here we give honor to both. We then turn to one and then the other. From Thee come light and strength (the Sun), To Thee rise love and

thanks (from within). This is how I think the children should feel it, namely, the divine in light and in the soul. You need to attempt to speak it with the children in chorus, with the feeling of the way I recited it. At first, the children will learn only the words, so that they have the words, the tempo, and the rhythm. Later, you can begin to explain it with something like, "Now we want to see what this actually means." Thus, first they must learn it, then you explain it. Don't explain it first, and also, do not put so much emphasis upon the children learning it from memory. They will eventually learn it through repetition. They will be able to read it directly from your lips. Even though it may not go well for a long time, four weeks or more, it will go better later. The older children can write it down, but you must allow the younger ones to learn it slowly. Don't demand that they learn it by heart! It would be nice if they write it down, since then they will have it in their own handwriting. I will give you the verse for the four higher classes tomorrow.

The verse for the four higher grades was

I look into the world;
In which the Sun shines,
In which the stars sparkle,
In which the stones lie,
The living plants are growing,
The animals are feeling,
In which the soul of man
Gives dwelling for the spirit;
I look into the soul
Which lives within myself.
God's spirit weaves in light
Of Sun and human soul,
In world of space, without,
In depths of soul, within.
God's spirit, 'tis to Thee
I turn myself in prayer,
That strength and blessing grow
In me, to learn and work.

[The texts of the verses are exactly as Dr. Steiner dictated them according to the handwritten notes. It is unclear whether he said, “*loving light*” (*liebes Licht*) or “*light of love*” (*Liebeslicht*).]

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 39-40.]

23. Recitation of Poetry Before and After Puberty

When we attempt to have a child who is not yet past puberty recite something according to his or her own taste, we are harming the developmental forces within human nature. These forces will be harmed if an attempt is made to use them before the completion of puberty; they should only be used later. Independent judgments of taste are only possible after puberty. If a child before the age of fourteen or fifteen is to recite something, she should do so on the basis of what an accepted authority standing next to her has provided. This means she should find the way in which the authority has spoken pleasing. She should not be led astray to emphasize or not emphasize certain words, to form the rhythm out of what she thinks is pleasing, but instead she should be guided by the taste of the accepted authority. We should not attempt to guide that intimate area of the child’s life away from accepted authority before the completion of puberty. Notice that I always say “accepted authority” because I certainly do not mean a forced or blind authority. What I am saying is based upon the objective observation that from the change of teeth until puberty, a child has a desire to have an authority standing alongside her. The child demands this, longs for it, and we need to support this longing, which arises out of her individuality.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 215-216.]

24. Indications on Choral Speech

Two teachers report about teaching foreign language in the first grade.

Dr. Steiner: The earlier you begin, the more easily children learn foreign languages and the better their pronunciation. Beginning at seven, the ability to learn languages decreases with age. Thus, we must

begin early. Speaking in chorus is good, since language is a social element. It is always easier to speak in chorus than individually. [79]

I think we should give attention to allowing the children to sing not only in chorus. Do not neglect solo singing. Particularly when the children speak in chorus, you will find the group soul is active. Many children do that well in chorus, but when you call upon them individually, they are lost. You need to be sure the children can also do individually what they can do in chorus, particularly in the languages. [233]

The fourth grade is terribly loud. But, we should not take these things so seriously. Morally, it is very significant if you have changed a child's obtrusive characteristic. For instance, if you can achieve that the fourth grade is not so loud, or if you can break B.Ch.'s habit of throwing his school bag ahead of him—if you can change such an obvious characteristic, regardless of whether you view that as good or bad behavior. It has great moral significance if you can break the boys in the fourth grade from all that terrible yelling. I would say it is a question of general didactic efficiency, how far the speaking in chorus goes. If you develop it too little, the social attitude suffers. That is formed through speaking in chorus. If you go too far, the capacity to comprehend will suffer because that has a strongly suggestive force. When they speak as a group, the children will be able to do things they otherwise have no idea of. It is the same as with a mob in the street. The younger they are, the more they can fool you. It is a good idea to randomly request them to do the same thing again individually, so that each has to pay attention to what the other says. When you are telling a story, you can give some sentences and then let the children continue. You should do things I have done, for instance, when I said, "You there, in the middle row at the left end, continue on," "You there in the corner, continue," so that they have to pay attention and that you can make the children move along with you. Speaking in chorus too much leads to laziness. The tendency to shout in music confirms that. [88-89]

There is a question about speaking in chorus.

Dr. Steiner: You can certainly do that. You can also tell fairy tales. There are many fairy tales you should not tell to six-year-olds. I don't mean the sort of things that the Ethical Culture Association wants to eliminate, but the stories that are simply too complicated. I would not have the little children repeat the tales. However, if they want to tell something themselves, then listen to it. That is something you will have to wait on and see what happens. [95-96]

In teaching foreign languages, there is a tremendous difference between speaking in chorus and individual speech. The children can all easily speak in chorus, but individually they cannot. We should use that fact. We will discuss that in the pedagogical questions next year, namely, that we should try to have the children speak individually immediately after they have said something in chorus. That should become a basis of learning, without doubt. [124]

I think that it is good to teach in chorus. It is good to do that within bounds. If you do too much in chorus, I would ask you not to forget that the group soul is a reality, and you should not count upon the children being able to do individually what they can do properly in chorus. You may have the feeling that when the children are speaking in chorus, you can keep them quiet more easily. That is a good method when done in moderation so that the group soul becomes active. To that extent, it is good to leave the children in the hands of their group soul. However, as individuals they cannot do what they can do in chorus. You need to change that. You need to ask the children a lot individually. That is what you need to do because that has significant educational value. Don't believe that when the children become restless you should always have them speak in chorus. [209]

Sloppiness has entered our work in that we have moved in the direction of doing things more easily. It is important that we take into account that when the children speak in chorus, although it goes well, that is no proof that they can do it individually, since the group spirit also participates. We need to work both ways.

[Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner, pp. 95-96, 124, 209, 363]

25. Recitation and Declamation

At the time when I was lecturing about declamation and recitation, I discovered that most people do not even know there is a difference. If you take the way you should speak Greek verses, then you have the archetype of reciting, because what is important is the meter, how things are extended or contracted. When the important point is the highs and lows, and that is what you need to emphasize, for instance, in *The Song of the Niebelungs*, then you have declamation. I showed that through an example, that there is a radical difference between the first form of Goethe's *Iphigenia*, that he later reworked into a Roman form. The German *Iphigenia* should be declaimed and the Roman, recited.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, pp. 286-287.]

26. Speaking and Conversation in the Early Grades

Above all, we must try to cultivate as much simple speaking and conversation with the children as possible during the first year. We read aloud as little as possible, but instead prepare ourselves so well that we can bring to them in a narrative way whatever we want to tell them. Then we seek to reach the point where the children are able to retell what they have heard from us. We avoid using passages that do not stimulate the imagination and make as much use as possible of texts that activate the imagination strongly, namely, fairy tales—as many fairy tales as possible. Having practiced this telling and retelling with the children for a long time, we start in a small way to let them give brief accounts of experiences they themselves have had. We let the children relate something they like talking about. With all this telling and retelling of stories and personal experiences, we develop the transition from the local vernacular to educated speech by simply correcting mistakes the children make, without being pedantic about it. At first they will make many mistakes, but later fewer and fewer. Through telling and retelling, we develop in the children the transition from vernacular to educated speech. In this way, the children will have reached the desired goal by the end of their first year at school.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 168-169.]

27. Story Telling and Retelling I

The first thing we need to consider when we welcome children into the first grade is to find appropriate stories to tell them and for them to tell back to us. In the telling and retelling of fairy tales, legends, and accounts of outer realities, we are cultivating the children's speech, forming a bridge between the local dialect and educated conversational speech. By making sure the children speak correctly, we are also laying a foundation for correct writing.



At the beginning of the second grade, we will continue with the telling and retelling of stories and try to develop this further. Then the children can be brought gradually to the point of writing down the stories we tell them. After they have had some practice in writing down what they hear, we can also have them write short descriptions of what we have told them about the animals, plants, meadows, and woods in the surroundings.

[Discussions with Teachers, pp. 183, 185-186.]

28. Story Telling and Retelling II

To get the right atmosphere for this pictorial storytelling you must above all have a good understanding of the temperaments of the children. This is why the treatment of children according to temperament has such an important place in teaching. And you will find that the best way is to begin by seating the children of the same temperament together. In the first place you have a more comprehensive view knowing that over there are the choleric, there the melancholic, and here the sanguine. This will also give you a vantage point from which to know the whole class.

The very fact that you do this, that you study the children and seat them according to their temperaments, means that you have done something for yourself that will help you to keep the necessary unquestioned authority in the class. These things usually come from sources you least expect. All teachers and educators must work upon themselves inwardly.

If you put the phlegmatics together they will mutually correct each other, for they will be so bored by one another that they will develop a certain antipathy to their own phlegma, and it will get better and better all the time. The choleric hit and smack each other and finally they get tired of the blows they get from the other choleric; and so the children of each temperament rub each other's corners off extraordinarily well when they sit together. But when the teacher speaks to the children, for instance when conversing with them about the story that has just been given, the teacher must develop as a matter of course the instinctive gift of treating each child according to temperament. Let us say that I have a phlegmatic child; if I wish to talk over with such a child a story like the one I have just told, I must come across as even more phlegmatic than the child. With a sanguine child who is always flitting from one impression to another and cannot hold on to any of them, I must try to pass from one impression to the next even more quickly than the child does.

With a choleric child you must try to teach things in a quick emphatic way so that you yourself become choleric, and you will see how in the face of your choleric the child's own choleric propensities become repugnant to the child. Like must be treated with like, so long as you do not make yourself ridiculous. Thus you will gradually be able to create an atmosphere in which a story like this is not merely related but can be spoken about afterward.

But you must speak about it before you let the children retell the story. The very worst method is to tell a story and then to say: "Now Edith Miller, you come out and retell it." There is no sense in this; it only has meaning if you talk about it first for a time, either cleverly or foolishly; (you need not always be clever in your classes; you can sometimes be quite foolish, and at first you will mostly be foolish). In this way the children make the thing their own, and then if you like you can get them to tell the story again, but this is of less importance for, indeed, it is not so essential that the children should hold such a story in their memory; in fact, for the age of which I am speaking, namely between the change of teeth and the ninth or tenth year, this hardly comes in question at all. Let the children by all means remember what they can, but what has been forgotten is

of no consequence. The training of memory can be accomplished in subjects other than storytelling, as I will describe.

[*Kingdom of Childhood*, pp. 63-65.]

29. Temperament and Voice Range

Dr. Steiner: The teachers will understand their students better because each teacher will remain with his or her class. We must continue to work in this direction and use those things we discussed in the teachers' seminar. When you can properly judge a child's temperament, everything will come of itself. You should work toward reflecting the child's temperament in the sound of your voice when you call the child.

A teacher: I believe I have perceived a relationship between the phlegmatic children and a deep voice, the sanguine children and a middle tone, and a higher voice with the choleric. Is that correct?

Dr. Steiner: That is certainly true with the first two. The question regarding the higher voices is rather interesting. In general, it is true that phlegmatics have lower voices and the melancholic and sanguine children, middle tones. The sanguine children are among the highest voices. The choleric children spread out over all three. There must be some particular reason. Do you think that tenors are mostly choleric? Certainly on the stage. The choleric element spreads out everywhere.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, pp. 72, 90.]

