



**FOR TEACHERS**

**CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS  
ON**

**Reading and Writing**

**WITH  
DR. KARL KÖNIG**

Unedited: For Study Purposes Only







# Reading and Writing



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## Contents

Foreword .....	5
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### Reading and Writing

Seminar I .....	7
Seminar II .....	11
Seminar III .....	17
Seminar IV .....	21
Seminar V .....	25
Seminar VI .....	30

### Disorders of Reading and Writing

Seminar I .....	35
Seminar II .....	39
Seminar III .....	43







## Foreword

In this volume are contained notes of two conferences which Dr. König held in 1957 with the Teachers of the Camphill Movement and Newton Dee, and in 1963 with the Teachers of the Rudolf Steiner School in Pforzheim. The first conference dealt with the physiology and anatomy of Reading and Writing and the second with the pathology of Reading and Writing.

Although the conferences and lectures were not recorded in shorthand, extensive notes of both existed, and these notes were compiled and edited for the present volume. The Newton Dee Conference on the physiology and anatomy of Reading and Writing is published here for the first time together with notes from the conference held subsequently in Pforzheim.

– H.H.E.  
St. John's, 1969







## READING AND WRITING

### Seminar I

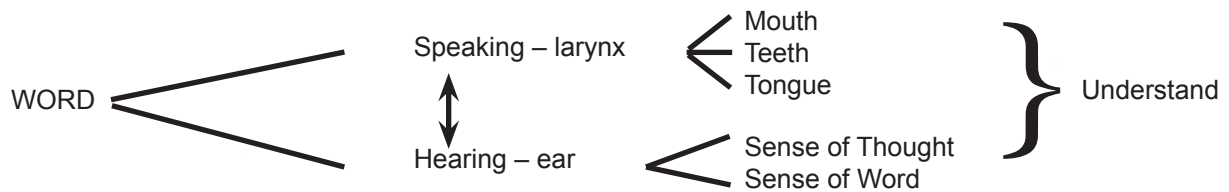
Reading and Writing belongs to the great riddles of life, and so far we have not solved them, but passed them by. If one looks into modern text-books on Reading, one fails to find the fundamental issues, a deeper insight into the problems involved. Usually one believes that Reading and Writing, developed as a kind of means of communication and that this has developed by chance, in order to fixate statements so that they did not vanish, but remain. However, with this Reading and Writing are only touched at the fringes and so we have to ask ourselves what actually is Reading and Writing.

To Read and Write as a human being is something entirely different from Speaking, and we have to learn the first fundamentals of the difference between speaking and reading and writing. Only then shall we be able to understand the deficiencies and inabilities in reading and writing. They are fundamental human qualities. In point of fact all cultures are intimately bound up with reading and writing. It would have been quite impossible for States to come about if there had not been reading and writing. Rudolf Steiner pointed out once that once upon a time reading and writing was given only to priests. Only initiates came near to a condition which enabled them to read and write, ordinary people were denied this. Still today there are millions of people who cannot read and write; but everyone can speak, discounting cases of illness. Everyone is able to experience himself by means of verbal communication.

What is now the social difference between those who can read and write and those who only speak? The spoken language between illiterate people changes infinitely quicker than any other. With fifty to seventy years, such a tribal language changes completely and nowhere do we find so many dialects spoken as there where nothing is written down and each tribe almost has its own language. In point of fact one should not generally speak of language as long as this language is not written down. It is actually still a dialect. One cannot build up a State if everyone speaks a different dialect. Only when written language appears, the pre-condition for a State is given. Going through history one sees that only when language becomes written language can States and culture be formed. This is the first point.



The second point is that, when we speak, the activity of speaking is only one part of hearing. Without speaking and hearing one cannot see the whole.

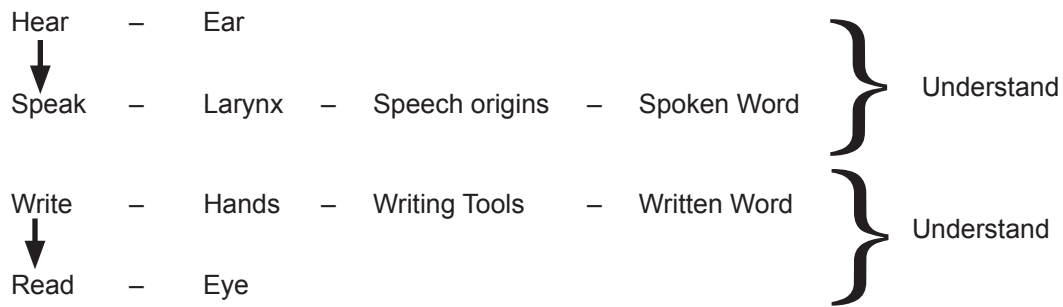


We can see that we hear with our ear and we speak with our larynx. We need, of course, also all the other speech organs, as with our ear alone we would not be able to hear. The higher senses have to join into this process, because only then can we understand the spoken word. This is a twofold activity, on the one hand to speak, which is the active part, and on the other hand to hear, and this is passive. To speak is something which is in us the male part, whereas to hear is the female part. It is the word which is spoken and understood within this whole realm, as one cannot speak without being able to hear and at the same time to speak. In order to under-stand it is necessary to speak too, not only to hear. Only all this together brings about the faculty of our understanding. What we speak has gone. It is spoken into the air. Only when what is spoken is not permitted to be whisked away, only when it is fixed when we put down a mark, the monument of what was spoken will not disappear.

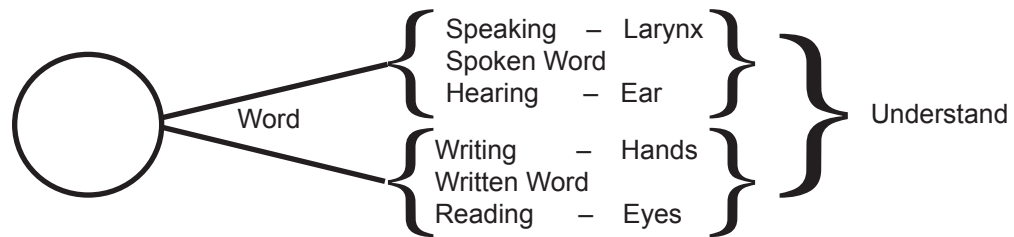
This wish to fixate every-thing is one of the greatest neuroses of our time to which, for instance, the whole realm of photography belongs. 5000–6000 BC a slightly different neurosis was that the spoken word was suddenly no longer allowed to dis-appear. 3000 BC, at the oncoming of the Kali Yuga, the curtain was drawn, man felt no longer taken up into the realms of light and warmth of the gods. They realized they have to come down into this earthly condition which does not anymore carry the certainty of belonging to the spiritual world.

Memory which should have remained the floating possibility takes hold of everything. Memory takes hold of speaking and hearing and with it speaking and hearing becomes hardened. Writing comes about at the very same time. As soon as we start to write, the physical body of the spoken word is filled with hard matter. The word becomes the physical material body as soon as it is written down. We write with our hands just as much as we speak with our larynx.





Just as the larynx has additional speech organs, so has the hand its writing tools: stone, pen, brush, etc., corresponding to the mouth, the tools are similar to the tongue, teeth, lips, etc. So we have the written and the spoken word, just as much as we have hearing belonging to speaking, so reading belongs to writing. To hear and to read are brother and sister. Reading is not as active as writing, though it is activity. We also have to realize that we hear with our ear, but we read with our eyes. We have a pair of hands and a pair of eyes, compared with the pair of larynx and ear; both lead to understanding. Furthermore, we must be aware of the fact that the word is first. This then parts into speaking and hearing, into reading and writing. The hands and the larynx have to come into relationship, just as much as the eye and the ear have to do so in order to come to an understanding. It is there where we find the reasons for reading and writing difficulties.

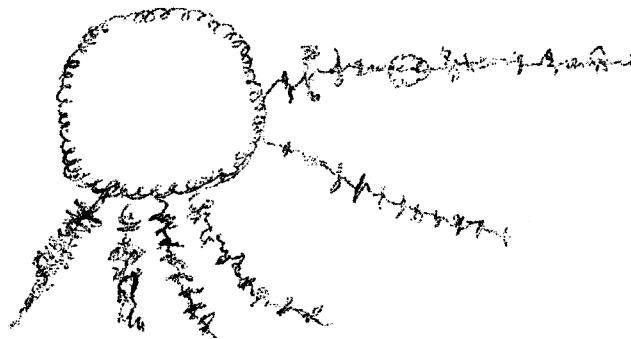


As soon as we read and write, everything has to be shifted into a different realm of existence. If then two different realms work together, like right and left work together, the child is able to learn to read and write. Out of the movement we learn to walk. Out of this we learn to talk. It is the realm of music out of which the spoken word comes. It is the realm of time, of light, and in this Son-realm the spoken word lives. As soon as we engage our hands to write and read, the eye engages itself and we come into the space of sight, and it is into this that the word has to be fixed. The dimension of up and down is the spoken word and to it must be added right and left. Front and back is the reading realm and to it has to be added right and left. These two realms can only be bridged by right and left which belong to either realm. This is the key point. The space of hearing is from above and below with right and left; the space of sight is front and back with right and left. To



speak and to hear is within the realm of the father-ground. To read and write is the earthly realm. This is the fixation. Rudolf Steiner described how Ahriman introduced writing into mankind. He speaks in the 4th Mystery Drama about it in a talk between Benedictus and Capesius. Also in the fifth and sixth chapters of the cycle on *The Secret of the Threshold* he turns to this point.

But now how did writing come about? We know the tremendous manifoldness of the development in writing to mankind. What is now our alphabet is the latest writing which we have derived. Demotic writing only came about round about the 12th–15th century BC. Before that time writing was built up not in alphabet but in syllable symbols that, for instance, had been done in the Cretan Cultures. Before that still we had the word writing, and this is still done by one half of mankind and again before that there was the pictorial writing and before that there were still different ways of writing. An enormous amount of sweat and work has been put into efforts to decipher the various scripts like the Babylonian, Minoan, and old Maja writing, the hieroglyphics of Egypt and the Peruvian Quipus. But how can the spoken word be impressed into the written word differently?



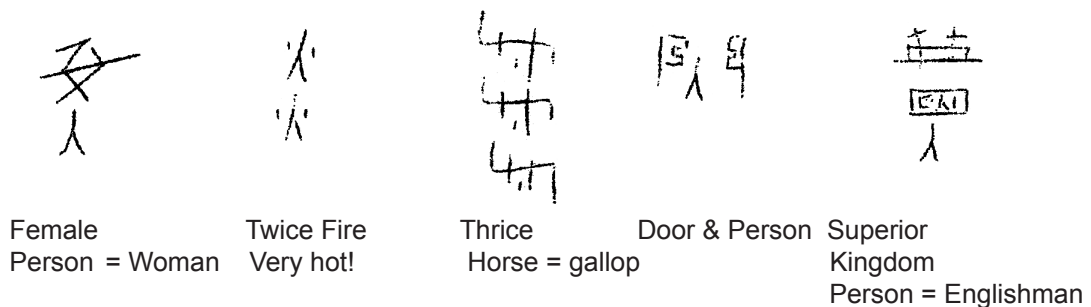
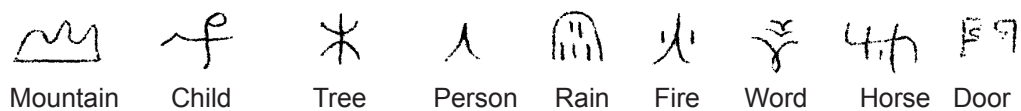
If we look at a tablet or Quipus, we must be aware of the fact that this is not writing, but that this is transferring a message. It is a possibility to fixate this message into matter. If you inscribe a rune in wood, it is something different. Here writing starts as well as reading. It has a meaning. To write comes from *rita* = *rune*, and *Schreiben* comes from *inscribere*.



