

CHAPTER 4

New perspectives on infant education:
The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

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4.1 Introductory remarks

Many centuries elapsed before the child's "being different", his uniqueness as a child and not as a small grown-up, was accepted, and before provision was really made for this difference in educational theory and educative practice. In the classical cultures, citizenship, and not the child himself, was the deciding factor which directed all discussions on the education of the child. From the Middle Ages until the sixteenth century there were other considerations, such as for instance freedom of religion, to which everything else was subordinate, including the theories about and education of the infant in particular. This led to the infant's personal happiness and potential for self-realization being undervalued and misunderstood to a greater or lesser degree.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which are the eras under discussion in this chapter, may be seen as the period during which the foundations were laid for the "discovery" of the child as a unique being with a right to happiness and the realization of his potential, abilities and expectations. This new insight into the child also introduced a new era of concern towards infant education.

4.2 The informal education of the infant in Western Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

4.2.1 Introduction

Comenius (1592 - 1670), a pious seventeenth century scholar – of whom more will be said later – was actually the motivating force behind establishing infant education on a firm foundation. After him there were two

other scholars, Locke (1632 - 1704) and Rousseau (1712 - 1778), in particular who reaffirmed the essences of infant education emphasized by Comenius. Their interest led to a further reflection on and more clarity about this important matter.

4.2.2 *Infant education during the era of Realism (seventeenth century)*

4.2.2.1 Orientating remarks

The stream of thought which originated in approximately the year 1600 and became known as Realism, was closely related to and a continuation of Renaissance-humanism and the Protestant Church Reformation. But there was to be a shift in emphasis: the Renaissance-humanism emphasized the literary and aesthetic achievements of the individual; the Church Reformation strove after religious and moral goals; the Realists in their turn were chiefly concerned with the content of teaching and education, in particular, which, according to their views, had to take account of the practical and concrete realities of life. Experience (empirical research) became a substitute for Christian revelation as a source of knowledge. It is interesting to note that this emphasis on reality by the realists (cf. reality=actuality) coincided with the era of important discoveries and achievements in the natural sciences. (Galileo for instance, invented the telescope and pendulum. Newton formulated his important theory on gravity and various voyages of discovery resulted in the establishment of trade and industrial undertakings.)

An extremely interesting characteristic of Realism is that it in fact consisted of three so-called "realistic streams of thought", each of which influenced teaching and education in its own unique way:

- The *humanistic realists* believed that the realities of life could best be fathomed by studying classical opinions about them; classical knowledge was timeless knowledge which was true always and everywhere.
- The *social realists* wanted to gain insight into the realities of life by direct contact with people and social circumstances.
- The *sensory realists* were of the opinion that knowledge and truth concerning the realities of life could be gained by scientific research and sense perception. In terms of infant education this implied that perception through the senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, etc.) should be emphasized as memory activities and that action, self-activity, observation and individualization should play an important role.

It is important to note that although the Realists differed in their thoughts, they all had the same encompassing educative goal, namely the moulding and preparation of the child for responsible participation in a life with and amongst people and objects and that rational knowledge with concrete utilitarian value is more important than traditional (classical opinion) and/or revealed (religious) knowledge.

Although the types of infant schools which were discussed in the previous chapter, continued to exist during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and will not be mentioned again during this chapter, it may be assumed that the opinions of the realists would have influenced these schools. In fact, the attention to new learning content which the infants had to be introduced to, bore results in the family environment as informal education situation and was also mentioned repeatedly in the views of leaders in education. This statement should be elucidated by the discussion which is to follow now.

4.2.2.2 Home education

During the seventeenth century families in general continued to be of a patriarchal nature and nothing or indeed very little was done by legislators to release the woman from her subordinate position in marriage.

Notwithstanding the limitations imposed on the married woman and her subordinate position in the home and society, it would be erroneous to accept that she was looked down upon or that she was treated with contempt. Although the expectation of the ideal woman was that she would be a "virtuous housewife" and the most highly regarded feminine virtues were considered to be humility, modesty and meekness, her status in society in general as well as in the home was nevertheless reasonably acceptable.

As far as the views of the child are concerned: The French author P. Ariès, who had made a thorough study of iconography through the ages, strikingly indicates that prior to the seventeenth century the child was depicted as a miniature adult - his face was given the same shape and expression as that of the adult and the body of a baby boy showed the same muscular development as that of an adult man. Only during the seventeenth century was the discovery made that the child is something totally different from an adult, that there is a profound difference between infancy and adulthood, not only physically but also emotionally and intellectually. This extremely important discovery concerning the true nature of the child (as manifested, among others, in the artistic images of the times) had obvious implications for education: the spiritual abilities and needs, not only of children in general but also of the individual child, would be taken into account more and more. With this im-

proved insight into the nature of the child the realization also came that the hygiene and physical well-being of the child also needed to be promoted. Towards the eighteenth century this brought about that: "Everything to do with children and family has become a matter worthy of attention. Not only the child's future but his presence and his very existence are of concern: the child has taken a central place in the family." (Ariès 1962:133).

Keeping in mind what was revealed in the preceding paragraphs, namely that the woman occupied a fair though subordinate position in the family and that there was renewed interest in and insight into the child, it is fairly obvious that home education was highly regarded and that this education would be of a relatively high standard. A conspicuous phenomenon, however, was the important position of the governess-nurse in the family circle and the fact that she exercised virtually absolute authority, in many instances over both boys and girls.

Discipline within the home remained very strict at the start of the seventeenth century (corporal punishment was lavishly inflicted), yet there were undeniably indications that more moderate means of control were beginning to gain a foothold. Gradually a more realistic relationship between parents and children came into being.

A better understanding of the personal rights of the child was also gradually coming into being with resulting legislation to protect the child and a shift in public opinion in favour of a more reasonable and gentler approach to punishment.

The content of home education during this period may be briefly described as: the foundation of the child's future instruction was laid at home under supervision of the nurse and mother. At approximately two years of age they started teaching the child the letters of the alphabet as well as simple arithmetic; as an aid in teaching the letters they used wooden blocks on which the letters were painted; in teaching arithmetic a counting-frame or abacus was liberally used. The third part of home education consisted of inculcating the first religious concepts (the Lord's Prayer and the Catechism).

Upon completion of their initial home education the instruction of boys was often entrusted to a tutor in the home, while girls also received instruction at home with their future role as housewife and mother in mind.

4.2.2.3 The views of Comenius (1592 - 1670) on infant education

John Amos Comenius, as the most important representative of (sensory) realism, succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation between the new approaches of the times and the traditional religious views of the Middle

Ages and the Reformation. He was one of the very first educators to study the way in which a child, also the infant, acquires knowledge.

In his mammoth work, *Didacta Magna* (The big doctrine of education) the education of infants was also discussed. The following are important pedagogic aspects, particularly significant for the education of infants, which are emphasized in the *Didacta Magna*:

- Man, who was created in the image of God, must be educated during his earthly existence to have *knowledge, virtue* and *piety* in preparation for life everlasting. To Comenius knowledge implied an all-encompassing knowledge (understanding) of God, nature and the arts.
- Man is inherently good and does not have an evil and sinful nature. Education must for this reason be a positive learning experience which includes freedom, happiness and pleasure.
- Education should take the child's nature into consideration, that is, every stage of education should be properly graded according to the child's age, talents, capabilities, prior knowledge and stage of development.
- The educative aim had to be realized through the development of the intellect and the moulding of a moral conscience by means of religious teaching.
- Every child, rich or poor, boy or girl, is entitled to education.
- Pupils should not merely *listen*, they should also be *doing* things, thus self-activity should be strongly emphasized at all times.
- It should constantly be kept in mind that sensory perception is the basis of all knowledge; all learning material should therefore be presented graphically.
- Education should always be coupled with firm yet restrained discipline.
- Education should be started at the earliest possible age for the following reasons:
 - because we do not know when the child's preparatory earthly existence may come to an end;
 - owing to the limited time available in which to master a vast amount of knowledge;
 - because it is characteristic of every living entity that it is flexible and may be easily moulded when it is still young but not when it is old;
 - because childhood, as a gift of God, is a time suited only to education and nothing else;
 - because the influence of early impressions is permanent;
 - because the human intellect and mind needs to be active and when

it is not occupied with some meaningful activity, man will occupy himself with trivial and even harmful matters.