30. Speech Exercises for Teachers from *Discussions with Teachers*

Rudolf Steiner: It is most important that, along with all our other work, we should cultivate clear articulation. This has a kind of influence, a certain effect. I have here some sentences that I formulated for another occasion; they have no especially profound meaning, but are constructed so that the speech organs are activated in every kind of movement, organically. I would like you to pass these sentences around and repeat them in turn without embarrassment so that by constant practice they may make our speech organs flexible; we can have these organs do gymnastics, so to speak. Mrs. Steiner will say

the sentences first as it should be done artistically, and I will ask each one of you to repeat them after her. These sentences are not composed according to sense and meaning, but in order to “do gymnastics” with the speech organs.

Dart may these boats
 through darkening gloaming
 Name neat Norman on
 nimble moody mules

[The original German speech exercises may be found in the Appendix of *Discussions with Teachers* and in *Creative Speech*]

The *N* is constantly repeated, but in different combinations of letters, and so the speech organ can do the right gymnastic exercises. At one point two *N*s come together; you must stop longer over the first *N* in “on nimble.”

Rattle me more and
 more rattles now rightly

In this way you can activate the speech organs with the right gymnastics.

I would recommend that you take particular care to find your way into the very forms of the sounds and the forms of the syllables; see that you really grow into these forms, so that you consciously speak each sound, that you lift each sound into consciousness. It is a common weakness in speech that people just glide over the sounds, whereas speech is there to be understood. It would even be better to first bring an element of caricature into your speech by emphasizing syllables that should not be emphasized at all. Actors, for example, practice saying *friendly* instead of *friendly*! You must pronounce each letter consciously. It would even be good for you to do something like Demosthenes did, though perhaps not regularly. You know that, when he could not make any progress with his speaking, he put pebbles on his tongue and through practice strengthened his voice

to the degree that it could be heard over a rushing river; this he did to acquire a delivery that the Athenians could hear. [58-59]

New speech exercises:

Rateless ration
 roosted roomily
 reason wretched
 ruined Roland
 royalty roster
 Proxy prized
 bather broomstick
 polka pushing
 beady basket
 prudent pertness
 bearskin bristled [69]

Today we will try an exercise in which we have to hold the breath somewhat longer.

Fulfilling goes
 through hoping
 goes through longing
 through willing
 willing flows
 in wavering
 wails in quavering
 waves veiling
 waving breathing
 in freedom
 freedom winning
 kindling

You can only achieve what is intended by dividing the lines properly. Then you will bring the proper rhythm to your breath. The object of this exercise is to do gymnastics with the voice in order to regulate the breath.

In words like fulfilling and willing, both “*l*’s” must be pronounced. You shouldn’t put an “*h*” into the first “*l*”, but the two “*l*’s” must be sounded one after the other. You must also try to avoid speaking with a rasping voice, and develop instead tone in your voice, bringing it up from deeper in your chest, to give full value to the vowels. (All Austrians have tinny voices!)

Before each of the above lines the breath should be consciously brought into order. The words that appear together also belong together when you read. You know that we usually do the following speech exercises also:

Barbara sass stracks am Abhang
 or: Barbara sass nah am abhang
 or: Abraham a Sancta Clara kam an [81-82]

Speech Exercise:

In the vast unmeasured world-wide spaces,
 In the endless stream of time,
 In the depths of human soul-life,
 In the world’s great revelations:
 Seek the unfolding of life’s great mystery.

Rudolf Steiner: The first four sentences have a ring of expectation, and the last line is a complete fulfillment of the first four. Now let’s return to the other speech exercise:

Proxy prized
 bather broomstick
 polka pushing
 beady basket
 prudent pertness
 bearskin bristled

Rudolf Steiner: : You can learn a great deal from this. And now we will repeat the sentence:

Dart may these boats through darkening gloaming

Rudolf Steiner: Also there is a similar exercise I would like to point out that has more feeling in it. It consists of four lines, which I will dictate to you later. The touch of feeling should be expressed more in the first line:

Lulling leader limply
liplessly laughing
loppety lumpety
lackety lout

You must imagine that you have a green frog in front of you, and it is looking at you with lips apart, with its mouth wide open, and you speak to the frog in the words of the last three lines. In the first line, however, you tell it to lisp the lovely lyrics “Lulling leader limply.” This line must be spoken with humorous feeling; you really expect this of the frog. [99-100]

Speech Exercise:

Deprive me not of what, when I give it to you
freely, pleases you.

Rudolf Steiner: This sentence is constructed chiefly to show the break in the sense, so that it runs as follows: First the phrase “Deprive me not of what,” and then the phrase “pleases you,” but the latter is interrupted by the other phrase, “when I give it to you freely.” This must be expressed by the way you say it. You must notice that the emphasis you dropped on the word “what” you pick up again at “pleases you.”

Rateless ration
roosted roomily
reason wretched
ruined Roland
royalty roster

Name neat Norman on
nimble moody mules.

Piffing fifer
prefacing feather
phlegma fluting
fairground piercing

Weekly verse from *The Calendar of the Soul*:

I feel a strange power bearing fruit,
Gaining strength, bestowing me on myself,
I sense the seed ripening
And presentiment weaving, full of Light,
Within me on my selfhood's power. (114-115)

Speech Exercises:

Children chiding
Chaffinch chirping
Choking chimneys
Cheerfully chattering
Children chiding and fetching
Chaffinch chirping switching
Choking chimneys hitching
Cheerfully chattering twitching
Beach children chiding and fetching
Reach chaffinch chirping switching
Birches choking chimneys hitching
Perches cheerfully chattering twitching

Rudolf Steiner: The “ch” should be sounded in a thoroughly active way, like a gymnastic exercise.

The following is a piece in which you have to pay attention both to the form and the content.

From *Galgenlieder* by Christian Morgenstern:

The Does' Prayer

The does, as the hour grows late,
 Med-it-ate;
 Med-it-nine;
 Med-i-ten;
 Med-eleven;
 Med-twelve;
 Midnight!
 The does, as the hour grows late,
 Meditate,
 They fold their little toesies,
 the doesies. [126-127]

Rudolf Steiner: In the speech exercises that we will take now, the principal purpose is to make the speech organs more flexible.

Curtsey Betsy jets cleric
 lastly light sceptic

One should acquire the habit of letting the tongue say it on its own, so to speak.

Tu-whit twinkle 'twas
 twice twigged tweaker
 to twenty twangy twirlings
 the zinnia crisper
 zither zooming shambles
 this smartened smacking
 smuggler sneezing
 snoring snatching

Both these exercises are really perfect only when they are said from memory.

From *We Found a Path* (by Christian Morgenstern):

Those who don't know the goal
can't find the way,
they will trot the same circle
all their lives long,
and return in the end
whence they began,
their piece of mind
more disturbed than before. [135-136]

Speech Exercises:

Curtsey cressets Betsy jets cleric
lastly plotless light skeptic

Rudolf Steiner: : You will only get the words right when you can reel them off by heart. Be conscious of every syllable you speak!

Narrow wren
mirror royal
gearing grizzled
noting nippers
fender coughing [147]

Speech Exercises:

Clip plop pluck cluck
clinked clapper richly
knotted trappings
rosily tripled [151]

Rudolf Steiner: Memorize this before you practice it!

Speech Exercise:

Slinging slanging a swindler
the wounding fooled a victor vexed
The wounding fooled a swindler
slinging slanging vexed
March smarten ten

clap rigging rockets
 Crackling plopping lynxes
 fling from forward forth
 Crackling plopping lynxes
 fling from forward forth
 March smarten ten
 clap rigging rockets

Rudolf Steiner: With this exercise you should share the recitation, like a relay race, coming in quickly one after the other. One begins, points to another to carry on, and so on. [171]

31. Comments Regarding a Teacher's Speech

A teacher: My fifth-grade class is noisy and uncontrolled, particularly during the foreign language period. They think French sentences are jokes.

Dr. Steiner: The proper thing to do would be to look at the joke and learn from it. You should always take jokes into account, but with humor. However, the children must behave. They must be quiet at your command. You must be able to get them quiet with a look. You must seek to maintain contact from the beginning to the end of the period. Even though it is tiring, you must maintain the contact between the teacher and the student under all circumstances. We gain nothing through external discipline. All you can do is accept the problem and then work from that. Your greatest difficulty is your thin voice. You need to train your voice a little and learn to speak in a lower tone and not squeal and shriek. It would be a shame if you were not to train your voice so that some bass also came into it. You need some deeper tones. [Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner, pp. 20–21.]

32. Using Formulas as Speech Exercises

A question about the use of formulas.

Rudolf Steiner: The question is whether you should avoid the habitual use of formulas, but go through the thought processes again and again

(a good opportunity for practicing speech), or whether it might be even better to go ahead and use the formula itself. If you can succeed, tactfully, in making the formula fully understood, then it can be very useful to use it as a speech exercise—to a certain extent.

[*Discussions with Teachers*, p. 161.]

33. Speech Exercises for Children with Difficulties

Dr. Steiner: Today, we will primarily discuss the problem children we spoke with. We will need to look at M.H. often. We will have to ask E.S. many things.

We can give some of the children in the fourth grade specific exercises, for instance, E.E. could learn the phrase, "People gain strength for life through learning." You could allow him to say this each morning in the course of the first period. F.R. could learn, "I will pay attention to my words and thoughts," and A.S. could learn, "I will pay attention to my words and deeds." We should have H.A. in the fifth grade do complicated drawings, for instance, a line that snakes about and comes back to its own beginning. He could also draw eurythmy forms. He should learn the phrase, "It is written in my heart to learn to pay attention and to become industrious."

You will need to force T.E. in the seventh grade to follow very exactly and slowly. She should hear exactly and slowly what you say to her. That should have a different tempo than her own fragmented thinking. Think a sentence together with her, "I will think with you." Only think it twice as slowly as she does. O.R., in eighth grade, is sleepy. He is a kind of soul-earthworm. That kind of sleepiness arises because people pass things by and pay no attention to them. He shouldn't play any pranks on anyone, nor disturb anyone's attention. In regard to the slow thinking in the third grade, you could take a phrase like, "The tree becomes green," and turn it around to "Green becomes the tree," and so forth so that they learn to turn their thinking around quickly. My general impression is that, in spite of all of the obstacles, you should maintain the courage to continue your teaching. Although there is not much time left in this year, we still have much to do.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 61-62.]

GRAMMAR AND SPELLING

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2. Introduction to Grammar from *The Renewal of Education*, p. 279
3. Speech Development through Grammar from *The Foundations of Human Experience*, p. 280
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15. Working with the Pictorial Element in Grammar from *Erziehungsfrage im Reifealter* translated in Karl Stockmeyer's *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools*, p. 304

16. Working with the Perfect Tense from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, p. 305
17. Enlivening the Study of Grammar and Punctuation from *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, p. 305
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SPELLING

1. Spelling as Convention from *Practical Advice to Teachers*, p. 311
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GRAMMAR

1. Lifting Speech to Consciousness through Grammar

Before delving into these matters in more detail, I want to dispel certain ideas you may have that could cause confusion. So many sins have been committed through the prevailing methods of learning reading and writing, especially in teaching what is connected with learning to read and write, that is, language, grammar, syntax, and so on. There has been so much waywardness in this area that there are doubtless few people who do not remember with some horror the lessons they had in grammar and syntax. This horror is quite justified. We should not conclude, however, that learning grammar is useless and should be gotten stopped. This would be a completely erroneous idea. In seeking to find what is right by going from one extreme to the other, it might be natural enough to come up with the idea that we should do away with grammar. Let's teach the children to read by the practical method of selecting passages for them; let's teach them to read and write without any grammar. This idea could arise quite easily out of the horror that so many of us remember. But learning grammar is not an unnecessary practice, especially in our day and age. I will tell you why.