# Seminar 11

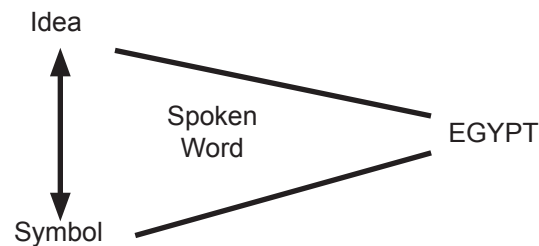
The spoken word is the Logos whose physical body consists of air. In script this physical body is filled with matter. The development of writing through the evolution of mankind is followed up by signs, but one does not distinguish between the written word and the word symbol. All what is painted or inscribed has to do with writing, yet what the written word and symbol really means is not yet carefully enough considered. This has to be done if one is to learn about reading and writing defects.

The Chinese script belongs to the category of picture writing. Science accepts that Chinese writing has its origin in special symbols. These symbols have come over to us, although they are hardly understood. Eight symbols form the Archetype of the Chinese script. Out of this today's Chinese writing has come about. These symbols have three lines indicating not words, but heaven above, ☰ the gods, everything that is in heaven. When the lines are interrupted it means earth below, creation, everything that is formed out ☷ ☷. If the top line is interrupted, it means light, ☱ ☱ ; if the bottom line is interrupted, air, ☴ ☴ ; if the center line is interrupted, fire or sun, ☲ ☲ . If the upper and lower lines are interrupted it means water or moon, ☵ ☵ ; if the two upper lines are interrupted, ☶ ☶ , thunder and the mountain that comes from above; and if the two lower lines are interrupted it means mountain, ☶ ☶ . But all that has nothing to do with the word. These are ideas which are experienced by symbols, they are not experiences of the word. These are symbols for ideas and images, not for the word. Out of these 8 archetypal symbols the Chinese script developed and the Chinese language still consists of syllables and does not know any grammar.

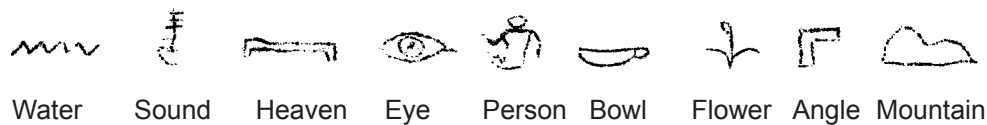




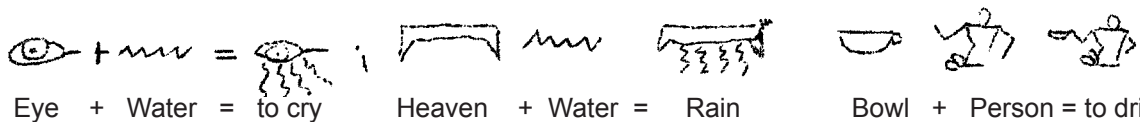
The idea and symbol are connected with one another in Chinese writing. They are connected beyond the realm of language. It means *yin*, but has nothing to do with *yin*, but rather with *superior*. The word and the symbol are still far apart from each other. Many scripts of this nature are still alive, also the Maja script is similar. In all scripts which have survived from Atlantean and early post-Atlantean times, the written word has as yet not appeared. All the scripts that have derived from the Atlantean culture have nothing to do with the element of language. They are symbolic expressions of the idea; the spoken word has not yet entered. As soon as we turn to the post-Atlantean culture, this changes, and syllable writing begins to develop.



The Hieroglyphic writing develops and one has to be clear that Hieroglyphic writing is not pictorial, but it is syllabic letter writing. About 4000 BC the Egyptian hieroglyphics have been purely idea symbols.



Water Sound Heaven Eye Person Bowl Flower Angle Mountain



Eye + Water = to cry Heaven + Water = Rain Bowl + Person = to drink



Leg + Leg = Walking



Reversed = walking backward



Sound + Sound = pleasant sound

Later the determinative symbol was added to the idea symbol to bring about greater definition.



Crane + Man = Son

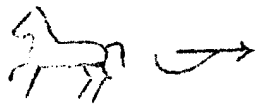


Horse + Sound = Foal



Horse + Fire = Stallion





Horse + Wood = Mare



This was the symbol for printing used to show that the symbol is an abstract idea.



Water + Printing = through/over



Nobleman + Printing = I, mine, me



Bowl + Printing = You, yours

Then the syllable symbol appeared, and the phonetic alphabet was developed still later.



S-W P-A P-A W-R N-F-R N-H H-ch-T R-A T-A



N-T-D



N-dj



tj



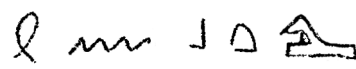
J-J



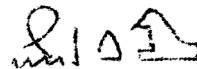
ntd ndj tj jj = the avenger

Vowels were never experienced. They were syllables having prefixes, saying to which kingdom the syllable belonged, and it is through this that the phonetic writing came about which no longer indicated the image, but the word. Throughout a thousand years then developed the real hieroglyphic signs, which are syllables without vowels and only then signs of the alphabet came about. Now the letter was used for composing words. This was about 1800 BC, and this then developed into the hieroglyphic writing on tomb-stones. In about 1200 BC the hieratic writing developed in the mystery centers in the temples on the tablets and papyri, and about 600 BC the demotic writing unfolded, which was then used also by the common people. At that time all three kinds were used concurrently, so one can see that out of the use by priests and initiates it gradually came down into the hands of ordinary people, this script incarnated.





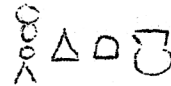
s n b t falcon



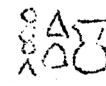
= s n v t = the breast



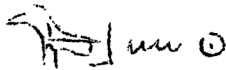
r n a man = r n = the name



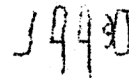
h k t the vessel =



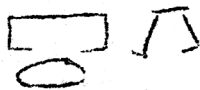
hkt = Beer



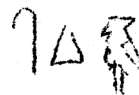
w b n Sun = glittering



b jj abstract = wonder



h r walking = outgoing

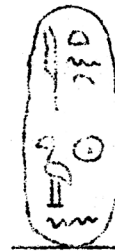


s k a = ruling



Scheschenk I

22nd Dynasty



t  
= j n  
ch

Echnaton

Sun

Son of the Sun

water

Ruler over the  
waters (Nile)

Echnaton – 18th Dynasty

Only the phonetic script is the real script, because it is connected with the word. The pictorial script has nothing to do with writing, just as a child draws a round face with two dots and two lines and says, "Face." We know, for instance, that contrary to this the hydrocephalic child writes 'cat' instead of drawing; this is script. It is important for us to distinguish between symbols and script. The word is inserted from ear space-into sight space, where it becomes imprinted. This we have to see in order to understand what writing is.

Hieroglyph	Hieratic	Demotic	Old Hebrew	Old Greek	New Hebrew
a					
y					
m					
n					

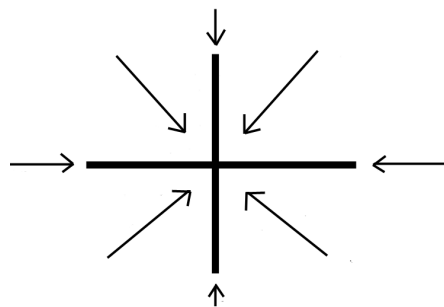


	Hieroglyph	Hieratic	Demotic	Old Hebrew	Old Greek	New Hebrew
h						
sch						
k						
g						
d						

Atlantis disappears and the people take with them their heritage. The Chinese moved to Asia, the Red Indians to America, and a group of people under Manu settled in central Asia and were instructed and educated to initiate the rising culture from east to west. One group was initiated in such a way that they were advised that the word has to incarnate step by step into the written word. In the metamorphosis from the spoken to the written word, something has to come about so that the spoken word does not remain a picture of sound and syllable, but moves into gesture and form of single letters. So something appears like the consonants. That means that mankind begins to undress the spoken word, it becomes naked, and the skeleton of the letters becomes visible and this should be seen. Manu taught that these letters:

W, L, M, N, B (P), S (Z), G (K), C (CH), H, R, D (T), F

are just the categories of everything what is created, everything and anything whatever is around and within, all comes out of these twelve categories which once upon a time created the whole of our existence. That this became apparent was the task of the post-Atlantean epochs. From everywhere all these scripts turned to one special place where, after the word, the Logos, revealed itself, it came down to earth.

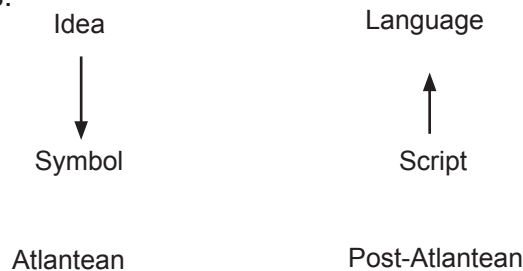




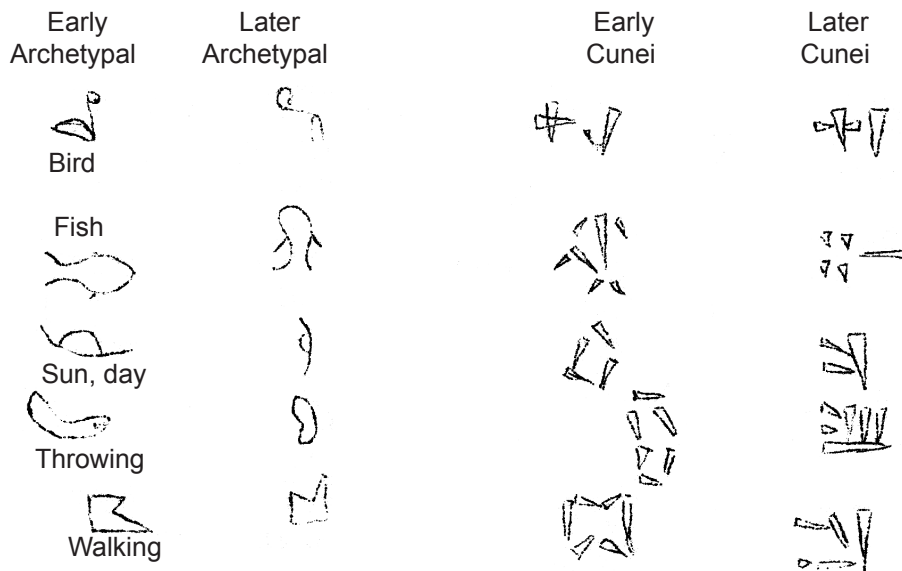
The word has been made naked and bare and so we see the runes of all existence. The Rigveda described the archetypal word, out of which all the other words originated, WHUA. If the alphabet from A to Z would stay in the air, it would form the human ether body. The human etheric body is the archetypal word, the WHUA which is incarnated into the signs of consonants and vowels. This became the naked, bare, undressed skeleton of the word and this is waiting to be taken up again. The word had to go through script, it had to incarnate; otherwise human understanding would not have seen the word incarnating and the Logos following it to redeem it. Language was for Atlanteans similar to thinking, and this went up to the Greek time. Ideas appeared to them as things do today. It just came to them.