- The lifetime of the child as well as his school lifetime should be subdivided as follows:
 - From birth to 6 years of age the infant should be educated at home in the *mother school*. (Every home represents a mother school and education occurs by means of habituation.)
 - From 7-12 years of age the child should attend a *mother tongue (vernacular)* or national school. (In every community or town there has to be a vernacular school and practising the imagination and memory is important.)
 - From 13-18 years of age adolescents should receive instruction in *Latin schools* or gymnasiums (of which there should be one in every city and where the moulding of rational understanding is of importance).
 - The 19-24 year old youth should attend a *university* (which may be found in each country or province and where the moulding of the will is an important matter) and he should also travel.

Another very important work of Comenius, *The school of infancy* was the first work in the history of education which described the education of the infant and is thus of particular interest. The purpose of this book was to explain to mothers (as he attached particular importance to home (family) education) how they ought to conduct the early education of their child(ren) to the glory of God and the salvation of the child.

The content of this work may be summarized briefly as follows:

- (1) The first education and instruction is of utmost importance. It is easier to prevent evil than to eradicate it – once evil has taken a foothold it is in fact impossible ever to uproot it again completely. If the initial education is properly conducted, the child will remain on the right track: as is the source, so will be all that follows.
- (2) Children, being God's most precious gift and man's most valuable treasure, must receive our continual vigilance and complete love and care.
- (3) The child, the most noble of all God's creations, must be educated in a manner which will enable him to approach as closely as possible the excellence of God whose image he bears.
- (4) The first care in home education should be for the immortal soul, the most important component of man; only after this should attention be given to the body in order to ensure that it should be a suitable dwelling place for the soul.

- (5) There are two kinds of wisdom which man should strive for and in which the child should be instructed: firstly true and clear knowledge of God and all His works; and secondly, the ability at all times to behave properly so that his deeds in terms of this life and the life hereafter will bear witness to this ability.
- (6) In accordance with Deuteronomy 6:7 parents should utilize every possible opportunity to inculcate the necessary knowledge, wisdom and belief in their children.
- (7) Parents should instruct their children on four aspects: the first is *religion and piety*, then *good morals and virtue*, followed by *languages and arts* and, finally, *caring for their bodies*. Comenius was convinced that the infant in his education should be introduced informally to the seeds of *all* knowledge, including those elementary concepts which constitute the source of all philosophical thought and scientific research. In this connection he stated:

Whoever has within his house youth proficient in these . . . matters possesses a garden in which celestial plantlets are sown, watered, bloom and flourish. (Comenius 1956:66)

(Here we thus find the first reference to a *kindergarten* which was later brought into being by Pestalozzi and Fröbel. Cf. chapter 5, par. 5.2.4.2).

Belief and piety consist of three things: respect and veneration for God, seeking His countenance in everything we do, say or think; continuously imitating God in love and obedience; continuous communication and unification with God through which we may achieve true peace, consolation and happiness. It is possible to imprint these basic principles of true piety so thoroughly in the first six years of the child's life that he will know there is a God who, because he is omnipresent, is always with us. God provides those who obey Him with food, clothing and all necessities, but for those who are obstinate and immoral the punishment is death. God should thus be feared, He should be called upon and loved as a Father, and all His commands must be complied with. Finally: if our actions are good and just, He will take us to His eternal glory. Parental instruction in *morality and virtue* includes the following:

- *moderation*: the child should learn to eat and drink within the limits of his natural needs; gluttony and over-eating must be avoided;
- *neatness and decency*: the child has to be accustomed to decency in his eating habits and way of dress, as well as in caring for his body;

- *respect*: children have to learn to heed their deeds and conversations out of respect for their elders; they have to learn from a very early age to be polite to older people;
- *to be accommodating*: the child has to learn to react promptly on commands of his elders;
- *honesty*: it is of the utmost importance that the child must become accustomed, like Christ, always to tell the truth, both when being serious or frivolous;
- *justness*: the child must be taught never to claim another person's property for himself or to do his fellow-man an injustice in any other way;
- *kindness*: the child should strive to please others and he must be directed away from jealousy and greed;
- *industriousness*: getting used to regular work will remove any tendency towards indolence;
- *decency*: the child should not only learn to speak but also to remain silent during prayers and when others are speaking;
- *patience*: the child should be taught from his earliest years to be patient to prevent him from expecting immediate gratification of his desires; and
- *seriousness*: to prevent rudeness and flippancy there should be emphasis on the seriousness of behaviour in order that everything can be done in modesty and affability.

Sound instruction in *languages and the arts* includes the ability to know, to do and to say certain things:

- *The following should be known*: During the first six years of his life the child must gradually get to know natural phenomena: the words for fire, air, water and earth; rain and snow; the plant and animal kingdoms and the human body. *Sight*: it is sufficient for the child to know what light and dark are and to be able to distinguish between the most well-known colours. *Astronomy*: the child should be able to differentiate between the sun, moon and the stars. *Geography*: he should know whether his place of birth is a settlement, a town or a city and also what a field, a mountain, a forest or a river are. The child's first introduction to *chronology* should be to know an hour, a day, a week, a month and a year as well as what the seasons constitute. The origin of *history* is based on remembering what happened yesterday, recently or a year ago. In terms of *household matters* the child will easily learn to distinguish who belongs to the family circle. Concerning political science they should know that there are a premier, ministers, legislators and a parliament.

- *The following has to be done:* In terms of *dialectics* the child should be aware of what a question and an answer are and should be able to respond to a question. *Arithmetic:* the child should understand concepts such as much and little, he should be able to count to twenty or more and have insight into the very simplest of calculations. *Geometry:* understanding of such concepts as large and small, long and short, broad and narrow, thick and thin as well as certain simple measurements of length, breadth and height. *Music:* the child should be able to sing hymns and psalms. Thus far the *heart and tongue*. As far as practice of the *heart and hand* are concerned the child must learn to cut, to split, to carve, to scatter, to arrange, to fasten, to loosen, to roll and unroll.
- *The following must be verbalized:* Proficiency in language is acquired by a study of grammar, rhetoric and poetry. The grammar during the first six years consists of the child's being taught to express himself so that he will be understood; childlike rhetoric consists of the repetition of and understanding figures of speech; the first principles of poetry consist of learning certain verses or rhymes off by heart.

In respect of *physical care* the following must be kept in mind by parents: a sound mind lives in a sound body; the pregnant mother should watch very diligently over the state of her mind and body; the mother must breast-feed her own child; the growing child must receive the correct nourishment and medication must be kept to a minimum; the body must always be protected against injury; sufficient exercise will ensure that the child eats and sleeps well; the child should play as much as possible and above all joy must form part of his daily life.

- (8) In their implementation of the above instruction parents should always keep in mind that there can be no fixed pattern in education as children do not all progress at the same cognitive and conceptual speed.
- (9) The senses should be widely employed in all instruction at home, as well as the child's urge to do things by and for himself as also his desire to imitate and for spontaneous games, in other words:
 whatever children delight to play with, provided it be not hurtful, they ought rather to be gratified than restrained from it, for inactivity is more injurious both to mind and body than anything in which they can be occupied. (*Ibid.* :92)
- (10) Before the child proceeds from home to school instruction, he should be prepared for the transition with great care.