What do we do when we raise unconscious speech to the grammatical realm, to the knowledge of grammar? We make a transition with our students: We lift speech from the unconscious into the conscious realm. Our purpose is not to teach them grammar in a pedantic way but to raise something to consciousness that otherwise takes place unconsciously. Unconsciously or semiconsciously, human beings do indeed use the world as a ladder up which to climb in a manner that corresponds to what we learn in grammar. Grammar tells us, for instance, that there are nouns. Nouns are names for objects, for objects that in a sense are self-contained in space. It is

not without significance for us that we find such objects in life. All things that can be expressed by nouns awaken us to the consciousness of our independence as human beings. By learning to name things with nouns, we distinguish ourselves from the world around us. By calling a thing a table or a chair, we separate ourselves from the table or chair; we are here, and the table or chair is there.

It is quite another matter to describe things using adjectives. When I say, "The chair is blue," I am expressing a quality that unites me with the chair. The characteristic that I perceive unites me with the chair. By naming an object with a noun, I dissociate myself from it; when I describe it with an adjective I become one with it again. The development of our consciousness takes place in our relationship to things when we address them; we must certainly become conscious of the way we address them. If I say a verb—for example, "A woman writes"—I not only unite with the being in relation to whom I used the verb, I also do with her what she is doing with her physical body. I do what *she* does—my I-being does what she does. When I speak a verb, my I joins in with what the physical body of the other is doing. I unite my I with the physical body of the other when I use a verb. Our listening, especially with verbs, is in reality always a form of participation. What is at this time the most spiritual part of the human being participates; it simply suppresses the activity.

Only in eurythmy is this activity placed in the external world. In addition to all its other benefits, eurythmy also activates listening. When one person says something, the other listens; he engages in his I with what lives physically in the sounds, but he suppresses it. The I always participates in eurythmy, and what eurythmy puts before us through the physical body is nothing other than listening made visible. You always do eurythmy when you listen, and when you actually perform eurythmy you are just making visible what remains invisible when you listen. The manifestation of the activity of the listening human being is, in fact, eurythmy. It is not something arbitrary, but rather the revelation of the activity of the listening human being. People today are, of course, shockingly slovenly; at first, when they listen, they do very poor inner eurythmy. By engaging in it as they should, they raise it to the level of true eurythmy.

Through eurythmy people can learn to listen effectively, which they are presently unable to do. I have made certain unusual discoveries in my recent lectures. Speakers come forward during discussions, but from what they have to say, one quickly notices that they really never heard the lecture, not even in a physical sense; they heard only certain parts of it. This is enormously significant, particularly in the present era of our human development. Someone enters into the discussion and says whatever he or she has been used to thinking for decades. You find yourself speaking in front of people with socialist ideas, but they will hear only what they have always heard from certain activists; the rest is not heard even in the physical sense. Sometimes they innocently admit as much by saying, "Dr. Steiner says a lot of good things, but he never says anything new." People have become so rigid in their listening that they become confused about anything that has not already fossilized gradually within them. People cannot listen and will become increasingly less able to do so in our age, unless the power of listening can be reawakened by eurythmy. The human soul being must find healing again. It will be particularly important in school to supplement the healthy qualities provided by gymnastics, which benefits the body and everything that takes account only of the physiology of bodily functions.

The other important factor is the health of the soul: To provide benefits for the soul requires that gymnastics lessons alternate with eurythmy lessons. Although eurythmy is primarily an art, its health-giving forces will be especially salutary to the students. In eurythmy they will not simply learn something artistic; through eurythmy they will derive the same benefits for their soul as they derive through gymnastics for their body. The way these two disciplines complement each other will be very helpful. It is essential to educate our children in a way that will enable them once again to notice the world around them and their fellow human beings. This is the foundation of all social life. Everyone talks today of social impulses, yet nothing but antisocial urges are to be found among people. Socialism ought to have its roots in the new esteem human beings should gain for one another. But there can be mutual esteem only when people really listen to each other. If we are to become teachers and educators, it

will be vastly important that we become attentive to these matters once more.

Now that you know that when you say a noun you dissociate yourself from your environment, when you say an adjective you unite yourself with your surroundings, and when you say a verb you blossom out into your environment and move with it, you will speak with quite a different inner emphasis about the noun, the adjective, and the verb than you would if you were not aware of these facts. All this is still only a preliminary discussion and will be continued later. For the moment, I merely want to evoke certain ideas, the absence of which might lead to confusion. It is extraordinarily important for us to know what it means for a person to become conscious of the structure of language.

In addition, we must develop a feeling for the great wisdom in language. This feeling, too, has all but died out today. Language is far cleverer than any of us. You will surely believe me when I say that the structure of language has not been formed by human beings. Just imagine what would have been the result if people had sat in parliaments in order to decree, in their cleverness, the structure of language. It would result in something about as clever as our laws. The structure of language, however, is truly more clever than our statutory laws. Inherent in the structure of language is the greatest wisdom. And an extraordinary amount can be learned from the way a people or a tribe speaks. Entering consciously in a living way into the framework of language, we can learn a very great deal from the genius of language itself.

It is extremely important to learn how to feel something definite in the activity of the spirits of language. To believe that the genius of language works in the structure of language is of great significance. This feeling can be extended further, to the point where we realize that we human beings speak, but animals cannot yet speak; they have at most the beginnings of articulated speech. In our day and age, when people like to confuse everything, speech is ascribed even to ants and bees. But in the light of reality this is nonsense. It is all built on a form of judgment to which I have frequently drawn attention.

There are some natural philosophers today who consider themselves most wise and say, “Why should not plants, too, have a will life and a feeling life? Are there not plants, the so-called carnivorous plants, that attract small animals that fly near them and then snap shut on them when they have settled?” These are beings that seem to have a will relationship with whatever comes into their vicinity, but we cannot claim that such outward signs are really characteristics of will. When I meet this attitude of mind, I usually use the same form of logic and say: “I know of something that also waits till a live creature comes near it and then encloses and imprisons it—a mouse-trap.” The mere workings of a mousetrap might therefore just as well be taken as proof that it possesses life as the nature of the Venus-flytrap is taken as proof that it possesses consciousness. We must be profoundly conscious that the power of articulate speech is a human possession. And we must also be aware of our position in the world compared with the other three kingdoms of nature. When we are conscious of it, we also know that our I is very much bound up with everything that constitutes speech, even though today’s way of speaking has become very abstract for us. But I would like to make you aware of something that will give you a new respect for language. In ancient times—in the Jewish culture, for example (though it was yet more pronounced even further back)—the priests, or those who administered and represented the cults, would stop speaking when they came to certain concepts while celebrating the rites. They interrupted their speech and communicated the names of high beings—not in words but in silence—through the appropriate eurythmic gestures. Then they continued the spoken rites. For instance, the name that sounds so abstract to us, rendered in Hebrew as “I AM the I AM,” was never spoken aloud. The priest spoke only up to the point where this name appeared, made the gesture, and resumed speaking. What was expressed in this gesture was the pronounceable name of God in humankind.

Why was this done? If this name had been spoken and repeated straight out, people were so sensitive at that time that they would have been stunned. There were sounds and combinations of sounds in speech that could stun the people of ancient cultures, so great was

the effect of such words on them. A state like fainting would have taken them over if such words had been spoken and heard. That is why they spoke of the “unutterable name of God,” which was profoundly significant. Such names could be spoken only by the priests, and even by them only on special occasions, for were they to be spoken before unprepared listeners heaven and earth would collapse. This means that people would fall unconscious. For this reason such a name was expressed only in a gesture. Such a feeling is an expression of what speech really is. Today people thoughtlessly blurt out everything. We can no longer vary the feeling nuances, and it is very rare to find a person who can be moved enough, without being sentimental, to have tears in their eyes when they come across certain passages in a novel, for example. This is today quite atavistic. The lively feeling for what lies in speech and sensitivity to language have become very dulled. This is one of the many things that need to be enlivened again today; when we do enliven it, it will enable us to feel more clearly what we really have in speech. We have speech to thank for much that lives in our I-being, in our feeling of being a personality. Our feelings can rise to a mood almost of prayer: I hear the language around me being spoken, and through the speech the power of I flows into me. Once you have this feeling for the sanctity of summoning the I through speech, you will be able to awaken it in the children by a variety of means. Then, too, you will awaken the feeling of I-being in the children, not in an egoistic manner but in another way. There are two ways of awakening the feeling of the I-being in a child. Done wrongly, it serves to fan the flames of egoism; done rightly, it stimulates the will and encourages real selflessness and willingness to live with the outer world.

I said these things to you because as teachers and educators you must be permeated by them. It will be up to you to use them in teaching language and speech. We shall speak tomorrow about how we can permeate them with consciousness to awaken in the children the sense for a consciousness of personality.

[Practical Advice to Teachers, pp. 55-61.]

2. Introduction to Grammar

Grammar should be taught in a very lively way. It should be taught in such a lively way that we assume that it already exists when the child speaks. When the child speaks, the grammar is already there. You should allow the children to speak sentences in the way they are used to speaking so that they feel the inner connection and inner flexibility of the language. You can then begin to draw the child's attention and make them aware of what they do unconsciously. You certainly do not need to do that through a pedantic analysis. You can develop the entirety of grammar by simply making the children more aware of the life of the grammar that is already there when the child has learned to speak.

We can certainly assume that all grammar already exists in the human organism. If you take that assumption seriously, you will realize that by making grammar conscious in a living way, you work on the creation of an I-consciousness in the child. You must orient everything toward that knowledge that exists in the body around the age of nine, when a consciousness of the I normally awakens. You need to bring forth into consciousness everything that exists unconsciously in the child's organism. In that way the child will reach the Rubicon of development at the age of nine in a favorable way. In that way you bring into consciousness what is unconscious. You then work with those forces in the child that want to develop, not the forces that you bring from outside the child. There is a way of teaching language by using the way the child already speaks and supporting the instruction through a living interaction between those children who speak a more cultivated language and those who speak a dialect. In this way you can allow them to measure themselves against each other, not in some abstract way, but using feeling to guide a word, a sentence, in dialect into another. If you do that for an hour and a half, you will really make the children break out into a sweat. The teachers who teach this way in the Waldorf School certainly have enough when they do this for an hour and a half or so each morning! If you give instruction in language by working with the knowledge in the body so that you create an actual self-consciousness, you are working in

harmony with the foundation you have laid in drawing and musical instruction. Thus you have two processes that support each other.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 111-112.]

3. Speech Development through Grammar

It will certainly not amaze you that the moment the head is physically complete—around the age of seven—the change of teeth presents the opportunity for the soul-head to arise from the larynx, permeated with a kind of skeleton. However, it must be a “soul-skeleton.” We do this by ending the wild development of language by imitation and, instead, begin to control speech development through grammar. We must be aware that when we receive children in elementary school, we need to practice an activity on the soul similar to what is practiced by the body when it produces the second set of teeth. We make the development of speech firm in the soul aspect when we include grammar in a reasonable way, so that what comes from speech enters into writing and reading. We will achieve a proper relationship of feeling to human speech if we know that the words people form tend to become the head.

[*The Foundations of Human Experience*, pp. 207-208.]

4. Developing Grammar Artistically

In language, broadly speaking, the unconscious has had a great effect on the child. We should also learn from the fact that primitive peoples have often developed a much richer grammar than those present in the languages of more civilized peoples. This is seldom taken into account outside of spiritual science, but it is something we should consider as a result of a genuine observation of human beings, namely, that the human being develops a logic from within so that language is actually logically formed. Thus we do not need to teach grammar in a way other than by bringing what already exists as a completely developed language structure into consciousness. When teaching and learning grammar, we need only to follow the general tendency of awakening the child and of bringing that into consciousness. We need only to develop those forces that can be developed until the age of nine, in

the sense that I described before. We need to use the instruction in language in order to continue to awaken the child. We can best do that if we use every opportunity that occurs to work from dialect. If we have a child who before the age of seven has already learned a more educated informal language, the so-called standard language, it will be extremely difficult to reach the aspect of the child's unconscious that has a natural relationship to the logical formation of language, since that has already withered. Thus if we have children who speak dialect and others who do not in the same class, we should always connect our instruction in grammar with what those children who do speak in dialect already provide us.