It speaks. = It is expressed.

Chinese cannot express their own emotions, they have no vowels and there is also no development in Chinese script. The realm of imagination remains there. Later from the time of Egypt, the realm of inspiration opens.



The more language came down into phonetic writing, the more common it became. Sumerians were a caste of priests in Mesopotamia who brought about the Assyrian and Babylonian cultures. They developed cuneiform writing. They brought down the music of the stars and musical writing. The Egyptians had 354 different signs which was for them the number of days in a year.



The Egyptians had 364 different signs which was for them the number of days in a year.



## Seminar III

Last time we concerned ourselves with the development of script, and we learned to distinguish between two types of script: the Atlantean which is pictorial, has symbols and drawings, and the post-Atlantean type being the word, syllable and phonetic writing. We also learned that the pictorial script has nothing to do with writing; there everything is drawn, but not written, as it is in the Chinese script and the Maja script. There we find only images. Pure writing only appears in post-Atlantean times. In the written script we see the word transformed into script. Around the eastern Mediterranean the script was born, like in the cunei-form writing, syllable-, letter-, consonant-writing. It was then that the Logos entered in order to fulfill what the scripts have prepared and formed. In the *Michael Letters* [October 25, 1924], Rudolf Steiner speaks on about the four stages of world evolution:

1. The archetypal beinghood.
2. The archetypal beinghood reveals itself in creation.
3. The activity that comes about through withdrawal of the beinghood out of revelation.
4. The work-world which shows the forms of divine beinghood, which no longer contains the creator or the revelation of the creator, is also empty of the deeds, is only form which shows that it is the result of divine activity, but the divinity has withdrawn, and we must be clear about the fact that the planetary existence around us is work-world, because it is empty of the first three steps.

When the word clothes itself into the spoken word, into speech, we have the second step, the step of revelation, whereas to begin with the Logos reveals itself purely in the archetypal beinghood. In the spoken word we still meet beinghood. The third step is deed, and this already is writing, the result of what has revealed itself in the word, but it is the shadow, it is the expression of a deed no longer revelation, and the Logos has withdrawn. If, however, the word is printed, then it is work-world and is entirely empty of beinghood. In reading it, we can still understand that once someone thought or spoke these words. The Cosmos is a printed book of all creation from which, however, the creator has withdrawn.



If we turn now to the act of writing, we find that to write is one of the most complicated and hidden activities of man. In writing the ear is replaced by the eye, because it is a kind of speaking, but not with the mouth or the larynx, but with the eye and the hand. Writing has two main sources: the eye and everything that is connected to it as well as the motor activity of arm, hand and fingers.



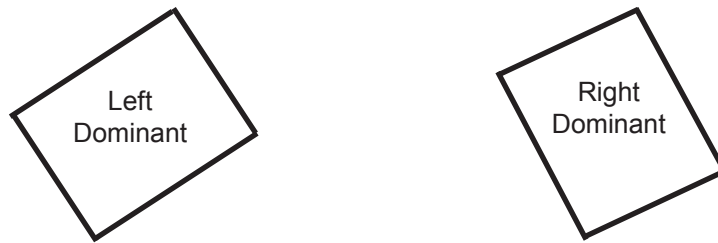
Motor Action

We see that there is a great difference between speaking and writing and this difference is the one between revelation and deed. What is the difference if I speak a word and if I write it? It is not of the same value. On the one hand we bring something into life; on the other hand we put something to sleep. In speaking there is the life activity, and it is carried by the sound. In writing we have the sleeping activity, which is manifested in space and fixed into letters. This can only be put into life again by reading. In hearing we have the experience of a oneness; the being and sound are one: It is the word; time and sound are alive. In the written word the being is hidden behind something else. Writing activity has at the end a formula appearing. There is space, silence and a kind of corpse. In reading we are raising a state of death into life again. The eye represents the picture, the hand represents the motor action, and if we shall understand the spoken word, we do so because the sound when appearing is heard and with it the being reveals itself, it creates in us an image. Every kind of understanding comes about through images. Only when something appears as an image, a vision, as a picture, can we understand. To understand means I meet myself. That means the 'I' meets the 'me,' which means that the 'me' appears in the form of an image or picture. In the mirror we have an archetypal image of cognition, of all-knowing. As man was once everything, we meet in everything ourselves, we learn to know ourselves. Every word we hear creates an image in us. If we recognize this image we know it, we recognize our own existence. This is brought about through speaking; that means to recognize, to remember, to know. Instead of sounding, man can also create lettering so that the picture can be beheld. This is the reason why we have to learn to read.

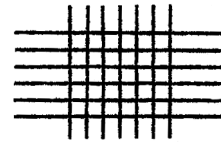
So what is reading and writing? Writing is to create by motor activity a shadow existence. Reading is to raise this shadow into life, into image, so that we can understand it. Reading and writing are



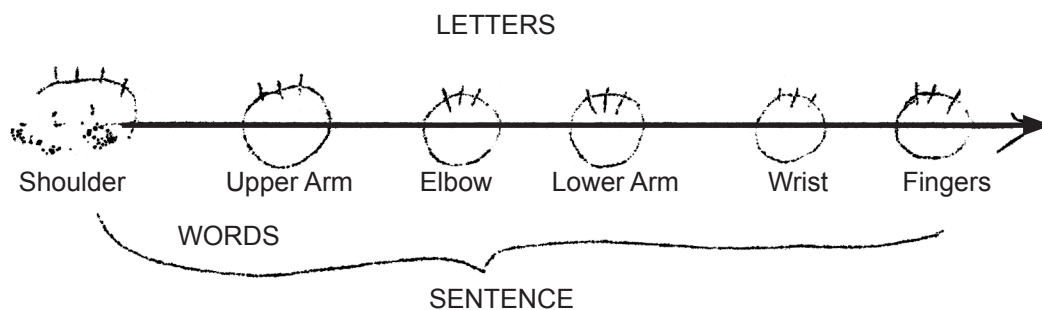
experiences of Easter. Something is laid down in the grave and rises again. The word is laid down; our own activity raises it. Against this stand speaking and hearing which are Michaelmas experiences, but we meet the Logos and all that he creates. The act of writing requires that we write with our eye. In our eye lines grow narrower and narrower and at last letters break down. It is the eye which gives the spacing for the act of writing. The eye identifies itself with the surface to write on. For instance, the placing of sheets of paper for the act of writing is descriptive.



The eye brings about lines and spaces because the eye is much bigger than we usually think. It is as big as the space on which I am writing. It provides the surrounding into which the arm gives and fulfils its motor activity. It is through this that the pathology reveals itself and at the same time reveals that it is something of a rhythmical activity. We need to exact some time for each letter and for this we have to be rhythmical. We write longer words, for instance, much faster and so it goes to syllables and words. This does not apply to learning, as there we are fully involved. Only later when we are free and our muscles of the arm and the eye are no longer engaged consciously can we act as described above. It is a rhythmical process.

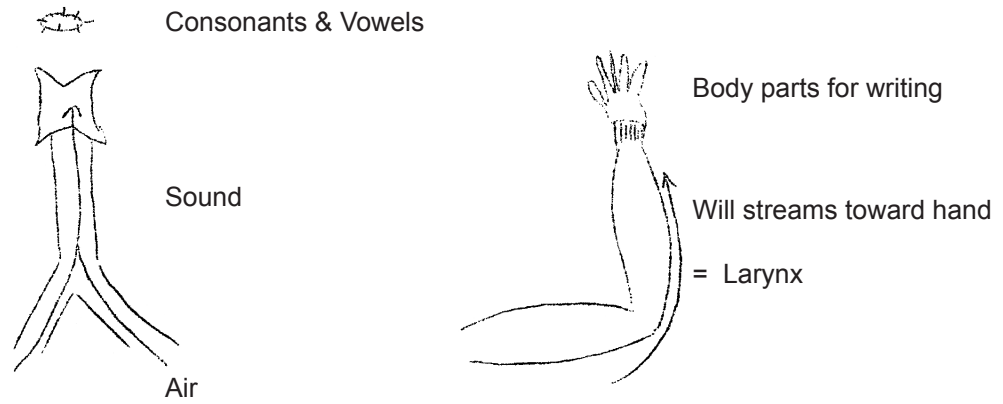


If we try to analyze the complicated movements of writing, we find a great variety. Rudolf Steiner describes that, in writing, the child must learn to analyze. If we analyze the motor activity of writing, one goes along a line. The main movement of this line goes from shoulder to upper arm to elbow to lower arm. The wrist joint diminishes the main movement into smaller movements and divides them into smaller parts, and each one of these is again cut into smaller movements by our fingers.





In the structure of our arm we find the word inscribed. In the wrist we find a slightly quivering movement coming into distinct movement in the fingers as letters.



The movement of the shoulder, elbow and arm is carrying the writing of the sentences. It is as if an air stream goes from the shoulder to the wrist which is corresponding to the larynx. It is there that this stream of movement is divided into smaller parts, into the fingers, and so as we speak, we also write as from the wrist. We find that in writing, the sentences correspond in speaking to the air, the words to sound, the letters to consonants and vowels. The whole organization of speaking has a corresponding anatomy in the hand for writing, so the tongue corresponds to the thumb, the teeth to the fingers, the pallet to the back of the hand, the cheek to the palm of the hand. To write is to speak in movement, it is *deed*; it is the same as speaking only on a different level. Revelation has moved into deed. (Mechanical writing is like babbling or parrot-speaking.)