The above discussion clearly indicates that Comenius, owing to his particular insight into the nature and expectations of infants advocated the "liberation of the child" from the image of miniature-adulthood into which he had been cast. The years of infancy were according to Comenius an irreplaceable and indispensable part of the child's progression to adulthood. In his *Didacta Magna* (1923:59) he presented the following argument concerning childhood:

In order that man may be fashioned to humanity, God has granted him the years of youth, which are unsuitable for everything but education . . . We can only suppose, therefore, that the Creator, of deliberate intent, interposed the delay of youth, in order that our period of training might be longer, and ordained that for some time we should take no part in the action of life, that, for the rest of our lives, and for eternity, we might be more fitted to do so.

Although many of the opinions expressed concerning education and infant education in particular were certainly of a prophetic nature, his educative thoughts have only now during the twentieth century received the appreciation and respect they deserve. Spielman (quoted *in*: Misawa 1909:30) goes as far as saying in this connection that:

If all the pedagogical writings of all ages had been lost and the great didactic alone remained it would have sufficed as a basis for the later generation to build the science of education anew.

The following didactic pedagogical principles of importance to infant education were set out in the works of Comenius:

- Knowledge is acquired through sensory perception and for this reason visual education is important.
- Individual differences between children should be taken into account.
- Education and teaching should accord with the level of progression of the child. At a certain age the child is not yet ready to master specific skills/tasks. Progression should be from the known to the unknown.
- A child learns through imitation and games as forms of spontaneous self-activity.
- Discipline should be in moderation yet firm.
- The example of the adult's (parent's) moral and ethical behaviour is extremely important.

Locke and Rousseau, during the era of Enlightenment, expanded on the foundations laid by Comenius.

4.2.3 Infant education during the era of Enlightenment (eighteenth century)

4.2.3.1 Orientating remarks

Although the eighteenth century is known as the Age of Enlightenment (in terms of the "light" provided by the human mind or reason), this period was also characterized by the exploitation and suppression of the less privileged masses, a low standard of living and perilous living conditions, a high death rate resulting from wars, diseases and famine and the abuse of child labour in total disregard of the child's right to be a child. The latter was one of the many repugnant social evils of the Industrial Revolution (\pm 1700 - 1850).

Two streams of thought, in particular, which were of importance for further developments in infant education came into being, namely *Rationalism*, with Locke (1632 - 1704) as its representative, and *Naturalism*, represented by Rousseau (1712 - 1778).

In opposition to the realists who considered experience to be the chief source of knowledge, the *Rationalists* emphasized human reason (*ratio*). Experience was seen as merely activating and moulding the intellect (which was considered the most important). The Rationalists did *not* deny the existence of God, but tried to explain it rationally (an approach known as deism). The human intellect, which was considered capable of everything, provided that it was correctly moulded by education, was absolutized.

The *Naturalists* believed that man was inherently unspoilt and naturally good and that the pollution of the goodness of human nature was brought about by the spoilt and corrupt society and its dreadful social conditions and malpractices. The adherents of Naturalism also revolted against the overdose of intellectual education and their motto was: Back to nature! Man's life-style and behaviour, morality, religion, education, acquisition of knowledge and thought should depend on the directives of nature so that human coexistence might once again become natural and thus inviolate and just. This philosophy of life resulted in the child's progression being able to proceed unhindered at a natural pace, in accordance with his nature, aptitude, potential and inclinations.

The educative goal of the Naturalists was the preservation of the natural goodness and virtue of the child and, through this, the creation of a new social order in which the principles of simplicity, liberty, equality and fraternity (the battle cry of the French Revolution, 1789 - 1795) were to be realized.

4.2.3.2 Home education

The Industrial Revolution, as well as the urbanization which it brought about, and the social changes (for better or for worse) which followed, also caused dramatic changes in the education and teaching of the young child and in the home as educative institution. The Industrial Revolution deprived many previously self-supporting rural labourers and farmers of their livelihood. These disillusioned and impoverished rural inhabitants had to turn to the many factories which were accelerating the production of goods in the cities. In this process of urbanization women and children were also utilized as cheap labour in the factories. Working conditions, particularly of children, were indescribably harsh. Many children of under ten years of age were crippled and ailing as a result of the long hours they laboured under appalling conditions. They were undernourished, ventilation in the factories was poor, not to mention the meagre sanitary facilities.

This state of affairs seriously disrupted family ties, family relationships and in particular the educative function of the family. The poorer families were particularly prone to serious disruption. The long hours that parents spent working away from home resulted in the children who were not themselves working in factories, being left at home and neglected: they grew up in vast numbers on the streets and were exposed to any number of dangers and bad influences. A description typical of these conditions is to be found in *Political and social history of modern Europe* (1916) by Hayes:

The once independent and home-loving yeoman lost home and independence . . . worst of all, the employment of women and children seemed to have the most terrible results. The basis of factory women, weak and without proper care, died in alarming numbers. The children, breathing the close air of the mill, were pale and sickly and developed into stunted and deformed men and women . . .

(Quoted in Forest 1927:42)

The fate of the eighteenth century child and the inability of his parents to temper this fate by means of a proper, secure home education, forced the Philanthropic movement (more about this movement in the following chapter) also to extend its social upliftment activities to the education of infants. Plans were made, theories formulated and charity schools and care centres were founded to support or even take over the protective and educative functions of the family.

Under these circumstances Locke (a rationalist) and Rousseau (a naturalist) introduced their ideas on informal education for infants.

4.2.3.3 The views of Locke and Rousseau on infant education

(a) *John Locke (1632 - 1704)*

The English philosopher, John Locke, received a strict Puritanical education and was trained in theology and medicine. As embodiment of the transition between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries he was one of the more prominent precursors and representatives of Rationalism. In his important philosophical work *An essay concerning human understanding* (1689) he investigated the limitations and possibilities of the human spirit. His theory of knowledge is based on the findings of this research.

He attributed a dominant role to reason in education and considered all of life to be under its control. Even God was to be "understood" through reasoning. He did not, however, emphasize reason as a goal in itself, but as a means to a goal, namely the moral well-being of the individual.

In the work mentioned above, Locke also rejected the established opinion (which had been in existence since the time of Plato) that knowledge was innate (i.e. that it was subconsciously inherent in man). Locke maintained that the mind at birth was a *tabula rasa*, an unwritten page, a clean sheet. (This theory was not original – Aristotle had already propounded it.) He also argued that sensory perception (or external observation) fills the mind with impressions which can subsequently be transformed into knowledge through reflection or thought (internal observation) which includes synthesis, analysis and comparison. This implies that sensory perceptions are found in the world by means of direct observation and are then transformed into ideas by means of reflection.

Another important implication of Locke's *tabula rasa* theory is that if the mind did not house inherent ideas, then the theory that man is inherently corrupt (original sin) would also become invalid. He thus postulated that the child's education will determine whether he will be good or evil.

Yet another implication of this theory is that the child differs radically from the adult in respect of his intellectual abilities: the child still has to increase his knowledge gradually and systematically develop his capability for abstract thought, while the adult has already "internalized" this knowledge and abstract thought.

The educative occurrence, according to Locke, was founded on habituation. Habituation fulfilled an important role in moral education (character formation) and in the development of self-discipline. This is why he placed such great stock by the early education of infants – espe-

cially home education within the family circle – because first impressions during early infancy had far-reaching and lasting effects on man.

In his well-known pedagogical work *Some thoughts concerning education* (1693) Locke with great circumspection spelled out the responsibilities of the family concerning infant education and also expressed important opinions on, amongst others, the nature of the child, games, the parent-child relationship and the qualities which should be promoted in the child.