We first want to try to find the structure of a sentence and then a word from the perspective of dialect. We can do that if we proceed by having a child say a sentence, for example, one that is as simple as possible. The main thing the sentence will always contain is something that is an inner enlivening of an activity. The more often we begin with an inner enlivening of an activity, the more we will be able to achieve an awakening of consciousness in the child while teaching language.

There is a very extensive and clever literature about so-called subjectless sentences, for instance, "It is raining," "It is lightning," "It is thundering," and so forth. The most important point about this is hardly mentioned in all of that research, however. What is most important is that these sentences correspond to the child's actual understanding. The sentences correspond to that feeling in children that exists in people who are not educated, and where the soul feels itself to be at one with the external world. A differentiation between the I and the external world has not yet been developed. If I say, for example, "It is raining," this is based upon an unconscious feeling that what is occurring as an activity outside of myself continues in that space within my skin, and that my I does not confront the external world. When saying something like "It is raining" or "It is lightning," we do not feel ourselves separate from the world. In a certain sense, these subjectless sentences are the original sentences of human nature. They are simply the first step of language development which arrests an activity. Originally, we perceived all of the world as an activity,

something we do not consider enough. In a certain sense, in our youngest childhood, we see everything substantial as a substantiated verb and accept it simply as it is. Later, what we become aware of, what is active, is what is active and then occupies our own activity. Now you might say that contradicts the fact that children first say “Papa” or something similar. That is not at all a contradiction, since in speaking the series of sounds, the child brings into life that activity which the corresponding person presents to the child.

Learning to speak is at first the enlivening of an activity whose substantiation occurs only afterwards. This is something that, when we look at dialect, we can certainly take into account. You can attempt to feel that by having a child say something and then trying to feel that within yourself. The words in dialect are such that they are extremely close to what lives in the gesture that accompanies the word in dialect. To a much greater extent dialect words require the person to participate, to live into the word. By feeling the word in dialect you can determine what is an abstraction, and what the subject and the predicate are. The predicate is derived from the activity, whereas the subject is actually more of an intellectual abstraction of the activity. When we have children speak sentences in dialect and we then consider the pictures they provide us with, and we can see those as representing what human beings actually feel when we go on to develop the rules of grammar, we are using instruction in grammar and sentence structure to help the child to awaken.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 153-155.]

5. Enlivening Grammar Instruction

What we want to teach children about language has an effect upon them long before they become aware of it. We should therefore avoid trying to teach them the rules for speaking or writing, but instead enable them to awaken and become aware of what subconsciously acts within. Whether we have one intention or another in our instruction is tremendously important. We should always pay attention to the intention behind teaching.

Speaking a dialect has an intimate connection with the subconscious, so we can develop real grammar and rules for sentence struc-

ture from the dialect language by basing our work upon the reason that lives within human nature. If, however, we need to work with children who already speak the standard language, we should whenever possible not work in such a way to develop a kind of grammar through the intellect, and not direct our work by teaching about the dative and accusative and how we write, how periods and commas are placed at particular locations and so forth. We instead need to work in a different way. When we need to teach children who do not speak in dialect, then we must create our instruction and grammar in an artistic way and appeal to a feeling for style.

Children bring an instinct for language with them into elementary school, and we need to develop this feeling wherever possible until the child reaches the age of nine. We can only do this by developing a feeling for style in an artistic way. That is something we can achieve—although in this age where authority is being undermined everywhere this may be laughed at—by using the natural desires of children to follow authority, and thus to form those sentences that we present to the children in the most artistic way. We need to artistically form the sentences so that we draw from the child a feeling for their artistic form. That is something we can do when we make the children aware of the difference between an assertion or a question, or perhaps a statement of feeling, and have the child speak it in such a way that a statement with feeling is spoken with the intonation of an assertion. We can then make the children aware of how an assertion is spoken in a neutral, objective way; whereas a statement of feeling is spoken with certain nuances of feeling. We can work with this artistic element of language, then out of that element develop grammar and syntax.

If we use dialect in order to develop the natural human instinct for language while using standard language in order to awaken an inner feeling for style, we can achieve what is necessary in teaching language. I will speak about this in more detail later, however; for now I simply want to indicate the principles.

This principle shows that we must keep the developing child in mind at all times. We need to ask what is developing at this particular age. If we do not have the feeling that with the change of teeth

children are, in a certain sense, born a second time, then we will not have the proper enthusiasm for our teaching. Of course, the physical birth is much more obvious than what occurs at around the age of seven. At birth the physical body of a human being is separated from that body of the mother. With the change of teeth, the human etheric body becomes separate from the physical body, with which the etheric body was intimately connected. The etheric body worked within the physical body to develop the second set of teeth, but now it becomes free. What children bring to school in terms of capacities are actually the free and newborn capacities of the etheric body. This is the first spiritual aspect that a child presents.

When we have a child younger than seven before us, we have it before us only as a physical body. All the child's spiritual and soul aspects are active within that physical body, and we can reach the child only through the fact that the child itself has a desire to imitate. At the age of seven, the etheric body, that is, all those aspects of human nature which have an etheric component in their substance, now become free and have a life for themselves.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 158–160.]

6. Bringing Language to Life

Today hardly anyone is interested in trying to bring life into language. I have tried to do that in my books in homeopathic doses. In order to make certain things understandable, I have used in my books a concept that has the same relationship to force as water flowing in a stream does to the ice on top of the stream. I used the word *kraften* (to work actively, forcefully). Usually we only have the word *Kraft*, meaning power or force. We do not speak of *kraften*. We can also use similar words. If we are to bring life into language, then we also need a syntax that is alive, not dead. Today people correct you immediately if you put the subject somewhere in the sentence other than where people are accustomed to having it. Such things are still just possible in German, and you still have a certain amount of freedom. In the Western European languages—well, that is just terrible, everything is wrong there. You hear all the time that you can't say that, that is not English, or that is not French. But, to say "that is not German"

is not possible. In German you can put the subject anywhere in the sentence. You can also give an inner life to the sentence in some way. I do not want to speak in popular terms, but I do want to emphasize the process of dying in the language. A language begins to die when you are always hearing that you cannot say something in one way or another, that you are speaking incorrectly. It may not seem as strange but it is just the same as if a hundred people were to go to a door and I were to look at them and decide purely according to my own views who was a good person and who was a bad person. Life does not allow us to stereotype things. When we do that, it appears grotesque. Life requires that everything remain in movement. For that reason, syntax and grammar must arise out of the life of feeling, not out of dead reasoning. That perspective will enable us to continue with a living development of language.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 180-181.]

7. Working with the Unconscious Element in Language

If you understand the spirit of what I have just presented, you will recognize how everywhere there has been an attempt to work with this unconscious element. I have done that first by showing how the artistic element is necessary right from the very beginning of elementary school. I have insisted that we should use the dialect that the children speak to reveal the content of grammar, that is, we should take the children's language as such and accept it as something complete and then use it as the basis for presenting grammar. Think for a moment about what you do in such a case. In what period of life is speech actually formed? Attempt to think back as far as you can in the course of your life, and you will see that you can remember nothing from the period in which you could not speak. Human beings learn language in a period when they are still sleeping through life. If you then compare the dreamy world of the child's soul with dreams and with how melodies are interwoven in music, you will see that they are similar. Like dreaming, learning to speak occurs through the unconscious, and is something like an awakening at dawn. Melodies simply exist and we do not know where they come from. In reality, they arise out of this sleep element of the human being. We experience

a sculpting with time from the time we fall asleep until we awaken. At their present stage of development human beings are not capable of experiencing this sculpting with time. You can read about how we experience that in my book *How to Know Higher Worlds*. That is something that does not belong to education as such. From that description, you will see how necessary it is to take into account that unconscious element which has its effect during the time the child sleeps. It is certainly taken into account in our teaching of music, particularly in teaching musical themes, so that we must attempt to exactly analyze the musical element to the extent that it is present in children in just the same way as we analyze language as presented in sentences. In other words, we attempt to guide children at an early age to recognize themes in music, to actually feel the melodic element like a sentence. Here it begins and here it stops; here there is a connection and here begins something new. In this regard, we can have a wonderful effect upon the child's development by bringing an understanding of the not-yet-real content of music. In this way, the child is guided back to something that exists in human nature but is almost never seen.

Nearly everyone knows what a melody is and what a sentence is. But a sentence that consists of a subject, a predicate, and an object and which is in reality unconsciously a melody is something that only a few people know. Just as we experience the rising and subsiding of feelings as a rhythm in sleeping, which we then become conscious of and surround with a picture, we also, in the depths of our nature, experience a sentence as music. By conforming to the outer world, we surround what we perceive as music with something that is a picture. The child writes the essay—subject, predicate, object. A triplet is felt at the deepest core of the human being. That triplet is used through projecting the first tone in a certain way upon the child, the second upon writing, and the third upon the essay. Just as these three are felt and then surrounded with pictures (which, however, correspond to reality and are not felt as they are in dreams), the sentence lives in our higher consciousness; whereas in our deepest unconsciousness, something musical, a melody, lives. When we are aware that, at the moment we move from the sense-perceptible to the supersensible,

we must rid ourselves of the sense-perceptible content, and in its place experience what eludes us in music—the theme whose real form we can experience in sleep—only then can we consider the human being as a whole. Only then do we become genuinely aware of what it means to teach language to children in such a living way that the child perceives a trace of melody in a sentence. This means we do not simply speak in a dry way, but instead in a way that gives the full tone, that presents the inner melody and subsides through the rhythmic element.

Around 1850 European people lost that deeper feeling for rhythm. Before that, there was still a certain relationship to what I just described. If you look at some treatises that appeared around that time about music or about the musical themes from Beethoven and others, then you will see how at about that time those who were referred to as authorities in music often cut up and destroyed in the most unimaginable ways what lived in music. You will see how that period represents the low point of experiencing rhythm.

As educators, we need to be aware of that, because we need to guide sentences themselves back to rhythm in the school. If we keep that in mind, over a longer period of time we will begin to recognize the artistic element of teaching. We would not allow the artistic element to disappear so quickly if we were required to bring it more into the content.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 189–192.]

8. Grammar as a Synthesis of the Drawing and Musical Elements

As I mentioned yesterday, we should also take such things into account when teaching music. We must not allow artificial methods to enter into the school where, for instance, the consciousness is mistreated by such means as artificial breathing. The children should learn to breathe through grasping the melody. The children should learn to follow the melody through hearing and then adjust themselves to it. That should be an unconscious process. It must occur as a matter of course. As I mentioned, we should have the music teachers hold off on such things until the children are older, when they will be less influenced by them. Children should be taught about the melodic

element in an unconscious way through a discussion of the themes. The artificial methods I mentioned have just as bad an effect as it would have to teach children drawing by showing them how to hold their arms instead of giving them a feeling for line. It would be like saying to a child, "You will be able to draw an acanthus leaf if you only learn to hold your arm in such and such a way and to move it in such and such a way." Through this and similar methods, we do nothing more than to simply consider the human organism from a materialistic standpoint, as a machine that needs to be adjusted so it does one thing properly. If we begin from a spiritual standpoint, we will always make the detour through the soul and allow the organism to adjust itself to what is properly felt in the soul.

We can therefore say that if we support the child in the drawing element, we give the child a relationship to its environment, and if we support the child in the musical element, then we give the child a relationship to something that is not in our normal environment, but in the environment we exist in from the time of falling asleep until awakening. These two polarities are then combined when we teach grammar, for instance. Here we need to interweave a feeling for the structure of a sentence with an understanding of how to form sentences.