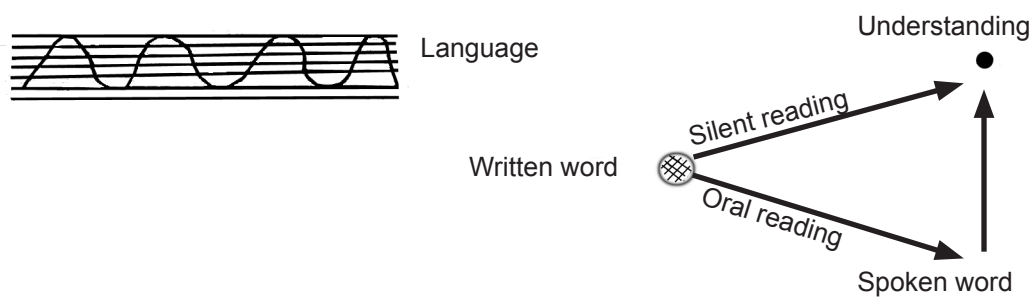


## Seminar IV

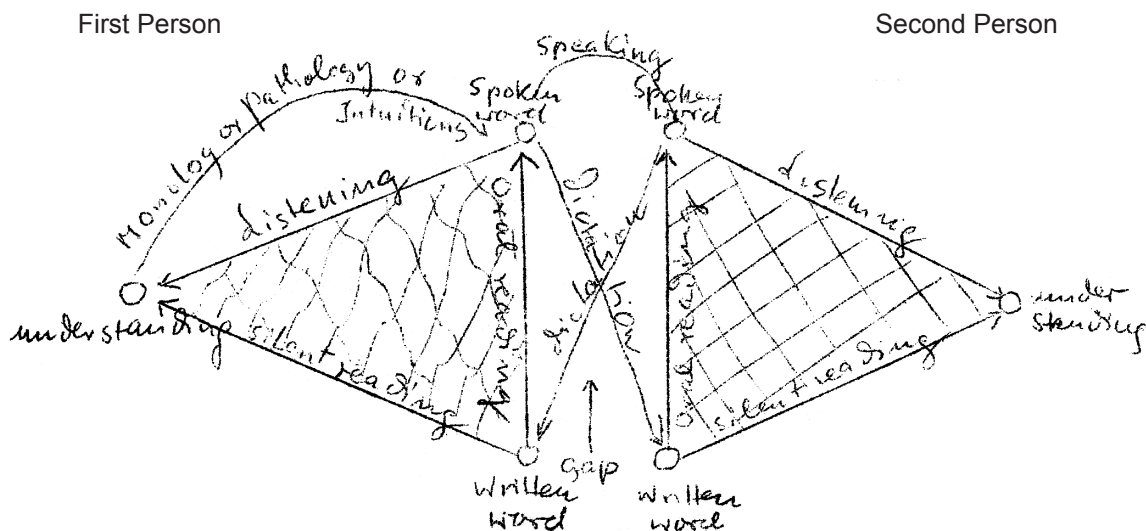
We have followed up so far the activity of man's writing. In anatomy and physiology the movements of arm and hand and fingers are the same as we find in the air man, in the bronchi, larynx and mouth, where the air is formed into spoken words, syllables, consonants and vowels. The process of reading is still more complicated and mysterious. Thousands of books have been written, tens of thousands of experiments have been performed in order to find out what qualities of human existence have to be merged in order to bring about reading. There are libraries all over the world and reading is a means of communication for any dignified human being. Today it is just a matter of fact that one is able to read. Reading is not looking, it is as little looking as speaking is making a noise. To read means also using tools, namely the tools of one's own eyes. But what is it actually?

When we read we look at books and these books have something enchanting, something fascinating. They are like beings with whom one starts to live. In the Middle Ages books were like human beings and also had, like those, their own destinies. That a writer a few hundred years ago thought and imagined comes out of the old manuscript. If you take a written or printed book, then you have two possibilities to read. First you can read silently, which is also called mental reading; secondly there is oral reading, which is reading aloud. Mental reading allows us to understand the written text. When reading aloud, one usually does not understand what one reads. If, however, one has read something beforehand, then one can remember it when reading it aloud; only through being prepared can oral reading take the place of hearing and so is understood also by the reader. Oral reading reveals more of the wisdom of the read language. Then reading silently one is not active with the motor system. The will is differently engaged. However, if one reads poetry, one feels forced to read aloud. When reading aloud one remains in the sphere of language, that means in the logic of it, but one is far away from that which the listener experiences. If one has the written word, the oral reading leads to the spoken word, the silent reading to the understanding. To understand oral reading requires part of silent, reading. To do oral reading means that, one reads aloud and then, so that one can understand it, one has to listen back to it silently.





If two people want to communicate with each other through the medium of speaking and writing, we have the most complicated process in which the written word can either be read aloud and through listening back be brought to an understanding, or this can be achieved directly by silent reading. If now the understood word is communicated through speaking or writing to someone else, this other person has to perform a similar process, either by listening to the word directly or his own words in oral reading, or come to an understanding directly by means of mental reading. Nevertheless between the two there is a gap which always has to be bridged from person to person. *Personare* means "to sound through" and a person is sounded through, and in communicating with someone else, one sounds through this other.

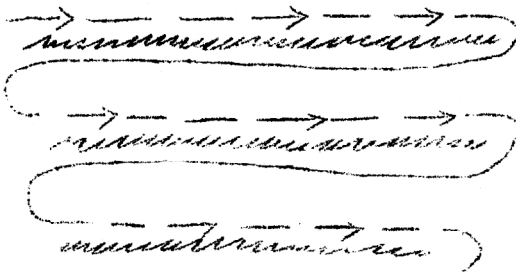


It is a great problem why so recent an acquisition as reading and writing takes up so vast a field in our cortex. Hunting and ploughing, for instance, do not need any centers in the brain, but as we are created out of the word and the brain is built up out of the word, it is natural that, therefore, we find reading and writing centers. But how do we read? The eye is thought to be the center of reading, and one thinks that letters are mirrored and then transported back through the optic nerve to the brain. In looking at a page, our eye has as much to do with comprehension as a lamp has to do with comprehension shining on to the paper. The light lets us distinguish black letters from the white sheet, so our eye is thought to be the lamp. Whether I touch with

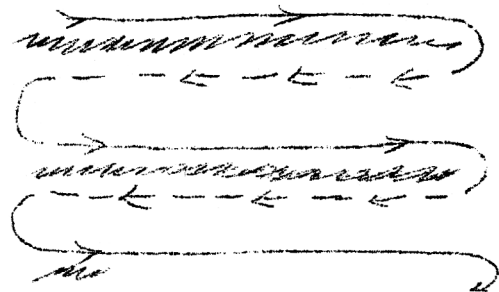


my fingertips the Braille script or look at letters with my eyes is only a difference in tools, not a difference in the process of reading.

So what is the process of reading? Usually it is thought to be a passive process. The print imprints itself in the eyes. But reading is at least as much a motor process as speaking. It is only more obscure to us. We feel the movements of our eyes less than the movements of our tongue, cheeks, etc. There are two distinct movements which one does when reading. One goes slowly in short broken movements from left to right along a line and then sweeps in a big, long, coherent movement back from the right to left again, only in order to move forward to the right again in short jumps. It is a breathing, it is a writing. One exhales in short and inhales in long deep breaths. So in this type, which one can call the acoustic type, we find a transformed breathing, in which the exhaling is the rhythmical forward movement and reading and the inhaling is the swooping movement from right to left between the lines. It is a metamorphosis of laughing. When we read, there is a slight smile behind the movement in one type.



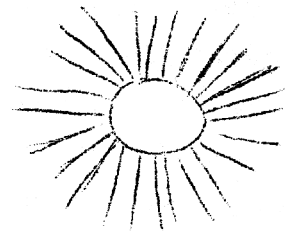
Acoustic – laughing type



Visual – weeping type

The other readers go over the line in a long sweep and move back to the beginning of the next line in short steps. They skim over the script. This is the weeping type, the visual type. There is still another type who reads rhythmically along the line, but staggers from the right to left between the lines. With this type we have a handle for the reading process.

If we look at the human eye we find that there are seven muscles for the eyeball, which direct the movement of the eye.



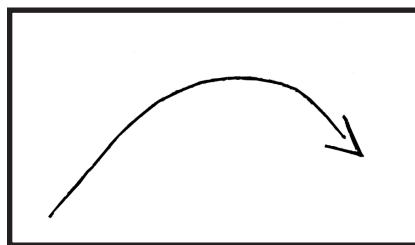
Apart from these there are also all our muscles in the cheek, neck and jaws, and all those muscles are trained when we learn to read.



The center of this activity is the ciliar muscle around the lens, around this are the seven muscles of the eyeball, and around these all the other muscles of the face and neck. These three muscle groups are the garments which surround the real reading activity. The outer breathing is movement. In this are embedded the three layers of muscles around the reading activity, and this reading activity goes out of our pupil. There lies the center of this activity in these muscle groups. It is not the eye that reads, but rather it directs our ego as a lamplight on a page onto the text, the script or the print. This ego uses the sense of touch, in feeling, moving, fingering along the written line. The ego fingers along the text just like our fingers might move along a stringed instrument. To read is a higher performance of playing a musical instrument. The ego plays on words and sentences. They start to sound as instruments, but out of the words appears an *image* and immediately an understanding arises. It is in this also that we find the difference between stringed and wind instruments. In the wind instrument, speaking and writing are placed further to the outside. In the stringed instrument, one furthers the reading ability.

A written word is not to be compared with written music. The written word is easily confused with the sound form of the spoken word. Each word has its own sound form. This is its instrument and that is written down in music. Playing the violin, for instance, is reading with the breathing process; to play the lyre is reading without the breathing process. In playing the lyre you realize what is hidden in the form. The written text is not sign and symbol, but it is a form, just as the instrument is a form. Numerals like 1, 2, 3, 4 are signs. This is also so in Chinese. These forms our ego takes, frees then and we understand. By reading we feed the sense of thought. By sounding, the sense of thought is reached only via the sense of word. The closed book is like a manifold portable instrument case. Only when it is open can we make the instruments release their meaning into images which we then understand. If we make the instrument sound, we are reading aloud.

Right-handed person



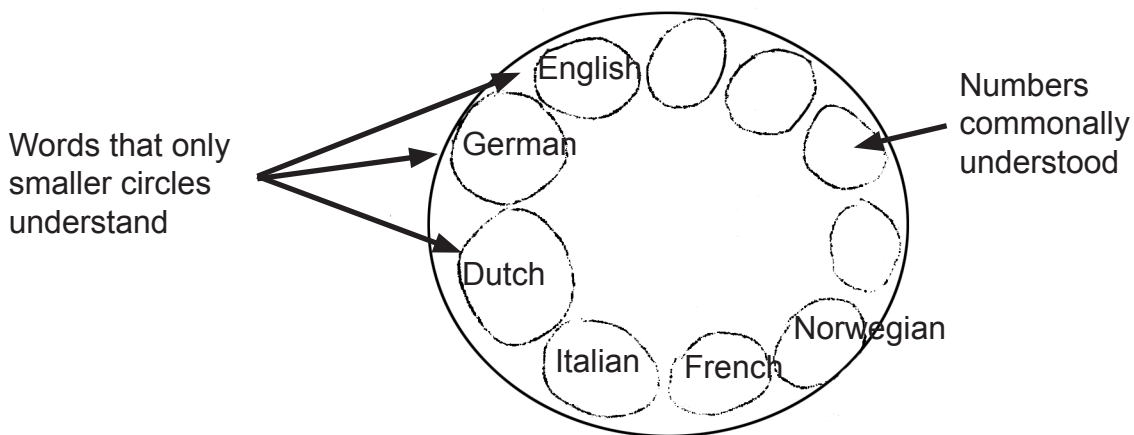
Points from the discussion:

- Looking at a picture is different for a right-handed and a left-handed person.
- Reading is a continuous walking, so that one can see it in the end.