Locke's views on home education may be summarized as follows:

- Bringing up children is the domain and responsibility of parents (in particular the mother) and not of nurses and servants. Employing nurses and servants results in the undermining of parental authority and it is also possible that it may bring the child into contact with smutty talk and unsavoury experiences which might be highly detrimental to the child's receptive mind.
- The exemplification within the family environment of proper moral values and habits (for instance, avoiding violence, vanity, dishonesty and excesses), is of utmost importance. It is imperative "to set before their eyes the examples of those things you would have them do, or avoid, which, when they are pointed out to them, in the practice of persons within their knowledge, with some reflections on their beauty and unbecomingness, are of the utmost force to draw or deter their imitation, than any discourses which can be made to them" (Locke 1913: par. 82).
- Initially, during the first years of the child's life, the parent-child relationship demands authoritarian behaviour from the parent, in order that children may learn to see their parents "as their lords, their absolute governors, and as such stand in awe of them" (*Ibid.* par. 41). When the child is older, has developed his reason and his good behaviour justifies it, the emphasis may shift towards indulgence and confidential conversations on topics which the child is able to grasp, in order that the parent-child relationship may eventually become a relationship of friendship and trust.
- Punishment and discipline are essential in education but punishment should not be too harsh (e.g. corporal punishment and enslaving punishment) as this is injurious to the child mind because: "if the mind be curbed and humbled too much in children; if their spirits be abased and broken much, by too strict an hand over them, they lose all their vigour and industry, and are in a worse state than the former." (*Ibid.* par. 46). Excessive reward is also undesirable and it is therefore essential that a fine balance should be maintained between fear (punishment) and hope (reward).

- A child is inconsiderate, forgetful and inconsistent and daydreaming is characteristic of his nature. The adult (parent) should thus be lenient towards the child's faults because: "if every slip of this kind produces anger and ranting, the occasions of rebuke and corrections will return so often, that the tutor will be a constant terror and uneasiness to his pupils." (*Ibid.* par. 167). By praise and appreciation, good example and explanatory conversations which take into consideration the level of understanding of the child, much which is positive may be achieved.
- The child's inherent inquisitiveness should be utilized. The urge to know is one of nature's instruments which assists in elevating the child's inborn state of ignorance. The fact that the child is inquisitive may be utilized by:
 - answering all his questions and explaining matters which are of interest to him "so as to make them as much intelligible to him as suits the capacity of his age and knowledge" (*Ibid.* par. 118);
 - praising him in the presence of others;
 - never giving misleading or evasive answers to his questions;
 - deliberately confronting him with new and strange things and affording him an opportunity to investigate such matters.
- A love of free, spontaneous activity, the desire to be reative and an inclination towards being shy and having a sense of honour are natural inclinations of the child which motivate his behaviour.
- Playing games is one of the most important aids in instruction and learning as the child's interest are central to the teaching situation. Parents should study the child at play in order to determine his interests and particular abilities and habits. The educative and teaching activities may be planned, directed or changed accordingly, because "were matters ordered right, learning anything they should be taught might be made as a recreation to their play, as their play is to their learning" (*Ibid.* par. 74). Instruction and play thus supplement each other and the one alternates with the other.
- Toys are essential prerequisites for playing and here the following rules should be adhered to:
 - Children should have a variety of toys which should always remain in the care of the parents (educators).
 - Care should be taken not to give in to the child's insatiable desire to buy more toys because too many toys will stifle the development of his imagination.
 - The child's natural need for self-activity should find expression in

making his own toys and the adults should encourage and assist him in this respect.

- A child should be allowed to play with only one toy at a time.
 - Free play is very important, but the adult must direct the child's play in such a way that it may be associated with the moulding of good and useful habits.
-
- The physical development of the infant should receive adequate attention and care should be taken that his clothing is suitable, nourishment is simple, that he has lots of fresh air, sufficient sleep and physical activity. A sound body (according to Locke) is a prerequisite for the formation of character and intellect (a sound mind).
 - Moulding of morals or character is more important than intellectual development. Intellectual moulding is achieved through the self-activity of the child and the orderly and regular practising of "intellectual" learning content. Moral moulding, however, occurs by means of habituation and not really by memorizing rules and regulations.
 - Although children differ from adults, they are human beings and it is thus proper that parents should treat their children with the necessary respect and that they support and guide them in order that their latent abilities might be fully realized.

After this cursory discussion of the many beautiful and important matters raised by Locke concerning informal home education of infants, his educative aim may now be formulated. This important facet of his theory on education is mentioned last as it reflects the attitudes of those times, which are no longer generally subscribed to. This does not, however, negate his numerous opinions which can still have a claim to validity today.

Locke's educative goal, the achievement of *virtue* (i.e. good character, fear of God, love of truth and goodwill towards others), *wisdom* (i.e. intelligent, sound judgement and insight), *refinement* (i.e. good manners) and *knowledge*, was directed at the education of the perfect "gentleman", thus the privileged child of the aristocracy and not at the less privileged children of the population. He maintained that a properly educated aristocracy could soon bring the "rest" into line. This one-sided preoccupation with the aristocracy in his thoughts on education meant that, although he firmly emphasized the value of family education, he did not really consider it important for the children of the working classes. His recommendation was that children from the working class environment should, from as early as their third year, attend trade schools (for instance knitting and spinning schools) in order to develop their labour capacity to its full extent from an early age. In these schools they would

be given accommodation and be trained to live simple and hardworking lives, their health and moral moulding would be ensured and they would receive their daily bread (and warm soup in winter). On Sundays they would have to attend church services under supervision. These children did not need anything more than a knowledge of the Bible and the skills of their trades and this so-called "education" would enable them as future adults to make a useful contribution to society.

This new vision of Locke's concerning infant education remained of chiefly philosophical interest in England. His opinions did reach France however where they had a profound effect on Rousseau in particular.

(b) *Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778)*

For the controversial Frenchman, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the education of the young child was a matter very dear to the heart. Many scholars rejected his opinions as his contentious private life was diametrically opposed to the preachings of his books. As a father he was incorrigible – he sent all of his five children to an orphanage; as a teacher he revealed his inability when he was found incapable of instructing infants for a full year (this was also the sum of his teaching experience!). Rousseau was, nevertheless, aware of his own limitations when he wrote: "I have had enough experience of the task to convince myself of my own unfitness, and my circumstances would make it impossible even if my talents were such as to fit me for it." (Rousseau 1925:18). It is, however, his writings and not his private life which are worthy of the attention of the pedagogician. His works also had a tremendous influence on the thoughts on education of the following centuries and they compelled serious contemplation by pedagogicians and all those who are concerned with the well-being of the child.

In France, like the rest of Europe, there were many contrasts in society: the glittering beauty of the French court, the poverty and defencelessness of the ordinary citizen and the religious persecution of the Protestants made Rousseau aware of how artificial, unnatural, unjust and morally decadent the world in which he lived really was. His writings on education *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (Julie or the new Héloïse) and *Émile ou de l'éducation* (Émile or education) which appeared respectively in 1761 and 1762, contained his propositions in respect of social reform by means of a carefully planned system of education.

Rousseau also believed that man (the child) was inherently good. In the introduction to *Émile* he stated that this natural goodness of the child becomes spoilt as a result of the corruption in society. Evil, according to Rousseau does thus not reside in man himself but in his surrounding life-world. Urban areas in particular were rejected by him as corrupt and degenerate while he praised the natural rural environment. Only in

this latter environment, he contended, can man be formed naturally according to the laws of nature without being affected by any of the injurious influences of society. His motto was thus: Follow nature in all things!

Rousseau was one of the first pedagogicians of his time who fully understood the essence of childhood, who realized that the child was not merely an imperfect miniature adult but a small human being in his own right.

In this respect he contended: "Nature would have them children before they are men. If we try to invert this order we shall produce a forced fruit immature and flavourless, fruit which will be rotten before it is ripe; we shall have young doctors and old children." (*Ibid.*:54). Rousseau was thus opposed to the education of his time through which the child was deprived of his being a child as he was expected to behave and achieve like an adult. In order to illustrate the child's need for assistance and support, he asked adults the following pertinent question:

Is there a creature in the world more helpless and more wretched, more at the mercy of its surroundings, more needing pity, love, and protection than the child?