We need to know such things if we are to properly understand how beginning at approximately the age of twelve, we slowly prepare the intellectual aspect of understanding, namely, free will. Before the age of twelve, we need to protect the child from independent judgments. We attempt to base judgment upon authority so that authority has a certain unconscious effect upon the child. Through such methods we can have an effect unbeknown to the child. Through this kind of relationship to the child, we already have an element that is very similar to the musical dreamlike element.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 194-195.]

9. Teaching Grammar and Syntax

You cannot teach a foreign language in school without really working at grammar, both ordinary grammar and syntax. It is particularly necessary for children older than twelve to be made conscious of what

lies in grammar, but here, too, you can proceed very circumspectly. This morning in our study of the human being I said that in ordinary life we form conclusions and then proceed to judgment and concept. [See lecture 9, *The Foundations of Human Experience*.] Although you cannot present the children directly with this logical method, it will underlie your teaching of grammar. Particularly with the help of the lessons in foreign languages, you will do well to discuss matters of the world with the children in a way that will allow grammar lessons to arise organically. It is purely a matter of structuring such a thing properly. Start by shaping a complete sentence and not more than a sentence. Point to what is going on outside—at this very moment you would have an excellent example.

You could very well combine grammar with a foreign language by letting the children express in Latin and French and German, for example, “It is raining.” Start by eliciting from the children the statement “It is raining.” Then point out to them (they are, after all, older children) that they are expressing a pure activity when they say: “It rains.” Now you can proceed to another sentence; you can include, if you like, foreign languages, for you will save a great deal of time and energy if you also work this method into the foreign language lesson. You say to the children: “Instead of the scene outside in the rain, imagine to yourselves a meadow in springtime.” Lead the children until they say of that meadow, “It is greening, it greens.” And then take them further until they transform the sentence “It is greening,” into the sentence “The meadow is greening.” And, finally, lead them still further until they can transform the sentence “The meadow is greening,” into the concept of a “green meadow.”

If you stimulate these thoughts within the children one after the other in your language lessons, you will not be pedantically teaching them syntax and logic. You will be guiding the whole soul constellation of the children in a certain direction; you will be teaching them in a discreet way what should arise in their souls. You introduce sentences beginning “It” or “It is” to the children, sentences that really live only in the domain of activity and exist as sentences in themselves, without any subject or predicate. These are sentences that belong to the living realm of conclusions—they are, indeed, abbrevi-

ated conclusions. With an appropriate example, you take the further step of finding a subject: "The meadow greens" or "The meadow that is green." Here you have taken the step of forming a judgment sentence. You will agree that it would be difficult to construct a similar judgment sentence for the sentence "It rains." Where would you find the subject for "It rains"? It is not possible. By practicing in this way with the children, we enter linguistic realms about which philosophers have written a great deal.

Miklosic, the scholar of Slavic languages, started writing about sentences without subjects, followed by Brentano, and then Marty in Prague. [Franz Xaver von Miklosic (1831–1891), a Slavic philologist and professor in Vienna; considered founder of modern Slavic philology. Franz Brentano (1838–1917), German philosopher, Roman Catholic priest, and professor in Würzburg and Vienna; wrote on "act psychology," or *intentionalism*, as well as on Aristotle. Anton Marty (1847–1914), a student of Brentano.] They all sought to find the rules connected with subjectless sentences, such as "It rains," "It snows," "It lightens," "It thunders," and so on—for out of their logic they could not understand where sentences without subjects originated.

Sentences without subjects, as a matter of fact, arise from the very intimate links we have with the world in some respects. Human beings are a microcosm embedded in a macrocosm, and their activity is not separated from the activity of the world. When it rains, for instance, we are very closely linked with the world, particularly if we have no umbrella; we cannot separate ourselves from it, and we get just as wet as the pavements and houses around us. In such a case we do not separate ourselves from the world; we do not invent a subject but name only the activity. Where we can be somewhat more detached from the world, where we can more easily remove ourselves from it, as in the case of the meadow, there we can invent a subject for our sentence, "The meadow is greening."

From this example you see that in the way we speak to the children we can always take account of the interplay between the human being and the environment. By presenting the children (particularly in the lessons devoted to foreign languages) with examples in which grammar is linked to the practical logic of life, we try to discover

how much they know of grammar and syntax. But in the foreign language lessons, please avoid first working through a reading passage and subsequently pulling the language to pieces. Make every effort to develop the grammatical side independently. There was a time when foreign language textbooks contained fantastic sentences that took account only of the proper application of grammatical rules. Gradually this came to be regarded as ridiculous, and sentences taken more from life were included in foreign language textbooks instead. But here, too, the middle path is better than the two extremes. If you use only sentences from ordinary life, you will not be able to teach pronunciation very well unless you also use sentences like the ones we spoke yesterday as an exercise, for instance:

Lulling leader limply
 Liplessly laughing loppety
 Lumpety lackety lout.

[See beginning of Discussion 8 in *Discussions with Teachers*. This version was adapted for English speakers from the original: “*Lalle Lieder lieblich, / Lipplicher Laffe, / Lappiger, lumpiger, / Laichiger Lurch.*”]

These sentences consider only the essence of language. When you develop grammar and syntax with the children, you will have to make up sentences specifically to illustrate this or that grammatical rule. But you will have to see to it that the children do not write down these sentences illustrating grammatical rules. Instead of being written down in their notebooks, they should be worked on; they come into being, but they are not preserved. This procedure contributes enormously to the economical use of your lessons, particularly foreign language lessons, for in this way the children absorb the rules in their feelings and after a while drop the examples.

If they are allowed to write down the examples, they absorb the form of the example too strongly. In terms of teaching grammar, the examples ought to be dispensable; they should not be carefully written down in notebooks, for only the rule should finally remain. It is beneficial to use exercises and reading passages for the living language, for actual speech, and, on the other hand, to let the children formulate

their own thoughts in the foreign language, using more the kind of subject that crops up in daily life. For grammar, however, you use sentences that, from the start, you intend the children to forget, and therefore you do not let them do what is always helpful in memorizing—write them down. All the activity involved in teaching the children grammar and syntax with the help of sentences takes place in living conclusions; it should not descend into the dreamlike state of habitual actions but should continue to play in fully conscious life.

Naturally, this method introduces into the lessons an element that makes teaching somewhat strenuous. But you cannot avoid the fact that you will have to make a certain effort, particularly in the lessons with the students who come into the older classes. You will have to proceed very economically, and yet this economy will actually benefit only the students. You yourselves will need to spend a great deal of time inventing all the techniques that will help make the lessons as spare as possible. By and large, then, let grammar and syntax lessons be conversational. It is not a good idea to give children actual books of grammar and syntax in the form in which they exist today; they also contain examples, but examples, on the whole, should be discussed and not written. Only the rules should be written down in the notebooks the children use for learning regular grammar and syntax. It will be exceedingly economical and you will also do the children an enormous amount of good if on one day you discuss a particular rule of grammar in a language with the help of an example you have invented. Then, the next day or the day after that, you return to this rule in the same language lesson and let the children use their own imaginations to find an example.

Do not underestimate the educational value of such a method. Teaching is very much a matter of subtleties. It is vastly different whether you merely question children on a rule of grammar and let them repeat from their notebooks the examples you have dictated or whether you make up examples specially intended to be forgotten and then ask the children to find their own examples. This activity is immensely educational. Even if you have in your class the worst young scamps, who never pay any attention at all, you will soon see what happens when you set them the task of finding examples

to fit a rule of syntax. (And you can indeed succeed if you yourself are fully alert as you teach.) They will start to take pleasure in these examples—they will especially enjoy the activity of making them up themselves.

When the children come back to school after the long summer holidays, having played out of doors for weeks on end, you will have to realize that they will have little inclination to sit quietly in class and listen attentively to things that they are expected to remember. Even if you find this behavior rather disturbing during the first week or two, if you conduct your lessons, particularly the foreign language lessons, in a way that lets the children share in the soul activity of making up examples, you will discover among them after three or four weeks a number who enjoy making up such examples just as much as they enjoyed playing outdoors. But you, too, must take care to make up examples and not hesitate to make the children aware of this.

Once they have gotten into the swing of this activity, it is very good if the children want to go on and on. It might happen that while one is giving an example, another calls out: "I have one, too." And then they all want a turn to share their examples. It is then helpful if you say at the end of the lesson: "I am very pleased that you like doing this just as much as you enjoyed romping outdoors." Such a remark echoes within the children; they carry it with them all the way home from school and tell it to their parents at dinner. You really must say things to the children that they will want to tell their parents at the next meal. And if you succeed in interesting them so much that they ask their mothers or fathers to make up an example for this rule, you really have carried off the prize. You can achieve such successes if you throw yourself heart and soul into your teaching.

Just consider what a difference it makes if you discuss with the children in a spirited way the process forming "It rains," "It greens," "The meadow is greening," and "The green meadow" instead of developing grammar and syntax in the usual way. You would not point out that this is an adjective and this is a verb and that if a verb stands alone there is no sentence—in short, you would not piece things together in the way that is often done in grammar books. Instead you would develop the theme in a lively lesson. Compare this living

way of teaching grammar with the way it is so often taught today. The Latin or French teacher comes into the classroom. The children get out their Latin or French books. They have finished their homework, and now they are to translate; afterward they will read. Soon all their bones ache because the seats are so hard. If proper teaching methods were practiced, there would be no need to take such care in designing chairs and desks. The fact that so much care has had to be lavished on the making of seats and desks is proof that education has not been conducted sensibly. If children are really taken up in their lessons, the class is so lively that even if they are sitting down, they do not sit firmly. We should be delighted if our children do not sit down firmly, for only those who are themselves sluggish want a class of children to remain firmly seated, after which they drag themselves home aching in every limb.

Particular account must be taken of these matters in grammar and syntax lessons. Imagine that the children now have to translate; grammar and syntax are worked out from the very things of life they ought to be enjoying. Afterward they are most unlikely to go home and say to their fathers: "We're reading such a lovely book; let's do some translating together." It really is important not to lose sight of the principle of economy—it will serve you particularly well in your teaching of foreign languages.

We must see to it, of course, that our teaching of grammar and syntax is fairly complete. We shall have to discover the gaps in the previous experience of the students who are coming to us from all sorts of other classes. Our first task will be to close the gaps, particularly in grammar and syntax, so that after a few weeks we shall have brought a class to a stage where we can proceed. If we teach in the way I have described (and we are quite capable of doing so if we are totally involved in the lessons and if we ourselves are interested in them), we shall be giving the children what they will need to enable them to pass the usual college entrance examinations later on. And we impart to the children a great deal else that they would not receive in ordinary elementary or secondary schools, lessons that make them strong for life and that will serve them throughout life.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 121-128.]

10. Working Hygienically with Grammar

I once again need to take this opportunity of mentioning that in teaching it is of primary importance to take care to bring the nerve-sense system and the metabolic-limb system into a proper balance. When that is not done, it shows up as irregularities of the rhythmic system. If you notice the slightest inclination toward irregularity in breathing or in the circulation, then you should immediately pay attention to it. The rhythmic system is the organic barometer of improper interaction between the head and the limb-metabolic system. If you notice something, you should immediately ask what is not in order in the interaction of these two systems, and second, you should be clear that in teaching you need to alternate between an element that brings the child to his or her periphery, to the periphery of the child's body, with another element that causes the child to withdraw within. Today, I cannot go into all the details of a hygienic school-room; that is something we can speak of next time.

A teacher who teaches for two hours without in some way causing the children to laugh is a poor teacher, because the children never have cause to go to the surface of their bodies. A teacher who can never move the children in such a way as to cause them to withdraw into themselves is also a poor teacher. There must be an alternation, grossly expressed, between a humorous mood when the children laugh, although they need not actually laugh (but they must have some inner humorous feeling), and the tragic, moving feeling when they cry, although they do not need burst into tears (but they must move into themselves). You must bring some life into teaching. That is a hygienic rule. You must be able to bring humor into the instruction.