## Seminar V

Reading is connected with the structure and morphology of language and speech. Speaking is related to will and motor activity and this brings about the activity “to speak.” To understand the spoken word, we must be aware that speaking takes place only when two people talk to each other. A monologue is not speaking. This same relationship which we find between speaking and understanding, we also find in reading and writing. What is actively produced as work-world has to be raised up by reading to the level of understanding. In writing the nobility is materialized. Nothing is as complicated a process as the one of reading and writing. Until today one had no idea of how to really come near to it. Everyone who investigates builds up his own system and a battlefield has been created. This is because the word as Logos, incarnated into man, is not considered. We have to realize the difference between the written word and the written number. Numerals are understood all over the world; the word is understood only in a limited circle of people, be it peoples, nations or tribes (*Sprachgemeinschaften*).



Where in language do we find something comparable to numerals? The letters, the alphabet. The letters as alphabet are more commonly understood. If that is so, we will realize that language consists of different layers, lower and higher layers which are intertwined. There are four layers out of which most modern languages consists:



=====	Sentence	–	Space, Time, Circumstance
=====	Word	–	Earthly Deed and Need
=====	Syllable	–	Birth, Death, etc.
=====	Letters	–	Alphabet, Numbers from 1–0

Within these four layers language exists, both spoken as well as written, but these layers are not next to each other, but intertwined.

### **Letters and Numbers**

In the lowest layer of language letters and numbers are contained. The formative powers which have built the whole of creation are contained in this. In a nutshell, we see all the powers which stream down from the beginning of human evolution, out of the twelve signs of the zodiac, molded by the power of the vowels which come out of the wanderings and forms of planetary spheres. This means that the number 1 means everything, the number 2 already means a division, a split, and within all this lives the lost shadow of what the letters and numbers are. They were released out of the Mystery Temples, but only to one part. The other part which was kept secret is disclosed in symbols of true and false occultism, but this does not disclose anything in reality. Some of these symbols were published in the book of the Rosicrucians 1730, or are to be found in the Kabala. The ten categories of Aristotle are intellectualized letters and numbers.

### **Syllables**

In Chinese, Mayan, and other languages, we do not find words, but syllables. There are no proper words. In the syllable is contained child and mother, tree and bird, earth and sky, birth and death. All these are syllables. In our language we use mono-syllabic words, but these are syllables. Even in the English language we have more of the syllable. The German language is further developed and has come down more to earth. English is still a language that has retained its middle-aged characteristics. The syllables mean living ideas, archetypal images expressed in syllables. They contain archetypal images of all existence, out of which the soul lives. The archetypal images are in these languages imprinted in syllables. Just as much as the archetypal powers of the universe are expressed in the alphabet or in Aristotle's categories, we find in the syllable expressed Plato's images and ideas.

### **Words**

Only in the third layer, in the layer of the words, the earthly needs and deeds find expression. All what belongs to our connection and



relation-ship to our surroundings belongs to the sphere of words and these are built up out of several syllables. No more archetypal, it is composed and handed over to daily usage.

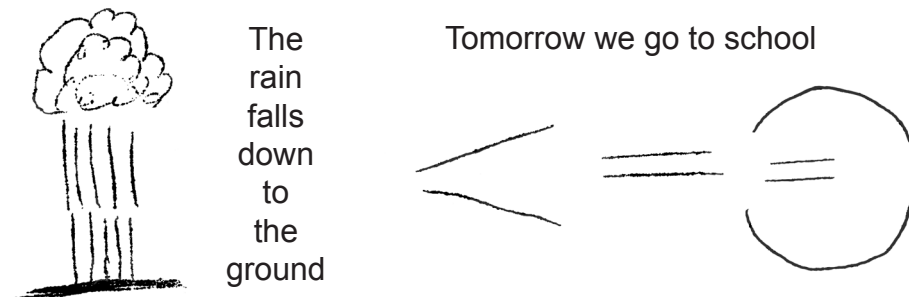
### Sentences

In the fourth layer, in the sentences, we are inserted into space, into time and circumstance. The past, present and future deeds, connections to people, reference to necessities, relationship to all the world, everything is there. It is secretly built into the realm of language, in which we can see the four steps of becoming. All the spheres of the world-all are found in the sentence. Of course one has to take this not too rigidly. All layers work and live together, and one has to turn to this in order to come to a first understanding, and everything we have said so far holds good for the spoken as well as the written language.

We learn to write by writing letters, but we also have to understand them to read them. Other different layers are understood by different senses. How are these layers now understood? They are understood by different means. These functions and disturbances are usually so big that, the whole of the cosmos is involved. We understand

- Sentences by sense of Ego
- Words by sense of Thought
- Syllables by sense of Word
- Letters by sense of Hearing

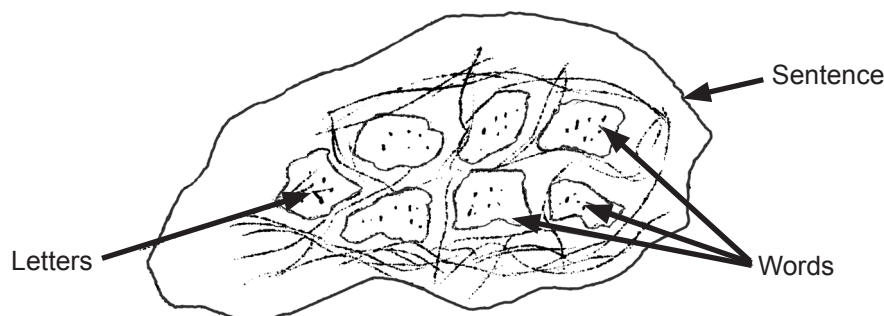
These four senses have to work together. They are each single one related to a special sphere in language and again we have to ask: How does this come about? One can only learn to understand this, and now one must be clear that this relates to the spoken word only. If we take such a sentence as: "The rain falls down onto the ground," we hear the melody first and this is the melody of the whole sentence and we perceive the sentence with our human form which is the seat of the ego, we discover that a sentence contains an image of man, and this we have to find in every sentence. If we take another sentence: "Tomorrow we go to school," we realize again that one senses and perceives the sentence with the human form.





That means we receive the sentence in our own image. Therefore, the writer has his own style; one puts one's own form outside and one meets the organ of the sense of ego.

When one has come to grasp the melody, the circumference, the human form of the sentence, then we can know the further layer of those in between words like: to, as, how, in, on, and so forth.



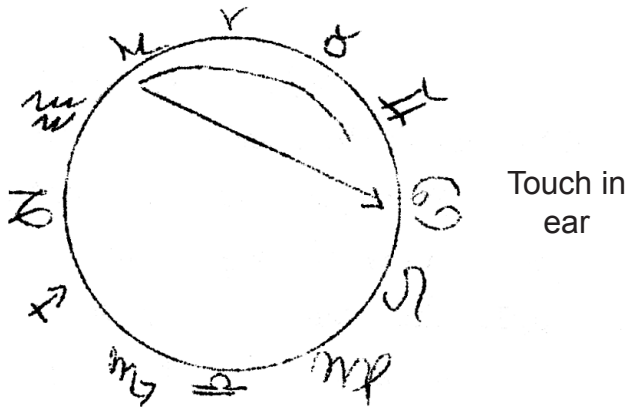
It is with the sense of thought that we hear the single words and within this again we perceive the single syllable, and within this with our sense of hearing we notice the different letters. There arises the question: How is all this related to the physical body, when to begin with you grasp the sentences, then the words, then the syllables, and finally the consonants and vowels? The consonants and vowels touch on to a special instrument in the human body which is the organ of Corti in the inner ear. It is there that we become certain that we hear, and this is done in the unconscious. The sentence we grasp consciously, the words are standing out, in the words is contained in a deeper layer the syllables and in them the archetypal images are divined. We must also be clear about the fact that the older we grow, the less we divine. When poets speak in their own language, they can open up this realm to us. It is as we said already: In the sleeping consciousness the vowels and consonants touch the organ of Corti, and it is in this complicated way that we hear the spoken language.

In reading this process is quite different and usually reversed, as we consciously read the letters and subconsciously form the sentences. While in listening we have an analytical process coming from the sentences—down to the single bricks of the consonants and vowels, which then touch the ground of the ear—in reading we have a synthetic process. We go from the single letter via the syllable and word to the sentences. It is there that we start with the eye. This is a very important statement. This is more important than a hundred sputniks. When this is understood, the connection between *Word* and *Man* is open. It is the tragedy of the 20th century that this has so far never been grasped or observed. Suddenly we understand when Rudolf Steiner speaks of the reversed perception of eye and ear. When reading we direct the go in and through our eye down to the letter and pluck with the sense of touch the single consonant and vowel. In this process



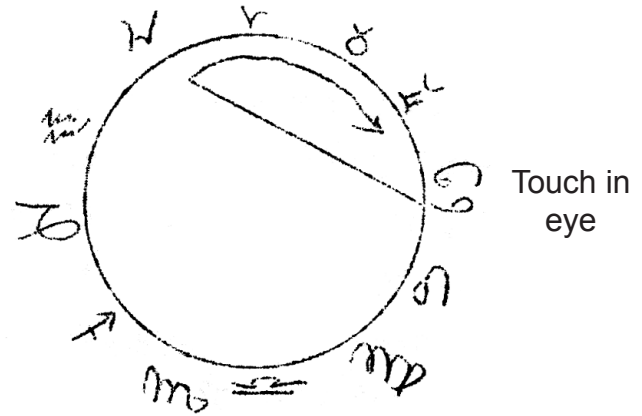
lies an understanding of all pathology of reading and writing, and we understand that in reading we go from the sense of hearing to the sense of ego, and in listening we go from the sense of ego to the sense of hearing.

### LISTENING (to the spoken word)



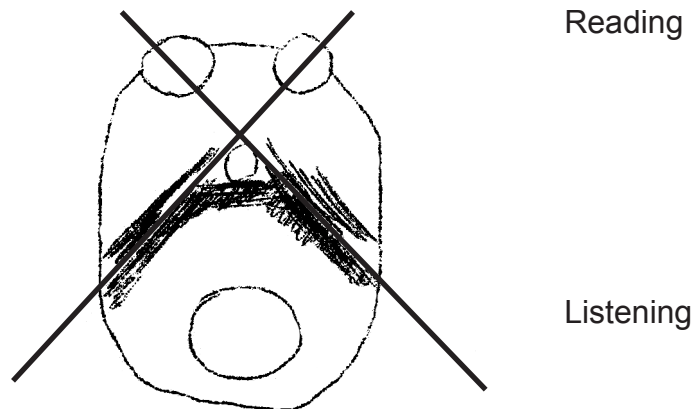
**Listening to the Spoken Word:**  
When listening we start with our sense of ego. There the spoken word enters through the sentence, goes to word, syllable and comes finally to consonant and vowel. It touches down in the inner ear.

### READING



**Reading:** When reading we start with the sense of touch. The eye is just a shell, a vessel. The sense of touch opens up the instrument of the printed or written letters and raises them via the syllable, word and sentence to the sense of ego.