(Rousseau 1962: 'Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse',
Part V, Letter 3, p.57)

Upon which he expects the insight that

childhood has its own ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling; nothing is more foolish than to try and substitute our ways (for theirs).

(Rousseau 1925:54)

An important truth which Rousseau emphasized repeatedly, is the fact that every child is a particular, unique human being with a unique disposition (temperament). The child's unique disposition must be moulded, not altered: "It is not a question of changing or restraining this temperament, but of giving it a form and bringing it to perfection . . . as far as it can go, and to cultivate it and keep it from degenerating; for only in this way can a man become all that he is capable of being, and the work of nature be made perfect by education." (Rousseau 1962: 'Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse' Part V, Letter 3, pp. 49 & 53). Every child's disposition and inherent abilities must be studied and he must be educated accordingly. In this connection Rousseau made the following plea: "Oh, wise man, take time to observe nature; watch your scholar well before you say a word to him; first leave the germ of his character free to show itself, do not constrain him in anything, the better to see him as he really is." (Rousseau 1925:58).

By means of his principle of "back to nature" Rousseau wanted to release man (and in particular the child) from the oppression of the intellectual overload and return him to what is natural and simple. Rousseau believed that naturalness and simplicity were to be found only in nature. It was thus essential that the child should always remain in contact with nature; nature should in fact be his educative environment (and educator). The child's contact with *nature*, *people* and *things* must always cause a feeling of happiness and satisfaction and should also encourage and promote the childlike qualities of happiness, spontaneity, inquisitiveness and interest.

Rousseau distinguished specific phases of development in the child's life which had to be taken into account in the child's education. The first phase, 0-2 years (hygienic physical care is of primary importance); the second phase, 2-12 years (physical and sensory practice is essential); the third phase, 12-15 years (intellectual education takes place); and the fourth phase, 15-20 years (it is now the phase for moral-religious education).

During the first two developmental phases (0-2 years and part of the 2-12 year period) the parents should fulfil the role of educators. Rousseau remarked as follows concerning the role of the mother in the education of her children:

The earliest education is most important and it undoubtedly is woman's world . . . for not only is their influence always predominant in education, its success concerns them more nearly, for most widows are at the mercy of their children, who show them very plainly whether their education was good or bad.

(Rousseau 1925:5).

The loving care of a mother fills the home with affection and "the noisy play of children . . . becomes a delight; mother and father rely more on each other and grow dearer to one another; the marriage tie is strengthened." (Rousseau 1925:13). In a secure atmosphere such as this children will be able to progress and grow up happily.

The task of the father was not completed with the procreation of his children. He had to help to educate his children to become worthy human beings and citizens. If he could not face up to this task he should not have children because he was not worthy of being a father. As Rousseau expressed it: "A father has no right to be a father if he cannot fulfil a father's duties . . . which is to support and educate his own children." (Rousseau 1925:17). A father's concern for amassing material wealth should never become an excuse for his neglecting his duty towards the education of his children.

In respect of the parent's combined responsibility for the education of their children, he arrived at the following conclusion:

It is only a father who can give a father's care, and only a mother who can give a mother's care . . . I am convinced that everything depends on them.

(Rousseau 1962: 'Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse,'
Part V, Letter 3, p. 77)

In the first two volumes of *Émile*, Rousseau gave a complete exposition of the progression of the education of the infant. In the *first volume* which deals with the care and education of the child from birth to the age of two years, he highlights the following important aspects:

- It is the mother's duty to breast-feed her own child.
- Vegetarian foodstuffs are more suitable for the growing child than foodstuffs derived from animals.
- To accustom the child to that which is new, strange and even fear-provoking, he should be allowed from an early age to observe ugly and even revolting animals and repulsive masks; he should also be exposed to the loudest bangs and noises.
- Even more important than habituation, however, are the needs which arise from natural urges: the child must sleep when he is drowsy and eat when he is hungry; he must be allowed to touch everything, to handle, use and become familiar with objects so that he will learn: whether they are hot, cold, hard, soft, or fragile, their weight, size, form and any other possible visible or audible characteristic.
- The crying of the child as a means of expressing himself and communicating, should be carefully noted: in the first place it serves to express dissatisfaction and helplessness, and in the second place to make contact with other people. Crying can, however, very readily degenerate into a form of tyranny; initially it is a request which later becomes a command.

The *second volume* (the phase of life from two to twelve years of age) deals first of all with the phase of infancy and thereafter with the school phase. During these years the child is expected to develop by way of natural education and by means of his sensory perception towards the phase of intellectual insight which starts at the age of twelve. The sense of *touch* must be developed by letting the child search for something (eg. a box of sweets) while blindfolded and in the dark; the sense of *sight* by estimating distances and by drawing objects in nature; the sense of *hearing* by comparing sounds and listening to singing voices; the sense of *smell* by investigating aromatic foods; the sense of *taste* by eating only natural foodstuffs (eg. fine bread but not meat). This phase is also a period of inurement for the child; he has to learn to bear suffering and should also not be protected against dangers, injuries and pain; he has to

learn to walk without the assistance of other people or devices, not in a stuffy room but in a meadow, and he must be permitted to fall, and bump, cut, prick or stab himself. Quite rightly Rousseau contends that the earliest years should be a time of happiness and joy (and not as it was then, according to him, a time of beatings, castigation, threats and bondage!) and he admonishes educators: People, be human! Love the childlike! Do not begrudge the children their games, their pleasure, their lovable natures! Finally Rousseau stipulated the following set of rules in respect of the education of the infant: do not force the child to sit still, allow him to jump and dart about, clamber and shout as much as he wants to; to prevent spoiling the child, needs (and not wishes) must be satisfied; do not continually give orders and do not forbid anything – care must only be taken that the environment does not have a detrimental influence; duties and obligations (which the child is not aware of as such) should not be imposed; no moral lessons should be given and there is to be no reasoning with the child; only natural punishment is to be permitted; to be able to educate someone (a child) the educator himself first needs to be fully human. These rules were designed "to give children more real liberty and less power, to let them do more for themselves and demand less of others; so that by teaching them from the first to confine their wishes within the limits of their power they will scarcely feel the want of whatever is not in their power." (Rousseau 1925:35).

Rousseau referred to this approach to education, in which moral and intellectual moulding is pushed to the background for the sake of physical freedom and sensory experiences, as "negative education": "It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error" and through this eventually "the eyes of his understanding would be opened to reason (forming of character and intellect) as soon as you begin to teach him." (Rousseau 1925:57). Through negative education the child is, however, protected against adult society which Rousseau considered to be corrupt. The isolation of the child from society nevertheless seriously disadvantaged his socialization.

4.3 Pedagogical contributions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to infant education now and in the future

Pedagogical reflection during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represented a reconsideration and refining of earlier insights as well as an original contribution. As such it brought about new understanding of the child and his informal education. The most significant contributions in this respect are the following:

- *Recognition of childhood as unique and different:* Children are not miniature adults whose lives only have meaning because they will some day become adult. Children are also not "evil creatures" but human beings with particular abilities, expectations and interests which should be taken into account very carefully in the educative occurrence.
- *Recognition of every child's uniqueness and his being different:* Through diligent observation and study the uniqueness and individuality of every child can be discovered. By being aware of these qualities it is possible to plan the educative event to make it possible to realize the happiness and particular talents of every child. In this way every individual will eventually be capable of taking his rightful place in the community as a responsible adult.
- *Recognition of the importance of experience for constituting the world:* The infant experiences reality and gains knowledge mainly through sensory perception. By means of his senses he acquires direct experience and knowledge of the surrounding concrete reality. In the educative occurrence this principle must be kept in mind. Assist the child to use his senses to enable him to learn how to constitute/create/conquer his world in a visual and self-active manner.
- *Recognition of the importance of the family as informal educative sphere:* From the safety and security of his parents' protective love the infant will initially venture forth into the as yet strange adult world. The loving care, the good example and supportive authority and guidance of the parents, are essential prerequisites for a safe and secure educative space within which the infant can, in an informal manner, become familiar with his surrounding reality.