If you bring your own heaviness into class, justified as it may be in your private life, you should actually not be a teacher. You really must be able to bring the children to experience the periphery of their body. If you can do it in no other way, you should try to at least tell some funny story at the end of the period. If you have caused them to work hard during the period on something serious, so that their faces are physically cramped from the strain on their brains, you should at least conclude with some funny story. That is very necessary.

There are, of course, all kinds of possibilities for error in this regard. You could, for example, seriously damage the children's health if you have them work for an entire period upon what is normally called grammar. You might have children work only with the differences between subject, object, adjective, indicative, and subjunctive cases, and so forth, that is, with all kinds of things in which the child is only half-interested. You would then put the child in the position that, while determining whether something is in the indicative or the subjunctive case, the child's breakfast cooks within the child, uninfluenced by his or her soul. You would, therefore, prepare for a time, perhaps fifteen or twenty years later, when genuine digestive disturbances or intestinal illnesses, and so forth, could occur. Intestinal illnesses are often caused by grammar instruction. That is something that is extremely important.

Certainly, the whole mood the teacher brings into school transfers to the children through a tremendous number of very subtle connections. A great deal has been said on various occasions during our earlier discussions on this topic. The inner enlivening of our Waldorf School teaching still requires considerable improvement in that direction. Even though I might say something positive, I would nevertheless emphasize that it is highly desirable, even though I am aware that we cannot always achieve ideals immediately, for Waldorf teachers to teach without preconceptions. Teachers should really be so prepared that they can give their classes without preconceptions, that is, that the teacher does not need to resort to prepared notes during class. If the teacher needs to look at prepared notes to see what to do, the necessary contact with the students is interrupted. That should never occur. That is the ideal. I am not saying this just to complain, but to make you aware of something fundamental. All these things are hygienically important.

The mood of the teacher lives on in the mood of the children, and for that reason, you need to have a very clear picture of what you want to present to the class. In that way, you can more easily help children who have metabolic difficulties than if you had the children sit in a classroom and taught them everything from a book.

It is a fact that in earlier periods of human development, teaching was generally understood as healing. At that time, people understood the human organism as tending to cause illness itself and knew that teaching brought a continual healing. It is extraordinarily good to become aware that, in a certain sense, every teacher is a doctor for the child.

In order to have healthy children in school, teachers must know how to overcome themselves. You should actually attempt to keep your private self out of the class. Instead, you should picture the material you want to present during a given class. In that way, you will become the material, and what you are as the material will have an extraordinarily enlivening effect upon the entire class. Teachers should feel that when they are not feeling well, they should, at least when they are teaching, overcome their ill feeling as far as possible. That will have a very favorable effect upon the children. In such a situation, teachers should believe that teaching is health-giving for themselves. They should think to themselves that while teaching, they can move away from being morose and toward becoming lively.

Imagine for a moment you go into a classroom, and a child is sitting there. After school, the child goes home. At home—of course, I am referring to a different cause, I am not saying the teaching would cause this—the child needs to be given an emetic by the parents. Of course, that could not have been caused by the instruction given by Waldorf teachers, that would only occur in other schools. However, if you went into a class with the attitude that teaching enlivens me and brings me out of my morose state, you could spare the child the medicine. The child can digest better when you have the right attitude in the classroom. In general, a moral attitude of the teacher is significantly hygienic. This is what I wanted to say to you today. We will continue to work on this later.

[Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II, pp. 538-542.]

11. Maintaining Discipline in Grammar Classes by Awakening Interest

A teacher: I teach English to the eighth grade, and I found the discipline there terrible.

Dr. Steiner: What do you as the class teacher have to say?
The teacher reports.

Dr. Steiner: It would be pedagogically incorrect if we did not take the personal relationship to the children into sufficient account. It is certainly difficult to create, but you must create it and you can create it in individual cases. You should, however, remember that our language instruction is extremely uneven. In spite of the fact that we have a Waldorf pedagogy, there is, for example, sometimes too much grammar in the classes, and the children cannot handle that. Sometimes I absolutely do not understand how you can keep the children quiet at all when you are talking, as sometimes happens, about adverbs and subjunctive cases and so forth. Those are things for which normal children have no interest whatsoever. In such instances, children remain disciplined only because they love the teacher. Given how grammar is taught in language class, there should be no cause for any complaints in that regard. We can really discuss the question only if all the language teachers in the Waldorf School meet in order to find some way of not always talking about things the children do not understand. That, however, is so difficult because there are so many things to do. What is important is that the children can express themselves in the language, not that they know what an adverb or a conjunction is. They learn that, of course, but the way such things are done in many of the classes I have seen, it is not yet Waldorf pedagogy. That is, however, something we need to discuss here in the meetings. There are so many language teachers here and each goes her own way and pays no attention to what the others do, but there are many possibilities for helping one another. I can easily imagine that the children become restless because they do not know what you expect of them. We have handled language class in a haphazard way for too long.

A teacher: We language teachers have already begun.

Dr. Steiner: Recently, I was in a class and the instruction had to do with the present and imperfect tenses. What do you expect the children to do with that when it is not taught in Latin class? How should they understand these expressions? [Steiner is saying that the words used for “present” and “imperfect” were both Latin—*präsens* and *imperfektum*—rather than the German *gegenwart* and *vergan-genheit*. He clearly believed it to be more appropriate to use German terms when teaching German-speaking children.—Trans.] You need to feel that there is so much that is not natural to human beings, particularly in grammar. It is clear that in schools where discipline is maintained through external means, discipline is easier to maintain than where the children are held together through the value of the instruction. I am not saying that such expressions as present and indicative should be done away with, but that you should work with them in such a way that the children can do something with them. What I noticed was that the children did not know what to do with such expressions.

A teacher: There is examination fever in the highest grade. The middle grades are missing the basics.

Dr. Steiner: That is not what they are missing. Look for what they are missing in another area. That is not what they are missing! It is very difficult to say anything when I am not speaking about a class in a specific language, since I find them better than the grammar instruction. Most of our teachers teach foreign languages better than they teach grammar. I think the main problem is that the teachers do not know grammar very well; the teachers do not carry a living grammar within them. Please excuse me that I am upset that you now want to use our meeting to learn grammar. I have to admit that I find the way you use grammar terms horrible. If I were a student, I certainly would not pay attention. I would be noisy because I would not know why people are forcing all of these things into my head. The problem is that you do not use time well, and the teachers do not learn how to acquire a reasonable ability in grammar. That,

then, affects the students. The instruction in grammar is shocking, literally. It is purely superficial, so that it is one of the worst things done at school. All the stuff in the grammar books should actually be destroyed in a big bonfire. Life needs to come into it. Then, the problem is that the students do not get a feeling for what the present or past tense is when they really should have a lively feeling for them. The genius of language must live in the teacher. That is also true for teaching German. You torture the children with so much terminology. Do not be angry with me, but it is really so. If you used mathematical terminology the same way you do grammatical terminology, you would soon see how horrible it is. All your horrible habits do not allow you to see how terrible the grammar classes are. This is caused by the culture that has used language to mistreat Europe for such a terribly long time, it has used a language that was not livingly integrated, namely, Latin. That is why we have such a superficial connection to language. That is how things are. The little amount of spirit that comes into grammar comes through Grimm, and that is certainly something we need to admire. Nevertheless, it is only a little spirit. As it is taught today, grammar is the most spiritless thing there is, and that gives a certain color to teaching. I must say there is much more to it than what we do. It is just horrible. We cannot always have everything perfect, which is why I do not always want to criticize and complain. You need a much better inner relationship to language, and then your teaching of language will become better.

It is not always the children's fault when they do not pay attention in the language classes. Why should they be interested in what an adverb is? That is just a barbaric word. Things only become better when you continually bring in relationships, when you repeatedly come back to the connections between words. If you simply make a child memorize and yourself have no interest in what you had them memorize, the children will no longer learn anything by heart. They will do that only if you return to the subject again in a different connection so that they see there is some sense in learning.

[Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II, pp. 547-550.]

12. Vowels and Consonants

Nevertheless, we will have to introduce a topic that really ought not to be included in this very first year of schooling because it weighs on the child's soul. We have to teach the children the difference between a vowel and a consonant. If we could follow the ideal curriculum, we would not do this during the first year. But then an inspector might come at the end of the first year and ask the children to define an *i* and an *l*, and they would not know that one is a vowel and the other a consonant. And it would be said that this ignorance was the result of anthroposophy.

We must make sure that the children can distinguish between a vowel and a consonant. We must also teach them the difference between a noun and an article. Here we find ourselves in a real dilemma, because, according to the present curriculum, we are expected to use the German and not the Latin expressions for grammatical terms, and so we ought to say "gender word" instead of "article." In this case, I think it would be better not to be pedantic and simply to continue to say "article." This is necessary in German-speaking countries because the dialects bear little relation to the written language. I have already given you hints on how to help the children distinguish between nouns and adjectives. You help them see how a noun refers to something that stands outside in space by itself. You say to them: "Let us take the word *tree*. A tree is something that remains standing in space. But look at a tree in winter and again in spring and again in summer. The tree is always there, but it looks different in winter than it does in summer and different again in spring. In winter we say it is brown. In spring we say it is green. In summer we say it is many colored. These are its characteristics." We first teach the children to distinguish between the characteristics that remain the same and those that change. Then we say: "If we need a word to describe what remains the same, that is a noun. And if we need a word for what changes on the thing that remains the same, that is an adjective." Then you teach the children the concept of activity: "Sit on your chair. You are a good child. *Good* is an adjective. But now stand up and walk. You are doing something. That is an activity. The word you need to describe this activity is a verb."

In this way we try to lead the children to the fact, and then we make the transition from the fact to the words. By using this method, we will be able to teach the children, without doing too much damage, the meaning of *noun*, *article*, *adjective*, and *verb*. It is most difficult to understand the nature of an article, because the children cannot yet grasp the relationship between an article and a noun. We shall have to flounder about in abstractions to teach the children the definition of an article. But they must learn it. It is better to flounder in abstractions (since we are dealing anyway with something synthetic) than to invent all sorts of artificial ways of explaining to children the significance and nature of an article, which is impossible. In short, it will be good for us to teach in full consciousness of the fact that we are bringing a new element into teaching. The first school year will afford us plenty of opportunity for innovation. During the second year, too, a great deal of this sort of innovation will creep in. But there will be much in the first year that is enormously beneficial for the growing child. It will encompass not only writing but also elementary painting and drawing, since we need them as our starting point for writing.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 169-171.]

13. Grammar in the Second Grade

A teacher: My perception is that what we teach children about grammar is something still foreign to them. Do we have to do that in the second grade?

Dr. Steiner: It depends upon how you do it. You do not always need to teach them the terminology, nouns and verbs, but use them only for yourself to form an objective polarity. A child of seven and a half can certainly differentiate between an activity and a thing. You do not need to emphasize the terminology. You could begin with stories and make the difference between a thing and an activity clear. That is something a child at that age can grasp. They should be able to grasp the difference between running or jumping and a human being or something of that sort. We do not need to follow the form of a pedantic grammar. In particular, with children in the lower grades, you should completely avoid using definitions.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, p. 315.]

14. Working with the Parts of Speech

A teacher: Our proposal in teaching languages was to begin with the verb with the lowest beginners. From the fourth grade onward, we would develop grammar, and beginning with the ninth grade, we would do more of a review and literature.