With this we have come to an important point for the understanding of pathology. The sense of touch is used differently in both realms. In listening it comes to rest in the ear; in reading it begins in the eye. One can also say the one leg is the eye leg, the other is the ear leg, and in this way we are walking from eye to ear, from ear to eye. Therefore, reading and listening are combined difficulties. Only here we come to the physical structure of our organization.



The geometry of the human skull makes these experiences. There is one line as access through eye and ear, and through this we do the step from eye to ear, from ear to eye. Where these two accesses cross, there we find at this crossing-point the place where the sense of ego establishes itself.



## Seminar VI

In our previous discussions we have come to understand that

- Letters, vowels and consonants are related to the-categories of Aristotle and are perceived by the sense of hearing.
- Syllables are related to the eternal ideas of Plato and are perceived by the sense of word.
- Words are comprehended by man and are understood by the sense of thought.
- Sentences represent what we understand. It is the world in print which we describe, and we understand this with our sense of ego.

In these four elements the powers of the cosmos are represented. We have come to understand that reading is related to the printed or written word, whereas hearing is related to the spoken word, and we made that fundamental discovery about the process of hearing: To hear and understand what one has been listening to is an entirely opposite process to that of reading. When we read we start with single letters, and out of the letters we formulate syllables, words and finally sentences. It is our sense of touch which is used by our ego that plucks the single letters. Out of this then is formed syllable, and word by our sense of word, thought and ego. So the understanding of the written word wells up. So we rise from the lowest layer of language to the highest, from letters to sentences, in the process of reading.

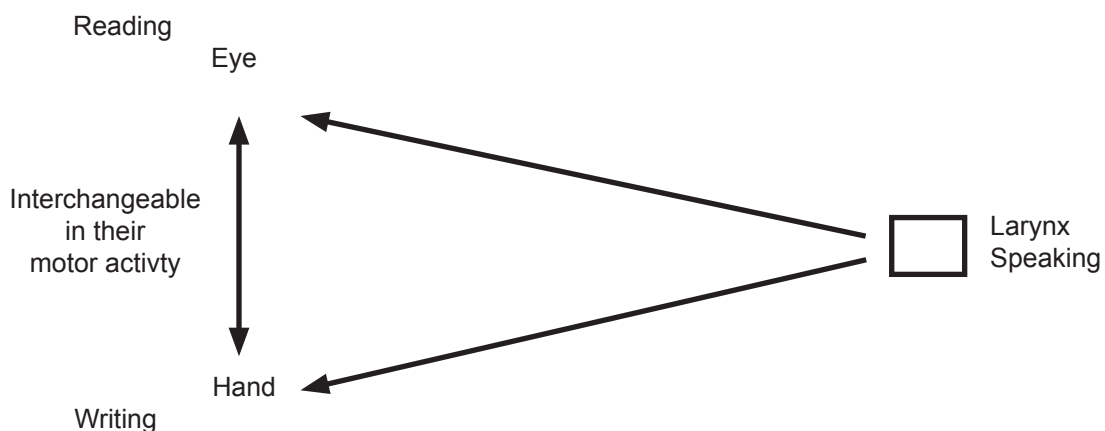


The process of word hearing is different. We hear the whole sentence with the sense of ego, and out of it we analyze and distinguish words, syllables and letters. This process goes from the sentences down to the letters, just the opposite of the reading process. If this is grasped, then one has achieved the first step in comprehending reading and writing.



The other side of the word was not mentioned last time. We approached only the side of understanding in reading and writing; we have not yet dealt with the motor activity side, but only with the sensory side. We have now to add to reading and hearing the process of writing. When reading aloud or talking, one does not understand oneself. One speaks out of a pre-consciousness which gradually becomes consciousness. Now we have to go into the realm of motor activities, where we are writing and speaking. We can see that the motor activity of producing the word is repeated in writing, which means that in writing we put the word to death, whereas through reading it is reawakened. It is a process similar to Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We write with the help of our hands, we read by means of our eye. In pathology one usually says that when we read and write there must be similar motor patterns, but we have to ask ourselves: What is the true issue?

You will remember how we described the eyeball, which is surrounded by seven muscles. These turn the eyeball in every possible direction. The eyeball is, in point of fact, the ideal joint. The interplay of these seven muscles brings about the music of the interplay of movement of the eyeball, and we have to realize that this movement concert has to transform into the active movement of our fingers. The fingers, hand and lower arm are simply the muscles of the eye when writing, just as much as the eye muscles are used when reading. I actively transfer this process into my hand. The fountain pen which I hold in my fingers is like the eye. So in a way we see that the activity of writing and reading is similar, although eye and hand are end organs, that means both come to a finish. They cannot develop, they can only regress, and the activities of both are secondary ones.



The primary activity lies in the larynx as a motor organ. It is a tube which is moved by muscles and the result is speaking. This same motor ability when going into the hand can produce writing or when going into the eye becomes reading. This is the basis of the motor activity of these functions, and we understand that hearing is related to

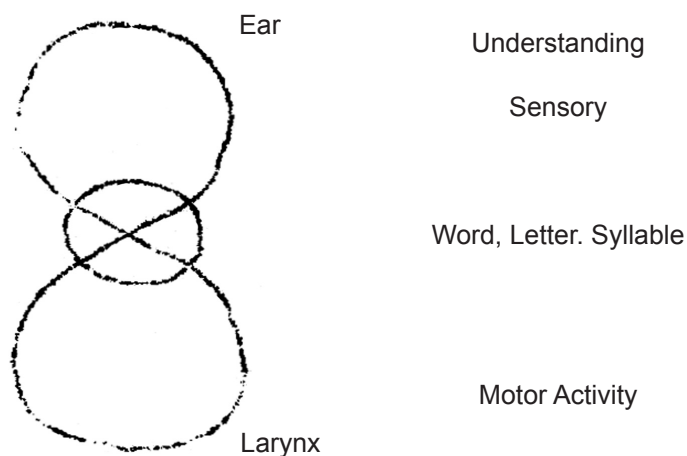


reading and writing. Where do we find hearing in the activity of writing? Then we listen to someone speaking, it is not only in the realm of sense perception, of knowing or comprehending knowledge, but it is also an activity in the realm of motor action, though rather diminished. When we listen to someone, we repeat the words that are spoken actively, though involuntarily, in our larynx. Our larynx moves in concordance with what we hear, and we must be aware of the fact that if this were not done, we would not be able to understand. So we realize:

When I am listening I move the larynx.  
When I am reading I move my eyes.

Whatever I do, whenever I am dealing with the word—be it in writing, reading, listening or speaking—we find that it has two sides, the motor side and the sensory side, and we see that one side is where I understand and comprehend and the other is where I act.

So the word has to be built up out of letters, syllables, by motor activity of the larynx and the sensory activity of understanding through hearing. We understand that the word is really present only in the center. There is balance in listening, but there are three forms of metamorphosis:



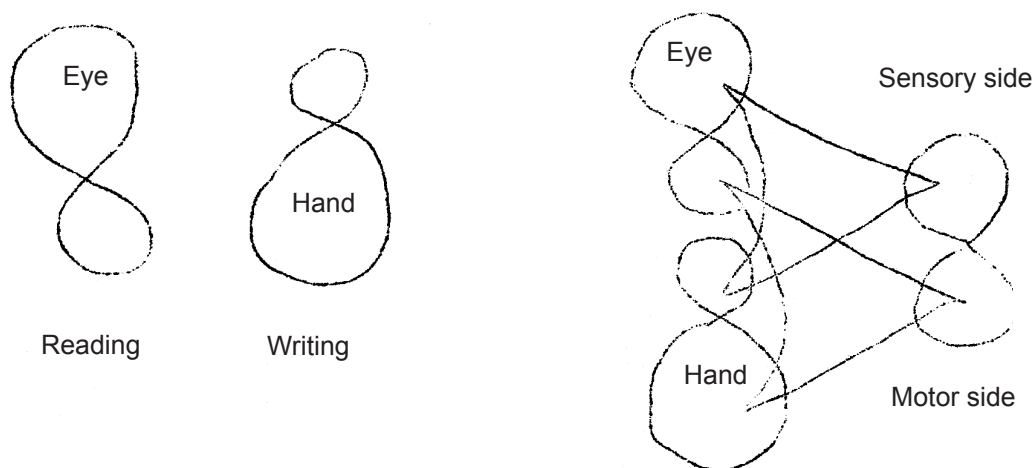
In Reading, the sensory part is large, the motor part small.

In Writing, the motor part is large, but the sensory part small.

In Speaking, both parts are more or less equal.

All these processes are interwoven; they are actually one. In a handicapped child this interweaving can be damaged through the inability of one or a few missing elements.





There is a great puzzle in evolution. In the old Atlantean writing went from up downwards, as in Chinese still today. This was an intermediate position between speaking and listening and reading and writing. That means they had only the ear and the larynx and they moved only from understanding to speaking. There were only images and symbols, no words. In point of fact, there was no development in reading and writing, there remained only symbols, as they are not related to eye and hand, but only to ear and larynx. The script then developed and later, even in old Grecian times, the direction of writing was from right to left, as it is still today in Arabic and Hebrew and this is the direction of the etheric. In the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, meander writing developed, which gave way in the 2nd century BC to writing from left to right. This happened because the etheric had entered fully the physical body and followed in writing the stream of the physical. The word became flesh and with it entered the time of Christ.

Before the Etheric - writing from up downwards  
 Etheric - writing from right to left  
 The Etheric entering the Physical - meander writing  
 Physical - writing from left to right

We have to distinguish two motor activities, the one of writing and the other of speaking. When one is writing an article, we know as little of it as when we are speaking. The sentence, however, is already in our mind. Out of it the word reigns, then the syllables come, and finally the letters are written down and in this way fulfills in writing letter by letter the existing sentence. It is the process from up coming down. The opposite happens in speaking. In speaking we formulate the vowels and consonants and place them together, so that finally they become a sentence which can stand in front of us. This is for all of us a great discovery. We can see that writing and word-hearing have the same direction and that reading and speaking again have the same direction.



Writing and  
Word-hearing



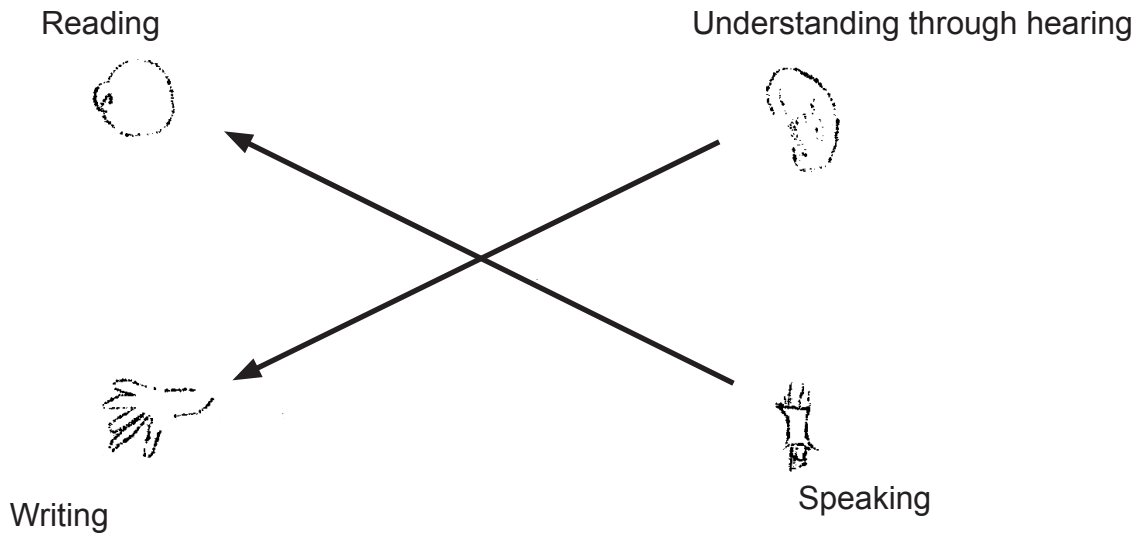
For writing you must  
train the child to listen.