By emphasizing the above principles the way was paved for progress in the sphere of informal infant teaching and education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Taking these principles into consideration is also a self-evident precondition for any present or future reflection on and planning of infant teaching and education.

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CHAPTER 5

The development of infant education during
the nineteenth century

Elsa G. Kruger

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5.1 **Introductory remarks**

In the previous chapter the new direction in education, pioneered by Locke and Rousseau, in which the child was seen as the pivotal point of education, was discussed. This chapter will present an exemplary overview of how this pedocentric approach influenced the formal and the informal education of the pre-school child in France, Switzerland, Germany, Britain and the United States of America. It will also be shown how the introduction of efficient infant schools supplemented, and in some instances even took over, the informal educative function of the home. In this discussion there will naturally also be references to the most important pioneers in respect of infant education in these specific countries.

5.2 **Infant education during the nineteenth century**

5.2.1 *Introduction*

A variety of factors contributed to the unprecedented progress in the field of teaching and education in the nineteenth century:

- The political revolutions in America (1775-1782) and France (1789-1804) were characteristic of the democratic disposition which was taking root in the Western world and which would eventually also affect teaching and education. The recognition of the rights and privileges of both the woman and the child of necessity culminated in change.
- The French Revolution, with its call for liberty, equality and fraternity, contributed significantly to the establishment of the opinion that

teaching and education were the right and privilege of every individual.

- Rousseau's emphasis on education being a natural process of growth (an internally experienced growth) as well as his conviction that the child was a unique being with particular dimensions and which should have the right to be himself, was responsible for changing the view that education was an external formative occurrence to the new idea that education was the development of every person's nature and abilities.
- The Industrial Revolution (which originated in Britain in ± 1750 and slightly later in Europe and the USA) also made an indirect contribution to the "emancipation" and "discovery" of the child. The dreadful social conditions, which were one of the direct results of the Industrial Revolution, focused attention on the plight of the small child who, as an exploited labourer, was caught up in these circumstances. Through philanthropic and state intervention the child was legally "banned" from the adult labour field and school attendance became compulsory. The material well-being which eventually flowed from the Industrial Revolution, also made it possible to create a better and more efficient informal life and learning space for the child within and outside the home. The nineteenth century can rightly be typified as "the time when public bodies began to think of children as children, with special needs because of their helplessness and vulnerability, rather than as small adults with the right to hire themselves out for sixteen hours a day, or as the chattels of their parents." (Demause 1975: 428)

This brief background to the situation should place the discussion which is to follow in the right perspective.

5.2.2 Home education

The Industrial Revolution was responsible for profound changes in family life in Western countries. Instead of practising his trade at home within the family circle as he had previously done, the father often spent many hours in the unhealthy and overcrowded work environment. This of necessity diminished his influence over his children and he thus played a far lesser role in the moulding of the lives and opinions of his family.

This was also not the only effect the Industrial Revolution had on family life. Most of the new machines were so easy to control that more and more women and children were drawn into the frantic factory life. Not only was their labour just as efficient as that of the men, but they could also be hired at a much lower remuneration. This often resulted in

entire families, all the children (of which the youngest might be only four or five years old), father and mother spending the whole day in the factories and mines. The bitter fate of some of these little children was poignantly described by the English poetess, Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

'For oh', say the children, 'we are weary'
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow;
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark, under-ground –
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

(Quoted in: Raymont 1937:67)

It is certainly not difficult to understand the extremely deleterious effects of these conditions on family life. There was often no longer any question of maintaining a household with fixed hours for meals, rest and relaxation and before long alcohol abuse became prevalent. Family discipline was gradually undermined and attention to the moral and religious education of the children slowly dwindled – there was in fact not really any form of education for these factory children. The appalling social evils which had their source in these family circumstances, compelled the different state authorities, by means of factory legislation (for instance in England the *Agricultural Children Bill*, 1873 and the *Consolidation Act*, 1878) to ban the more injurious forms of child labour.

The woman who had for so long been looked upon as the servant of and dependent on the man, became a power in the labour force and the economic independence which she gradually achieved, supported her demands for better education and the right to think for herself. The "emancipation" of women in turn led to the establishment of teaching institutions specifically for women, and they were also in time permitted to sit for the examinations of more and more of the existing universities (eg. the University of Cambridge in 1865). The outcome of all these developments was that the social status of women in general and in particular their status as wives and mothers were greatly elevated.

The improvement of the woman's position went hand in hand with an ever increasing respect for the rights of the child and legislation (eg. the *Children's Charter Act*, 1889) which was intended to prevent the exploitation of children by parents who forced them to go and work in order to increase the family income. These two factors helped to bolster family life and prevent the final disruption of family unity.

The progress during the nineteenth century in respect of opportunities for education for women and the elevation of their status, as well as the protection of the child, had a beneficial influence on attitudes and home education. It is obvious that a well-educated and properly equipped mother could make an extremely valuable contribution to a close family life and the physical, morally-religious and intellectual education of her children. Home education was in any case beginning to acquire a new significance as communities were becoming more aware of the child as future parent, church member and citizen of the state. This view necessitated the establishment of more schools.

5.2.3 *Infant schools*

During the nineteenth century the private sector, church organizations and also individuals began to take heed of the lot of the preschool child. Whether it was out of humanist-Christian or socio-political considerations, they insisted that infant schools had to be established. Various reasons were given for this step, such as:

- *The neglect of the preschool child*, especially among the poor in the cities, made the establishment of infant schools essential. As urban parents had to work in factories and mines, most of the preschool children were left at home or in a room without proper care. On occasion they were left in the care of older brothers and sisters by whom they were often bullied because the older children resented the chore which was foisted on them. Sometimes use was made of unreliable and usually inexperienced nurse-girls to look after these little ones at home. The poor defenceless waifs were often exposed to harmful spiritual influences. If the children had been attending schools, this state of affairs could have been prevented.

In a publication on infant schools entitled *Einige Worte über Kleinkinderschulen* (A few words concerning infant schools) which appeared in Nüremburg, Germany, in May 1831, it was stated that infant schools would make a safe and protected life possible for "neglected" 3-7 year old children and would also protect them against the harmful influences of evil (cf. Dammann & Prüsser 1981:39). Wilderspin (1791-1866) published the work *The Infant System, for developing the intellectual and moral powers of all children, from one*

to seven years of age in London, England in 1840. He refers to the neglected children of the city and their exposure to the social evils of the time and points out the favourable influence infant schools would have on the lives of these children (cf. Forest 1927:69). In his work *Die Menschenerziehung* (The education of man) which appeared in Leipzig in 1850, Julius Fölsing (1818-1882) specifically referred to the neglect of small children due to the social conditions of the working classes. He also pointed out that the experiences of the first year's of life affect man's entire later life. He thus considered it essential that infant schools should be established, where children could be properly cared for and could develop according to their nature by playing games under the wakeful eyes of friendly educators (cf. Dammann & Prüser) 1981:43-44 and 46).

Cochin, a Frenchman, in his work *Manuel des salles d'asile* (Manual for infant schools) which appeared in Paris in 1835, described the worth of infant schools as follows:

It is to supply the needs, the instruction, the impressions, which every child should receive from the presence and example of the mother, that it is necessary to open rooms for the hospitality and education of these very young children.