Dr. Steiner: It is certainly quite right to begin with the verb. Prepositions are very lively. It would be incorrect to begin with nouns. I would like to explain that further, but this is a question I want to discuss when everyone who gives a language class is here, and N. is not here today. He did something today that is directly connected with how the verb and noun should be treated in class. We also need to answer the question of what is removed from the verb when it becomes a noun. When a noun is formed from a verb, a vowel is removed, and it thus becomes more consonant, it becomes more external. In English, every sound can become a verb. [Nouns in German are often formed by “substantiating” verbs. In English, a verb is often formed by changing a noun into a *gerund*, or “verbal noun,” for example, by adding “ing.”—Trans.] I know a woman who makes a verb out of everything that she hears. For instance, if someone says “Ah” she then says that he “ahed.” We want to turn our attention to this as soon as possible.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, p. 488.]

15. Working with the Pictorial Element in Grammar

It should not be too difficult to present these matters pictorially in a language, if one thinks it is worth while to bring out the pictorial element in lessons. Really one ought not to miss a single opportunity to show even 10, 11 and 12-year-olds how sentences are built up by, let us say, a main clause, a relative clause, and a conditional clause. The actual grammar involved is not what matters most—it should only be a means of arriving at a picture. We should not miss the opportunity of giving the child what one could call a spatial picture of a main and a relative clause. Naturally this can be done in the most varied ways. Without wanting to theorize one could

represent the main clause as a large circle and the relative clause as a small one, perhaps an eccentric circle. The conditional clause, the “if-sentence,” could now be shown by lines drawn towards the circle like rays indicating the conditioning factors....It is really necessary, after preparation of one’s material, to come back to these matters again and again, and even with 10, 11, and 12-year-olds to go into the moral-characterological aspect of style made visible by pictures. This does not imply teaching syntax, for the pupil should grasp these matters in a more intuitive way. One can really go a long way here. For instance one can introduce a short story from the point of view of the temperaments, having thoroughly prepared beforehand. One can talk—not about the content, but about the style—about a melancholy or a choleric style quite apart from the content, even from the practical content. I am referring to sentence construction. There is not need to dissect sentences—this should be avoided—but one should cultivate this transformation into the pictorial element showing the moral and characteristic quality. One will find that it is possible to teach children aged 10, 11, 12, and 13 in a stimulating way if one struggles hard enough with the necessary preparation.

[*Erziehungsfrage im Reifealter* translated in Karl Stockmeyer’s *Rudolf Steiner’s Curriculum for Waldorf Schools*, p. 26.]

16. Working with the Perfect Tense

A teacher asks how to handle the present perfect tense.

Dr. Steiner: I would speak with the children about various parallels between the past and the complete. What is a perfect person, a perfect table? I would speak about the connections between what is complete and finished and the perfect present tense. Then I would discuss the imperfect tense where you still are in the process of completion.

If I had had time today, I would have gone through the children’s reading material in the present perfect. Of course, you can’t translate every sentence that way, but that would bring some life into it. Eurythmy also brings life into the development of the head. There is much you can do between the lines. I already said today that I can understand how you might not like to drift off the

subject. That is something we can consider an ideal, namely to bring other things in. For example, today I wanted to tease your children in the third grade with “*hurtig toch*.” [The Norwegian term for express train. Steiner would have made a pun by saying *hurtig toch* quickly, which sounds like *hör’ dich doch*—German for “Listen to yourself,” or “Listen to how you sound.” Steiner lectured in Norway before the war and returned to lecture there in 1921.—Trans.] That means “express train.” That is what I mean by doing things with children between the lines.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, p. 82.]

17. Enlivening the Study of Grammar and Punctuation

The main problem now is that if the children go to their final examinations with the punctuation they now know, it could be very bad. They use no punctuation at all in the 9b class. Teaching them punctuation depends upon discussing the structure of a sentence in an interesting way. That is something you can do well in the course of teaching them literature.

For example, if you begin with older German language forms, you can show them in an intriguing way how relative clauses arose slowly through the transformation of writing into Latin structure. That could provide the basis for studying commas. You can teach the use of commas when you first show the children that they need to enclose every relative clause within commas. It is interesting to discuss relative clauses because they did not exist in older German. They also do not exist in dialect. You could go back to the *Song of the Niebelungs* and so forth and show how relative clauses began to come into the language and how it then became necessary to bring this logic into the language. After you have shown how relative clauses are enclosed with commas, you can go into a more thorough discussion of the concept of clauses. The children then need to learn that every kind of clause is set off by some sort of punctuation. The other things are not so terribly important.

From there, you can go on to show how elements of thought developed in language, and thus arrive at the semicolon, which is

simply a stronger comma and indicates a greater break. They already use periods.

There is certainly sufficient time to begin that in the ninth grade. You need to develop it through a positive structuring of language, by going into the intent. It is something that you especially need to do with some excitement; you cannot do it in a boring way. Grammar alone is one of the most boring things. When you speak in dictations, you must make it clear when sentences end and begin. You should not dictate the punctuation to them. The children will have more when they become accustomed to learning punctuation by working with sentences. It would be erroneous to dictate punctuation. I would never dictate punctuation, but instead have them hear it through my speaking. It would be much better, however, if we could do something else. It would be better if we could divide things as was done in old German, but is no longer done in our more Latin writing—they wrote sentence per sentence, that is, one sentence on each line. You can discuss the artistic structure of a sentence with the children in an unpedantic way. You can give them a feeling for what a sentence is. You can make them aware of what a sentence is. You should also make them aware that well-formed sentences are something positive. You could, for instance, do something like using Herman Grimm's style to show them the form of a sentence, how a sentence is pictorially formed. Now, he really writes sentences. You do not find sentences in the things most people read, just a string of words. Sentences are completely missing. Give them a feeling for well-formed sentences. Herman Grimm writes sentences. They must learn to see the difference between Grimm's style and the things we normally read, for instance, normal history books. You can do that in the ninth grade by giving them a certain kind of feeling for the difference between a complete sentence and an interjection.

The curriculum contains something else that would be very helpful, which is poetics. That is completely missing. You are not taking it into account at all. I have noticed that the children have no feeling for metaphor. They should know metaphors, metonyms, and synecdoches. The result will be wonderful. That is all in the curriculum, but you haven't done it. Teaching the children about

metaphors helps them learn how to construct a sentence. When you bring metaphors and figures of speech into the picture, the children will learn something about sentence structure. You can explain these with some examples. You could explain, for example, the meaning of, "Oh, water lily, you blooming swan! Oh, swan, you swimming lily!" That is a double metaphor. Through such examples, young people gain a clear feeling for where the sentence ends, due to the metaphoric expressions. With those who have good style, it would not be at all bad to try to frame the sentences rather than using commas and semicolons. You can do this well with Herman Grimm's sentences and a red pencil. Circle the sentences and then circle twice the things that are less necessary for content, once with red and then with blue. In that way, you will have a nicely colored picture of an artistically formed sentence. You could then compare such sentences with those that are normally written, for instance, in newspapers. The weekly *Anthroposophie* was no exception to this. It used to go on and on just like some boring German, but now it is better. This is something we most definitely need to do. You should teach the children punctuation to give them some feeling for logic. Such things can also be quite exciting. If you first get the children used to enclosing relative clauses with commas, then everything else will fall into place. You need to go far enough that they understand that a relative clause is basically an adjective. You could say, "a red rose." You need no punctuation there. But, if you say, "a rose, red," then you need to place a comma following *rose* because *red* is an appositive. If you say, "a rose that is red," it is quite clearly an adjective.

If you give them such enlivened examples, learning will not be so boring. In dialect, people say, "the father what can write." The relative clause is an adjective, that is, the clause as a whole is an adjective. This view of relative clauses is also very important for learning foreign languages.

A teacher mentions Philipp Wegener's opinion that relative clauses developed from interrogative clauses.

Dr. Steiner: The interrogative could be the basis. Every adjective is actually an answer to a question. However, with "Here are some beautiful apples, give me some," there can hardly be any talk of a question. [As presented here, this sentence lacks a relative clause in German and English.—Trans.]

Researchers in languages are sometimes curious. I know of a number of papers about *it*—"it is thundering," "it is lightning." Miclosich wrote long papers about *it*. [Franz von Miclosich, 1813–1891, Slavic language scholar.] That is interesting, but the German *it* is nothing more than a shortened form of *Zeus*. [*Es*, or "it"; *Zeus*, or "Zeus." From this viewpoint, *es* would be a contraction: *e's*.—Trans.] It has the same meaning as *Zeus*, the god: *Zeus* thunders, *Zeus* lightnings. *It* is a stunted form. Many German words need to be traced back to their Greek origins. The German word for *it* is actually *Zeus*. The English word *it* needs to be sought also. It is based, in fact, on something lying in the spiritual. Hopefully, Wegener did not want to say that the relative clause is an interrogatory clause.

Well, that is what we want to do, to begin with the relative clause and go from there into clauses that are abbreviations or indications of an adjective. Beginning with that, which is something we need to emphasize, we can then go on to the semicolon, and finally arrive at the period, which is simply an emphasis or a pause. It is easy to convey a feeling for colons. The colon represents something not said, that is, instead of saying, "the following," or instead of forming a boring relative clause, we use a colon. We express it in speech through tone. For instance, the way every student should name the animals is, "The animals are: the lion, the goose, the dog, the Bölsche," and so on.

The teacher asks, "What is that, a Bölsche?"

"It says here on the book, 'Bölsche, *Das Urtier*.' "

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 645-649.]

18. Grammar in the Ninth Grade

In German, I would recommend that you not go too deeply into grammar in the first semester. Discuss the phonetic law, particularly Grimm's law. In the essays, I would recommend that you handle historical themes. The students should work primarily with the material you gave them last year in history. You will certainly have adequate opportunities to discuss grammar and syntax in connection with corrections. Before you have the children write an essay, though, you should have the children from last year orally discuss the theme for the new children in the class.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, pp. 176-177.]

19. Grammar in the Tenth Grade

A teacher: When teaching the *Song of the Niebelungs* in the tenth grade, I had the feeling I was right on the edge because I do not understand the language.

Dr. Steiner: You see how difficult it is to speak in terms of general principles. The details are what is important. I think that if properly handled, the language is always interesting to the students. Things that can be learned from the inner structure of the language itself would always interest the students. I also think that the teachers working together would bring a great deal of good. For example, Mr. Boy presented a number of very interesting things, things that really interested the students in spite of the fact that a number of philologists would not consider them. Although they are rules, such things are interesting. Everything connected with language is interesting. Nevertheless, it is difficult to generalize. What I have had to say in that regard, I said in my language course, but I connected it with specific things. It is not possible to generalize. We could achieve a great deal if those who know certain things would tell the others who do not know them. This is a possibility for real collaboration. It is a shame that there is so much knowledge here and the others do not learn it. In the faculty, there could be a really great cooperation.

A teacher: I do not understand Middle High German.

Dr. Steiner: I'm not sure that is so important. I once knew a professor who lectured about Greek philosophy, but who could never read Aristotle without a translation. What is important is that you come into the feeling of the language. Who is there who really understands Middle High German well? There is much that the other teachers could tell you.

A teacher: I cannot pronounce it well. You read it then.

Dr. Steiner: Not everyone reads it the same. It is colored by various dialects. We all speak High German differently. In some cases, it is important that you don't speak High German like an Austrian.

A teacher: Then you mean we should give only some examples from the original text.

Dr. Steiner: The original version of *Parzival* is really boring for students, and now one of them is translating it. One of you might write to Paris to order a book that you could get much more quickly if you simply ask Mr. B. to loan it to you.

A teacher: We could also make a connection with etymology.

Dr. Steiner: Regarding languages, my main desire is that the aesthetic or moral, the spiritual, and the content is emphasized more than the grammar. That is true for all languages and is what we should emphasize here. A word like *saelde* is really very interesting, "zweifeln," too. There is much that could be said about that, as well as about "saelde" that relates to the entire soul.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner II*, pp. 484-486.]