Reading and  
Speaking



For reading you must  
train the child to speak.

We see that this all requires a complicated interaction.



Through the same direction we find the larynx in our eye and the ear in our hand. When writing, we have to formulate into our hands the organ of comprehending the single vowel and consonant, the organ of Corti. When we are studying all this, then we can find in the lines of our fingertips, when holding a pencil, a spiral form. This also is expressed when our fingers hold a pencil: We form in our hands the organ of comprehending of vowels and consonants, or, we can say, we write down the same letters which otherwise touch down in the spiral of the inner ear. This spiral is different for the right- and left-handers.



This last image of the relationship between speaking and reading and hearing and writing is the basic image for our teaching handicapped children to read and to write, to bring hearing into our hand, and to lift speaking up into reading. This is the most important part and it will help us to teach the handicapped child.



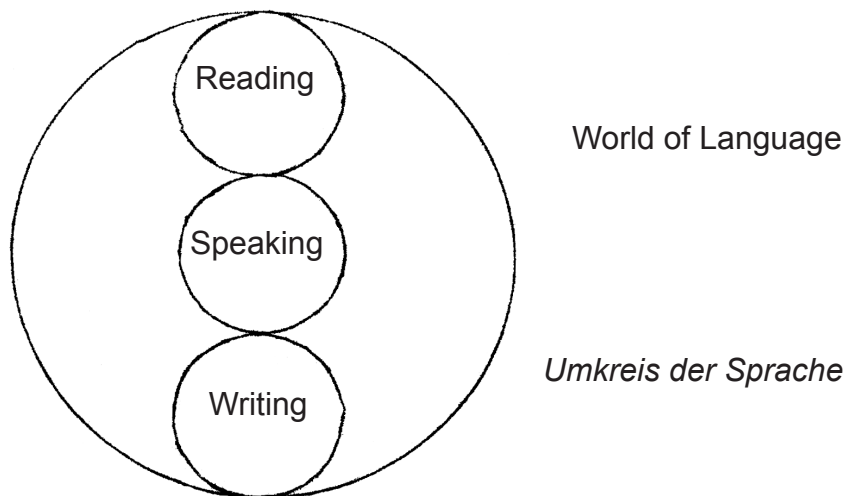
# DISORDERS OF READING AND WRITING (incomplete notes)

## Seminar I

We are concerned with one of the most difficult problems for teachers and doctors. It will be hard work, perhaps surprising, but very complicated. There are no real ways of classifying. Each child has his or her own individual disorders of writing and reading. For this reason it is necessary to understand the principles before we can deal with the various single disorders.

The number of modern difficulties (*Zeiterscheinungen*) is large: in the Northern countries twenty-five to thirty disorders, in the South less. When a doctor tries to understand Reading and Writing disorders, he faces a great challenge. Concepts like sensory and motor nerves are too elementary. It is a plain fact (*Binsenwahrheit*) that *reading and writing* are connected with speaking. How is that to be understood? They are not directly but indirectly connected.

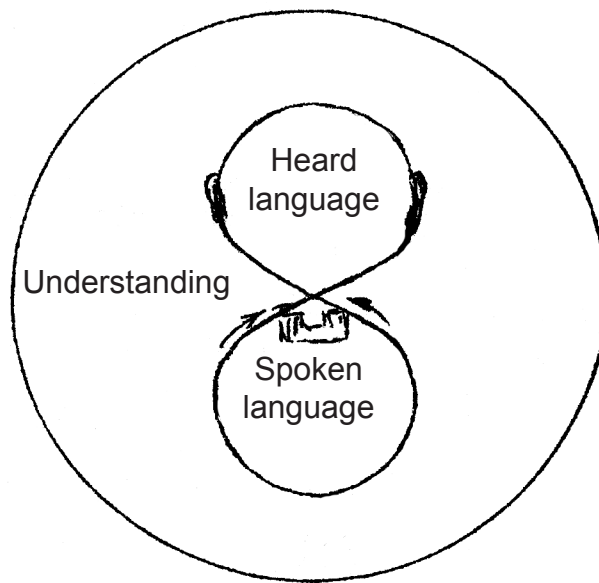
Reading, speaking and writing are three activities which are indirectly interdependent. In this space of language there are the three activities.



All illiterates and young children can speak without being able to read or write. Many can read without writing or vice versa. There are mentally challenged people who can read and write. All this must be taken into account.

Language is to be regarded as something that is real, it exists and lives in the spiritual surrounding of every nation, of every man whether he can read or write or speak. This is a fact which is not commonly recognized nowadays. It is out of this universal world of language that the three activities originate. They are archetypal activities of the earthly-cosmic existence of man. All this is far greater and mightier than we can imagine.





What is happening when we speak? Are there additional sides to it? Is the activity of speaking enough to make speaking possible? It is a semiconscious activity. We can only speak properly if two languages permeate each other simultaneously.

Spoken Language  
Heard Language

These two are different, and if they do not inter-penetrate understanding does not come about. The heard language and the spoken one must inter-penetrate.

Block your ears and speak. Understanding does not come about because the inter-penetration does not occur (not because your ears are blocked).

Larynx }  
Ear } Understanding

How is it with reading? Have you noticed how a child reads when a beginner? He must speak. Also reading consists of two processes.



Read  
language

Spoken  
language

Reading is not accompanied by movement, the eyes, speaking aloud, and so forth.



Only out of this polarity understanding can arise. We cannot stare at the page and understand without movement.



Heard  
language

(It is always necessary to have two)

Written  
language

Everything that a child is to understand has also to be *done*. The motor ability (*Motorik*) has to be activated. Then understanding can arise. All understanding goes exclusively by way of the limbs.

Which was first? If we look at man, it was obviously speaking. If we look at the child in a developmental way, we note that speaking has two roots: imitation and memory.

Speaking

Memory (*Gedächtnis*)

Imitation

Memorizing (*Merken*)

(Activity)

(Ability)

*Lesen* comes from gathering, collection.

To Read comes from *raten*, *Rätsel*.

To Write comes from *ritzen*, *Rune*.

Reading means gathering (*Zusammensammeln*).

Writing means engraving (*Ritzen*).

If you try to comprehend this concept, these are primeval activities, mightier than speaking.

Once upon a time in ancient times, speaking was dissolved (*aufgelöst*) in writing and reading. The gods wrote and thereby created the world of nature. What the gods have written, the leaders of mankind have tried to read, to decipher. This was communicated to mankind and became runes, cuneiform writing, picture writing, symbol script and finally alphabetical script when the Logos incarnated. Supersensible reading gradually evolved into (*gingüber*) sensory reading.

In the meantime language became ever more connected with all that in writing and reading. They had been independent of one another, but when picture writing became sound writing, they grew slowly back together again.

When the child learns reading and writing, the teacher has to be an artist to bring these three independent processes together again. A child does not necessarily take speaking and writing as belonging together. It is easier in the case of reading.

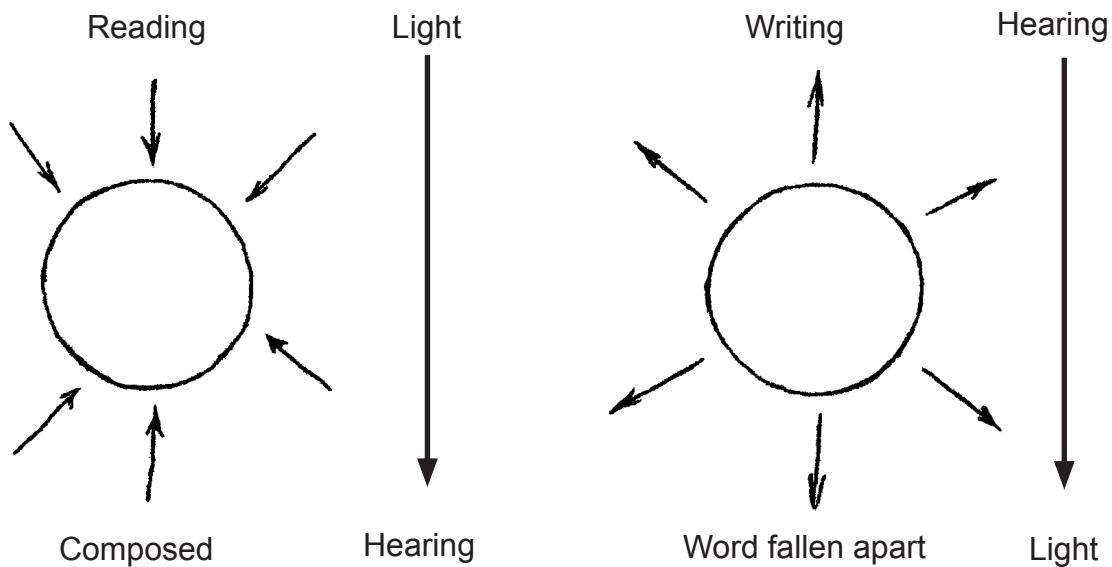


One should not presume to define reading and writing as one activity, for reading and writing are two polar opposite entities (*Vollzüge*).

Reading – a synthetic process

Writing – an analytical one.

(Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of May 5, 1920, Basel)



### Understanding

When we read, we read in such a way that we comprehend the word, the sentence, the paragraph, the page in a motoric way. The script shows up on the white paper. I synthesize and begin to comprehend. Then the written word has resurrected in me. In other words I have led the word from light into the space of hearing through the synthesis.

In writing the opposite takes place. To make the bridge from light, sound and vice versa, this is the first indication of that processuality which belongs to writing and reading.