(Quoted in: Forest 1927:71)

- *The inability of parents to fulfil their educative duties* also contributed to infant schools being considered in order to assist in, and being established for, the informal education of children. In this connection Cochin remarked in his Manual that he was convinced that very few mothers were sufficiently developed or had the time to educate their children in accordance with the best pedagogical principles.
- *The poor achievements of children in primary schools* were attributed, among others, to the neglect of moral and intellectual education in the family, the poor example set by parents and the poor quality of education in schools run by housewives (eg. the "matres schools" in the Netherlands, the "scuola della maestre" in Italy and the "dame schools" in England) where many small children spent their days.

The proponents of the establishment of infant schools in the nineteenth century all agreed that these schools would not only have a salutary and positive influence on the children, but also on parents who would be able to go to work not having to worry about their children, but knowing that they would be in safe hands.

The pleas for the establishment of infant schools did not go unheeded. Leading people came forward in various countries and made a deliberate effort to ensure the care of small children through the estab-

ishment of some type of infant school. This matter will be discussed more fully in the following paragraphs.

5.2.4 *Pioneers in the field of infant education in France, Switzerland and Germany, Great Britain and the USA*

5.2.4.1 Pioneers in the development of infant education in France

(a) *Jean Frédéric Oberlin (1740 - 1826) and the "école-a-tricoter" (knitting school)*

The history of schools for infant teaching and education in France can be traced to the final decades of the eighteenth century when in 1767 Oberlin, a Lutheran minister, received a call to the Valdersbach congregation in the district of Banc-de-la Roche (Steinthal) on the border of the French province of Alsace-Lorraine.

Oberlin's pedagogic attitude was influenced by the philosophical and pedagogical views of his time. He also studied the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution; he read the works of both Rousseau (cf. chapter 4, par. 4.2.3.3) and Pestalozzi (cf. chapter 5 par. 5.2.4.2) and investigated their pedagogic ideas and their practical implementation. In terms of this knowledge and his own experience he designed a particular pedagogic view which he implemented in practice.

The poverty (resulting from among others the many years of civil war), the low moral standards and child neglect in his extensive congregation (which included five villages), immediately became apparent to Oberlin upon his induction in Valdersbach. Because he was aware that man is influenced not only by his environment but also by his education, he believed that changing the members of his congregation and the eventual improvement of their circumstances could only be brought about through education (particularly of the younger generation). Oberlin was convinced that the future of his congregation was in the hands of the youth.

For this reason and also because the little ones were growing up totally devoid of supervision, during 1770 he established in his congregation, out of his own funds, a number of knitting schools (the so-called *écoles-a-tricoter*), as part of a comprehensive system of education which included infants and adults.

The schools were under the control of kind and gentle ladies known as *conductrices*. Two of the best known of these ladies were Sara Banzet and Louise Schepler. Oberlin attached particular importance to the capabilities of these *conductrices* and for this reason he and his wife per-

sonally undertook their training. They were expected to meet on a regular basis in order to exchange their experiences, compare results and discuss new ideas. In later years each *conductrice* was given an assistant whom she had to train. Above all these ladies were expected to be kind and loving with the children in order to create an effective pedagogic atmosphere in these little schools.

In a letter addressed by Oberlin to the National Convention of the First French Republic (1792-1795) he explained his goals for these infant schools. These schools (which were housed in large rooms) were for children from two or three years of age until the age of seven and were intended to supply careful instruction in the French language, the introduction to matters and phenomena in their life-world, the acquisition of useful knowledge from the plant and animal kingdoms, learning such skills as knitting, spinning and sewing (for older children) and purposive physical and moral-religious moulding. The method of instruction was aimed at informal learning through such entertaining activities as singing and games and not at formal learning situations as in ordinary schools. Discipline was such that it promoted the habit of subordination while also allowing a degree of freedom for the child's mind to develop to the full. This indicates Oberlin's particular insight into the unique nature of the child. By alternating activities, visual (by means of wood-engraved geographic maps, coloured pictures depicting the Bible stories) and excursions into nature, the little ones, through capable guidance, were taught the necessary discipline, knowledge and basic skills in preparation for their formal school years and eventually embarking upon a career. Oberlin's work in education was followed with interest during his lifetime by other countries, although he never published his pedagogic views. It is reasonably safe to assume that the Englishman, Owen (cf. par. 5.2.4.3.(a)), during his study tour of Europe, in the course of which he visited a number of educative institutions, also got to know Oberlin's knitting schools and that the design of Owen's infant school was actually based on these schools. The followers of Oberlin's pedagogic views concerning infant schools were, however, not only to be found in foreign countries. In France itself some of his countrymen were influenced by his ideas.

(b) *The Marquise de Pastoret and the "salle d'hospitalité" (crèche)*

The Marquise de Pastoret, having heard of the work done by Oberlin, and being concerned, in particular, about the thousands of neglected children and the high infant mortality in Paris, opened a *salle d'hospitalité* in 1801 to which neglected children of working mothers were admitted. This institution, which was more of a crèche (a mere care centre) than an infant school, may be seen as the precursor of the French

salle d'asile (infant school) which was to follow. The aim of Pastoret's school was purely to protect small children against the dangers of the streets and the city and there was no attempt at teaching or educating the children.

This institution had, however, not been in existence for any length of time before its original character was lost and it became an ordinary primary school. The significance of this institution lies in the fact that it led to an awareness of the needs of the neglected preschool child.

Pastoret had heard about the infant schools (cf. par. 5.2.4.3(a)) in London and once again attempted to realize her ideal. During 1825/26 she and a number of well-intentioned ladies founded a Women's Committee which interested itself in the establishment of infant schools in Paris. In 1826 the first *salle d'asile* (infant school) was opened and 24 to 80 infants between the ages of 2-6 years were admitted. They were cared for by two nuns. Unfortunately this attempt was also a failure. Only when the Women's Committee agreed to combine its efforts with those of the philanthropic lawyer, Jean-Denys Cochin, was the foundation laid for the proper establishment and development of the *salle d'asile* and later the *école maternelle* (cf. par. 5.2.4.1(e)).

(c) *Jean-Denys Cochin and the "salle d'asile" (infant school)*

The death of Cochin's wife in 1825, leaving him with two orphan children, decided him to establish a "mother school", independently of Pastoret's *salle d'asile*. Shortly after this he and the Women's Committee came together and it was agreed that he and Mme. Frédéric Millet would go to England to study the framework, organization and methods of the English infant schools. Upon their return various *salles d'asile* were opened in Paris. These privately subsidized infant schools were modelled on the English system. Through the efforts of Cochin, in 1835 the state undertook to take over the subsidizing of these infant schools. By 1837 there were already 261 such schools, attended by 29 214 children, spread across the whole of France.

Cochin, however, was not only responsible for seeing that the *salle d'asile* became a state institution, he is also credited with seeing to it that over and above the original protective nature of this institution, it was also endowed with a pedagogic character. In his manual *Manuel des salles d'asile* which appeared in 1833, he consolidated his advice and pedagogical principles concerning infant education in these institutions. This manual remained the definitive "tutor" for infant school teachers until Kergomard appeared on the scene (cf. par 5.2.4.1(e)).

In his manual Cochin described the *salle d'asile* as a care and educative institution, i.e. this institution's duties were of a social as well as educative nature. In these schools children were therefore instructed by

means of narratives, in religion, good manners, reading and writing skills, botany and zoology, a few of the principles of arithmetic and geometry, geography in the form of elementary environmental studies and history. This also served as a preparation for the primary school.

Cochin recommended that discipline should be reasonable and moderate:

The master should set himself to repress it (a wrong doing) with calm, justice and goodness, not only must he avoid all violence, all pressure, all anger, but he must also avoid any act which . . . causes irritation.

(Cochin, *Manuel des salles d'asile*, pp.185-196
quoted in: Forest 1927:86).

