

~~art of education springs from fundamental feelings, which can only arise in us from a true view of the world.~~

03/14/1912; in GA 61. *Self-education: The Self-development of Man in the Light of Anthroposophy*. Not published in English but available in typescript from the Rudolf Steiner Library, Ghent, New York [5]

Thus spiritual science reflects the pattern of a being that includes higher self, just as in joy and compassion we include others without losing our identity. And as we are aware of our larger self through ability to enter into the essential being of others, so in the case of child, apart from what we can draw upon as teachers and what grows and matures out of normal consciousness, we can say that, distinct from the normal self, a higher being exists that is already working upon the child. When we reflect upon this we find something that is exercising a special kind of formative influence on the child, which with our orthodox education we can only appeal to the personal self of the child. Where do we find that which acts upon the child as a higher self, as a higher entity that is part of the child, yet never enters into his consciousness? Strange as it may seem, it is nonetheless a fact that this begins to be manifested in purposeful, well-organized play. In the child's play activity, we can only furnish the conditions for education. What is gained through play activity stems fundamentally from the self-activity of the child, through everything that cannot be determined by fixed rules. The real educational value of play lies in the fact that we ignore our rules and regulations, our educational theories, and allow the child free rein.

What does the child do when left to its own devices? In play, the child experiments with external objects in order to find out whether or not they respond to his own activity: he generates an act of will. Through the way in which the external objects respond to the operation of the will, the child learns from life, if only through play in a totally different way than normally follows from the influence of another personality and his pedagogical principles. Therefore, it is of primary importance that we introduce a minimum of the rational into the child's play—the less rational and the more imaginative element the play activity, the better! ~~Therefore, when we give the child a toy where the illusion of the movement of people and things is created by pulling strings or some such device, whether it be a child's picture book with mechanical figures of people and animals~~