## Seminar II

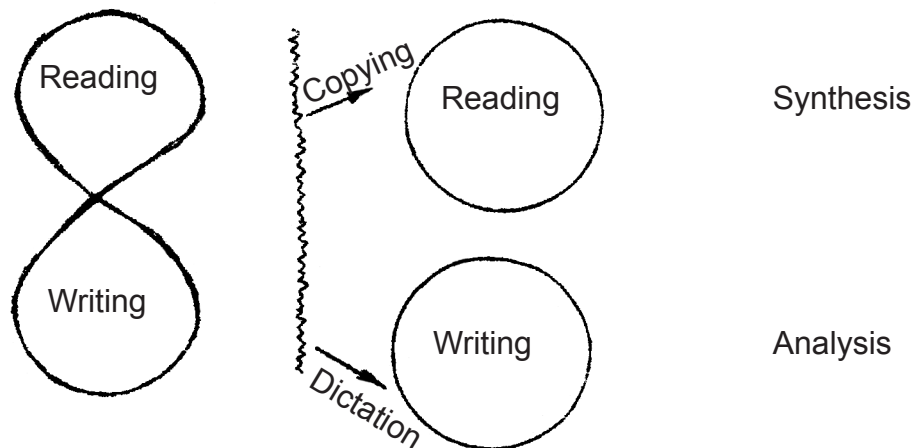
The *Hand* is an analyzing power when we write.  
The *Eye* is a synthesizing power when we read.

In earlier years, when the child came to school, he or she could not yet write and read. Nowadays this is different. Now the young child begins to learn to write and read at a much younger age. What happens?

The child speaks quite unconsciously, she does not speak her own language but the language of her parents, through imitation. This is born gradually through our teaching the child writing and reading (midwife fashion). The child can also read, metaphorically speaking—she reads the sense world, the tree, the mother, the sister, she can name things, she can read in images.

When you go from “fish” to “f,” you lead the child from image reading to the reading of the letter. By doing this you awaken in the soul of the child the feeling: There is a word in the things of the world. Out of the images of the word, the script of the world is revealed. The child can read but not write. Reading is a process out of which writing comes forth. Out of this process of word revealing (*Wortenthüllung*), the child gains the possibility of writing. Reading is in a sense the mother tongue of writing. Reading surrounds the child although she does not hear it.

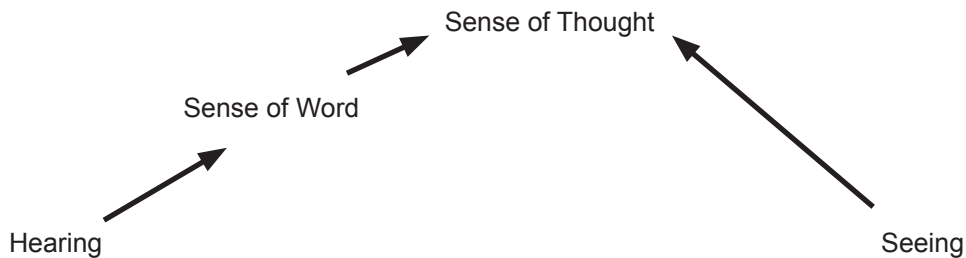
At such an early stage of development, reading and writing are still one. In the primitive (elementary) stage of drawing letters, of scribbling, and so forth, there is a some-what chaotic unity, and out of this a duality is gradually formed and separates.



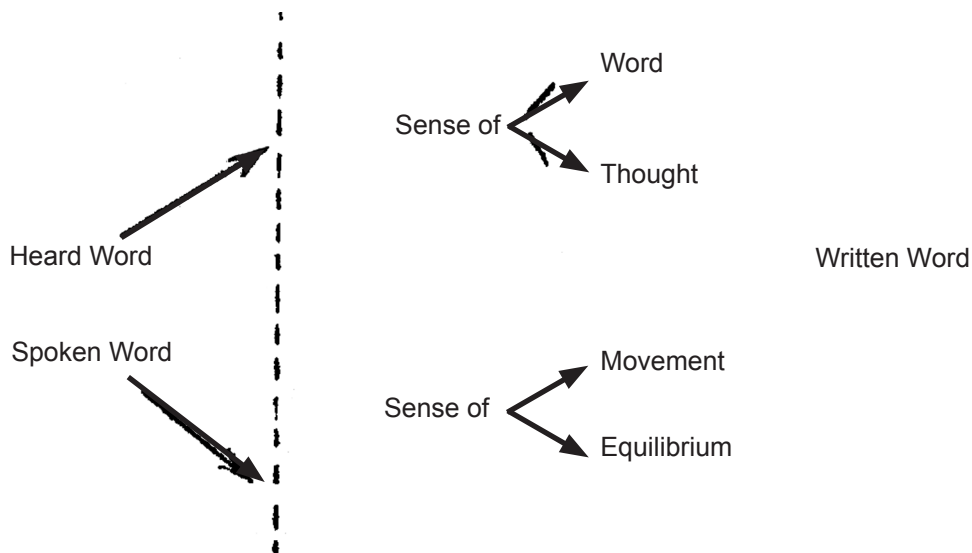


What is the threshold the child must cross to be able to read and write? As long as the child has to *copy*, the separation does not come about. The jump from copying (which is just reading) to *dictation*—this is the threshold. When the child can comprehend what she reads, then the capacity for true reading has been acquired.

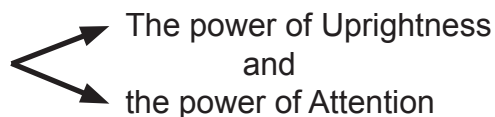
What is it that weaves not only in the soul and spirit of the child but also in the sheaths? Reading has only been acquired if there is comprehension. *Sense of word* and *sense of thought* have to connect themselves with reading, with the *sense of sight*. Previously only the *sense of hearing* was engaged.



Something has to happen via the eye which was hitherto done by the ear. It is here that many children stumble, the interplay of eye and ear is exceptionally complicated. The reins of the seven muscles of the eye are in the ear. Where our hearing is situated, we move the eye.



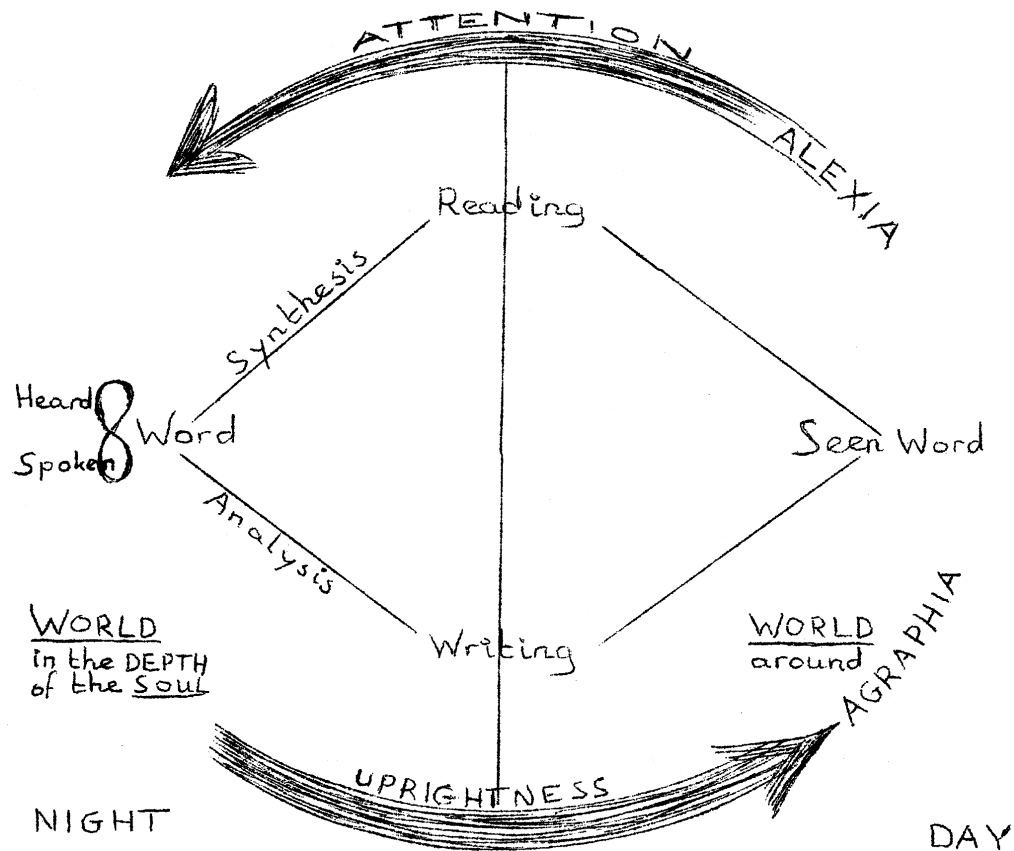
Into what do we have to insert writing in the child? Into the *senses of movement and equilibrium*. The spoken word is guided via the hand into senses of movement and equilibrium; this is a highly complicated physio-logical process. Which powers of the soul cause the two movements?





The power of *uprightness* belongs to the formative forces of the first seven years. When this is completed, the power of uprightness becomes partially free and can combine with the senses of movement and equilibrium. It can become writing (pencil, pen and quill are all upright).

The power of *attention* is a soul power which is connected with that which we call transcendence, to make images for oneself. The faculty of attention arises in the soul that becomes permeated by the Ego. The power of attention can be trained through the process of reading: Concentration > Reading > Supersensible Reading > Will Exercises > Writing > Consciousness > Writing Karma into the Earth.



Reading means to connect the *seen* word with the *heard* word. To find the bridge from day to night, that is *reading with comprehension*. In doing this we pass through the *evening*. *Writing* leads from night into day through to *morning*.



Space of hearing                      =            Darkness

Space of sight                        =            Light

### **Two Basic Forms of Disorder**

#### **Agraphia**

The child can copy but not write freely. To waken the analytical powers in the will, the power of uprightness, building the bridge, there is the trouble.

#### **Alexia**

The evening bridge is missing.

Art is needed, music in particular. Music is the bridge between day and night.



## Seminar III

### Reading

#### Synthesis

- From the day of script (*schriftbild*)
- To the night of the word (*Abend*)
- Attention

Out of these three forces the activity of reading is born.

1. Imagine the very common difficulty in reading: a child cannot yet form (make) a word out of five letters. The synthetic force is too weak. The collecting does not function. What could you do in order to strengthen this? Enliven the *fantasy*. Children who are short-sighted or small-headed or who have a convergent squint have great difficulties in this respect.
2. The second reading difficulty is *word blindness*. This is not a deficiency in synthesis, but the child does not know that what he sees, the characters in the word, are letters. He can read the word, but what is spoken and written (*das Gesagte und Geschriebene*) make no unity. The bridge from day to night is not found.  
The word remains without meaning until it is coupled with that which is heard. What is to be done? Music! The eye has to be associated to sense of word and sense of thought. You should form the words in singing (*Aus dem Singen die Worte formen*). Catch balls.
3. A third difficulty consists of a disturbance of attention. The child reads untidily, haltingly, stumbling, huddled. The movement of foot and eye are always the same in man. To Attention in reading can be achieved via speaking, *Skandieren*—finger-eye games for instance, “I spy with my little eye” (*“Ich sehe was, was du nicht siehst?”*).
4. For reading difficulty in the case of Laterality, use only the upper half.

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(What lies above the line is pertinent to reading difficulties, below to writing ones.)



## Writing

- Analysis
- Bridge night and day
- Uprightness

1. Strengthen the child's sense of concept (*Vorstellung stärken*). Let him make approximations of distances (*Distanzen schätzen*).
2. For large-headed children, sing songs, throw balls, aiming and hitting activities.
3. Rod exercises, walking, balancing, throwing and catching.