SPELLING

1. Spelling as Convention

It is natural to teaching that there is a certain yearning for complete freedom, and we should not dismiss this element. Notice how freedom flows into this discussion of how we might prepare ourselves to be teachers; our discussion intrinsically has something to do with freedom. I have pointed out that you should not fetter yourselves by toiling away at studying how writing came into being during the transition from Egyptian to Phoenician culture, that you must develop your own soul capacities. What can be done by this method of teaching will differ from teacher to teacher. Not everyone can use a dancing bear; someone might use a better example for the same purpose. One teacher, however, can achieve the final result just as well as another. All teachers give of themselves when they teach. In this, their freedom remains inviolate. The more teachers desire to preserve their freedom, the more they will be able to enter into their teaching by giving themselves. This capacity has been almost entirely lost in recent times, as you can see from a certain example.

Some of you who are younger may not remember a certain incident, but it very much annoyed some older people who understood its implications. Some time ago preparations were made to create something culturally, very much like introducing the infamous “official German gravy” in the material realm. You know that it has often been stressed that there should be a standardized sauce or gravy for all inns that serve only Germans and do not have to deal with a select foreign clientele. Well, spelling was supposed to be standardized just as they would this “official German gravy.” People have the strangest attitude toward the matter of standardization, as real examples show. There is in German literature an instance of a most beautiful, tender relationship between Novalis and a certain lady. This relationship is

so beautiful because when the lady in question passed away, Novalis continued to live with her quite consciously in the spiritual world, following her through death in an inner meditative activity of soul. He bore witness to this. The relationship between Novalis and his beloved is one of the most entrancing and intimate episodes in the history of German literature. A certain German scholar wrote a highly intelligent (and, seen from its own point of view, also interesting), strictly philological treatise on the relationship between Novalis and the lady. This delicate, tender relationship is “put in its proper light” through the proof that the lady died before she had learned to spell properly. She made spelling mistakes in her letters. In short, we are given, with the strictest scientific accuracy, of course, a thoroughly banal picture of this person who had such a special relationship with Novalis. The scientific method is so good that any dissertation made in accordance with it would earn the highest marks. I only want to remind you that people seem to have forgotten that Goethe was never able to spell properly, that all through his life he made spelling mistakes, particularly when he was young. Despite this, he rose to Goethean greatness. And this is not to mention the people he knew and thought highly of—their letters, nowadays sometimes published in facsimile, would earn nothing but red corrections from the hand of a schoolmaster. They would get very poor marks.

All this is linked to a rather unfree aspect of our lives, an aspect that ought to play no part in education. Only a few decades ago it was so pronounced that the more enlightened teachers were infuriated. Standard German spelling—the well-known Puttkammer orthography—was to be introduced. This meant that the state not only exercised the right to supervise and administer the schools but actually laid down the law on spelling. The result is just what you might expect. This Puttkammer spelling system has robbed us of much that might still have revealed a feeling for the more intimate aspects of the German language. Seeing only today’s abstract spelling, people have lost much in written German of what used to live in the German language.

The proper attitude of mind matters most in such circumstances. Obviously we cannot let spelling run riot, but we can at least recog-

nize the opposite points of view. If people, once they had learned to write, were allowed to put down what they heard from others just as they heard it (or what came from within them), their spelling would be extremely varied, exceedingly individualized. This would make communication more difficult, but it would be extraordinarily interesting. On the other hand, our task is to develop not only our own individuality in community with others but also our social impulses and feelings. A great deal of what could be revealed as our own individuality is expunged in what we have to develop for the sake of living together with others. We should feel that this is so; we should be taught to feel that we do such a thing purely for social reasons. Therefore when you begin to orient your writing lessons toward spelling, your starting point must be a quite specific set of feelings. You will again and again have to point out to the children, as I have already said earlier, that they should respect and esteem grown-ups, that they are themselves growing up into a world already formed and waiting to receive them, and that therefore they must take notice of what is already there. This is the point of view from which children must be introduced to subjects like correct spelling. Spelling lessons must run parallel with developing feelings of respect and esteem for what their predecessors have established. Spelling must not be taught as an abstraction, as though it existed as an absolute on the basis of some divine—or, if you will, Puttkammer—law. You must develop in the children the feeling that the grown-ups whom we are to respect spell like this, and we ought to follow their example. Variability in spelling will result, but it will not be excessive; the growing child will make a certain adaptation to the world of the grown-ups. And we must count on this adaptation. It is not our task to create in children the belief that this is right and that is wrong. The only belief we should arouse, thus building on living authority, is that this is the way grown-ups do it.

This is what I meant when I said we must find the transition from the child's first stage of life, up to the change of teeth, to the second stage, up to puberty, by making the transition from the principle of imitation to that of authority. These ideas must be introduced everywhere in practice, not by drilling the children to respect authority but

by acting in a way that will help foster their feeling for authority—for instance, by teaching spelling in the way I have just described.

[*Practical Advice to Teachers*, pp. 71-74.]

2. Understanding Spelling Difficulties

This brings me to yet another question which was given to me yesterday and which can be dealt with in this context. The question was: Why is it that some children have such tremendous difficulties in learning how to spell correctly?

Well, anyone who studies Goethe's spelling or that of other great men, may gain a peculiar impression, for many a great personality appears anything but sure of correct spelling. Obviously this must not tempt us to think that any bad speller in our class may be a budding genius and that therefore we must not interfere with such a child. Naturally, this would be an entirely wrong reaction. And so, our first question must be: wherein lie the causes of such difficulties? We only need to observe and compare the good and bad spellers to find that as a rule children who cannot spell, cannot listen properly to the music inherent in speech. Should there be other reasons as well, you will find that these usually stem from kindred origins. Children who have not learned to listen accurately, who have not learned to listen carefully to the plasticity of the sounds of words, will spell badly. [Most German words are spelt phonetically. Trans.]

Such a weakness can be traced back to a variety of facts. For instance, a child may grow up in a family, or in surroundings, where people speak unclearly. This will prevent the child from learning to listen carefully and, consequently, he or she will find it very difficult to spell correctly. Or, owing to an inherent weakness, a child may not have developed normal word perception. In this case, too, the first step should be to teach him to listen properly. But there are occasions—and here I have to ask you to forgive such a blunt statement—where poor spelling in the child is the teacher's fault. The teacher, above all, should endeavor to speak not only distinctly, but also with a rhythmical and harmonious flow. There is no need for him to imitate some actors who, in order to avoid swallowing their word endings, exaggerate each letter of the end syllables. [Rudolf

Steiner here quotes two Austrian expressions: *Freunderl* (little friend) and *Mutterl* (little mother).] But it is very necessary for him to cultivate the habit of living himself into each syllable and pronouncing it clearly. In lessons he should ask his pupils to repeat his sentences accurately, giving full value to each syllable, and with the right feeling for flow and intonation. Such practice of clear and well-formed speaking will certainly lead to an improvement in spelling. This is another example showing that what needs to be lifted up into the sphere of consciousness from the unconscious regions below, from the regions of sleep and dream for the unconscious realm is that of sleep should not be artificially imposed upon the child by extraneous methods.

On what does the faculty of listening depend? Psychology does not usually formulate this question. You see, at night we go to sleep and in the morning we wake up again, and from our own experience we know that during sleep our memory is blotted out. What happens to us during the hours of sleep is not known to ordinary science. But when you listen, the inner condition of your soul is no different from what it is while you are asleep. On the other hand, when you are listening, there is a constant interplay between your being outside yourself and within yourself. It is of great importance to be aware of this undulating activity of the soul. When I listen I am given up to the external world. But there are always the other moments, too, in which I wake up. Without these, hearing alone would be of no use. While listening, a continuous process is going on of waking up and going to sleep even in the so-called waking state. A perpetual interplay takes place between waking up-falling asleep that during sleep our memory is blotted out. This means that, ultimately, our entire intercourse with the world rests on this faculty of being able to enter into an outer situation or, if I may express it somewhat paradoxically, 'to fall asleep into what comes from outside'. After all, what else is listening to a conversation than to 'sleep oneself into the content of the conversation?' On the other hand, the listener's comprehension of what is said is a kind of waking up. This is how it is. But it also means that we should not attempt to appeal to the conscious region of the child when, in fact, the unconscious sphere, the sphere of sleeping or dreaming is the relevant one.

This is the reason why we should refrain from teaching spelling by using artificial means. Rather should we speak every word distinctly, then ask the child to repeat it before he writes it down. In this way we will help him towards better spelling. We can take it for granted that where there is bad spelling, there is bad listening. Therefore the main task is to improve the pupil's faculty of listening which is seated in the unconscious sphere, rather than our laboring with what belongs to the opposite sphere of consciousness.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 145-147.]

3. Careful Listening as the Basis for Spelling

I would like to mention how concrete general rules can always be developed into practical action if we have the will to do so. I would therefore like to answer in detail a question given to me about what we should do about those who are weak in spelling where the weakness arises in words where what is written is not clearly indicated, for example, whether an *h* or an *e* is in the word to form a longer sound.

As I already mentioned, training in clear listening is the basis of proper spelling. Training in proper hearing will support proper spelling. Clear hearing, if trained properly, will also train precise seeing. The different capacities support one another. If one capacity is developed in the proper way, the others will also have to develop properly. If we accustom ourselves to exact listening, we will tend to retain the appearance of the word as such, that is, its inner appearance. Exact listening supports exact seeing. For words that appear to have an arbitrary spelling, such as those that have silent letters that make the preceding vowel long, we can support the child's proper spelling by having the child repeat the syllables of the word clearly and with varying emphasis.

[*The Renewal of Education*, p. 237.]

4. The Development of Spelling after Puberty

If you ask how to awaken the memory for correct spelling, my answer would be that you need to observe the differences in human strengths during the three periods of human life, that is, until the change of teeth, until puberty, and then after puberty until the age of twenty.

You need to develop a sense for observing these three periods of life and the differences in the specific forces of life that develop. Then you will notice that people who, until the age of fifteen, have absolutely no sense of correct spelling or correct grammar will develop it if they are treated in the way I just mentioned. If you draw their attention to the rhythm of the language, they will develop this sense out of the depths of their souls after the age of fifteen.

This is why it would be totally inappropriate to keep children who have well-developed talents from progressing through the grades simply because they do not demonstrate any particular talent for grammar. If you look at what Goethe wrote as a young boy and then see that when he was older, he stood in a very exclusive group with regard to grammar, you will think about him very differently than the way people usually think about a boy or girl who cannot spell properly at the age of thirteen or so. Instead of wringing our hands about how poorly such children spell and continually asking what we should do to teach them to spell, it would be much better to think about what capacities the children actually have, seek out those special talents, and then find a way to teach the children what they need to learn from those talents.

You will see that if you emphasize the artistic element when teaching children who are one-sidedly gifted in mathematics, you will always achieve a balance.

[*The Renewal of Education*, pp. 35-36.]

5. Spelling Mistakes

If you look at [Goethe's] spelling, even when he was much older than seven or eight, you will find it full of atrocious mistakes. It is easy to deduce from this that far more is expected of an eight-year-old child today (if "more" is the right word) than what Goethe managed to achieve at seventeen (only with regard to spelling, of course). This certainly demonstrates that there is also another way of judging the situation, for Goethe owed much to the fact that, even at the age of seventeen, he was still likely to make spelling errors because, not having been too fettered to rigid rules, his inner being could remain flexible with regard to the unfolding of certain soul forces. If one

knows how these things interact with each other (and a more sensitive kind of psychology is needed for this than is frequently encountered today) one will be no more influenced by adverse criticism than by the superficial criteria of such a historical fact, which is interesting, at least.

[*The Child's Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education*, p. 49.]

6. A Comment on Spelling

Dr. Steiner: The children in the sixth grade write unbelievably horribly. They are really happy when they can write “lucky” with two “k”s. It is more important that they can write business letters and learn algebra than that they can spell “lucky” with two “k”s.

[*Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner I*, p. 75.]



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