Singing was the most important means of instruction. The children, through their songs, learnt to read, all movements were accompanied by singing and even prayers were sung. In the mornings and afternoons the children marched singing to their seats. Everything had to be done routinely, orderly and in a disciplined way. On the occasion of a visit to Marseille, the famous Russian author, Leo Tolstoi, remarked on this:

I saw the 'salles d'asile', in which four year old children, at a given whistle, like soldiers (marched) around the benches, at a given command lifted and folded their hands, and with quivering and strange voices sang laudatory hymns to God and to their benefactors and I convinced myself that the educational institutions of the city of Marseille were exceedingly bad.

(Quoted in: Harth 1983:62, author's translation).

Not only the routine nature of all activities and the fixed scheme of study, but also the intellectual nature of the learning content made high demands on the infants. Notwithstanding this Salvandy, the Minister of Public Education at the time, reported as follows on the *salles d'asile* in 1837:

These schools for the first years of life may be described as the most useful institutions of our time. In them we find the child of the working classes in careful homely and motherly education. The religious instruction cultivates good habits in them . . .

(Quoted in: Harth 1983:64, author's translation).

In 1838 the *salle d'asile* became a universal teaching institution. All children and not merely the less privileged, could then attend the infant schools.

A decree issued on 28 April 1848 stipulated that the *salles d'asile* were official institutions for public instruction and that they would in future be known as *écoles maternelles* (mother schools). The concept "mother" here refers to the age group of these infants who were in need of a mother's care, thus preschool children.

(d) *Marie de Pape-Carpantier (died 1878) and the "École Normale Maternelle" (normal college for teachers in mother schools)*

Marie de Pape-Carpantier ran a successful *salle d'asile* in her hometown (La Flèche). Since 1842 she had increasingly employed the methods of Pestalozzi and Fröbel. In 1848 she was appointed principal of the *École Normale Maternelle*, a normal college (teachers training college) which was to train teachers for the newly established *écoles maternelles*. Her book on the practical education in *écoles maternelles* entitled *Enseignement pratique dans le écoles maternelles* was published in the same year. In this book she devoted one section to object lessons according to the Pestalozzi model and Fröbel's views on the use of colour and geometrical shapes. Another section was devoted to the "entertainment value" of stories and games.

Madame de Pape-Carpantier's particular merit lies in the fact that she brought toys into the *écoles maternelles* and emphasized the skills and dexterity associated with plaiting, weaving, folding, sewing, cutting out, stringing pearls, knitting and constructing objects from card board, grass stalks, small blocks and sand. She could, however, not totally break away from the typical school character of the *salle d'asile* which tended to ignore the individuality and personality of the child.

Two decrees or laws (1881 and 1887) officially established the name *école maternelle* and it was determined that all children between two and seven years of age had to attend an infant school. The Decree of 1887 defined the *école maternelle* as "an institution for infant education where children of both sexes will together receive the loving care which is essential for their physical and intellectual progress" (Quoted in Harth 1983:79, author's translation).

In a declaration on infant schools in 1881, Ferry, the Minister of Public Education at the time, and Buisson, the President of the Primary School Institution, stipulated the following important pedagogical principles:

- The *école maternelle* would not be a school in the true sense of the word, but a transitional phase between the family and the school. For this reason the mother school had to link up with the affective nature of family education on the one hand, but on the other hand the child

had to be prepared for the industrious and regulated nature of formal school instruction.

- The *école maternelle* had to take the particular phase of development of the child into account and was not to burden him with activities for which he was not yet ready.
- Monotonous instruction may not be allowed to rob the child of his enjoyment of "school"; the teachers ought to follow methods which would give the child pleasure.
- The child's love of gymnastics, songs, games, drawing, looking, listening, talking and imitating ought to be the foundation of education and teaching in the mother school

Ferry and Buisson's recommendations were, however, not immediately incorporated in either the syllabi of these schools or the actions of the teachers. The methods of the older *salle d'asile* were still in force and only very gradually came to an end. That this change and reformation did eventually take place can be contributed in particular to the influence of Pauline Kergomard.

(e) ***Pauline Kergomard (1838 - 1925) and the "école maternelle" (mother school)***

Pauline Kergomard is quite rightly considered to be the most important figure in the history of French infant education.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a world-wide, near revolutionary movement, the *Education Nouvelle* (New Education Movement), came into being. This movement propagated a totally new attitude towards the child and literally every facet of being a child became the theme for thorough investigation. For the first time in history, scientific research was undertaken on a wide front on matters such as the child's aptitude, interests, intellectual abilities, emotional life and child's play.

Under the influence of the pedagogical discussion and the research results which were brought about by the New Education Movement, Kergomard developed her "new" pedagogic principles for the *école maternelle* and introduced them in numerous publications.

In her capacity as chief inspector of French infant schools (a post which she occupied for forty years), she was able to convey her thoughts concerning the new education of the child personally to the personnel of the mother schools she visited in her daily task.

According to Kergomard the family circle in the home is the ideal educative space. In this educative environment the child is able to experience true tenderness and freedom during his first years of life.

According to her the state commits a crime in compelling all infants to attend an infant school. No mother may be exempted from her educa-

tive duties and no child may be removed from a happy family circle for no sound reason. The socio-political and economic situation in France after the French Revolution as well as the influence of the Industrial Revolution, had, however, been detrimental to ideal family education. Thousands of mothers were, because of circumstances beyond their control, forced to enter the labour market and were thus not able to provide the necessary care for their children at home; others were simply not prepared to concern themselves with the education of their children, either because they did not know how or because they had no love for and understanding of their children. Kergomard therefore agreed that *écoles maternelles* were a solution for this type of situation. The fact that mother schools existed and that the methods of instruction in these schools left much to be desired, motivated Kergomard to promote her attempts at reform even more strongly. In this connection she particularly emphasized the following educative principles:

- *Education is comprehensive and all-inclusive*

Kergomard contended that man's body-will-intellect formed a unit and for that reason education should give evidence of a totality in its character by paying equal attention to the physical, moral and intellectual progression of the child. Only when the child is seen and educated as physically, spiritually and intellectually "indivisible", can he develop into a healthy, intelligent and happy person.

Kergomard stressed that the *école maternelle* was an educative institution and not a school or institution for instruction. A simple form of intellectual instruction will therefore follow only after the physical development, as the foundation for moral and intellectual moulding, has received proper attention. Intellectual moulding should not take place through boring memorizing, but should include activities which challenge the child to think, evaluate and investigate.

- *Education respects the individuality, dignity and freedom of the child*

Every child is a unique individual who behaves in a particular manner and needs to learn to accept responsibility for his own deeds. For this reason the educator is compelled to respect the individuality of every child. The child's potentialities must be stimulated and his happiness and comfort must ever be borne in mind so that his unique childlike nature can be developed/realized completely. In every activity the individuality and particular dimensions of the child must be taken into consideration; education must thus be individualized.

The child also has dignity and for this reason he is entitled to respect and personal freedom. A realization of his human dignity

must be inculcated in the child so that he may respect himself and others. To have respect for himself, the child needs to be physically healthy, clean and tidily dressed.

Partaking in games spontaneously will make the child aware of his freedom. By being able to move freely the child becomes aware of the limits of his freedom. He is violating the bounds of freedom when his actions are detrimental to himself or someone else. When he violates the bounds of his freedom, this should be pointed out to him.

The child also has to learn to be comfortable with his freedom; false freedom is a very dangerous instrument in incapable hands. To be able to do what is right or good, it must also be possible for the child to do what is false or bad. With the help of the educator he is then guided on the right path. By continuously studying and observing the child's spontaneous, free expressions the educator will soon be able to determine whether the bounds of freedom are being violated or not. It is essential that behaviour in this matter should always be consistent.

Kergomard considered intellectual freedom to be of profound importance. She maintained that the child should not memorize absolute truths but should learn to think independently.

- *Education leads to discipline, obedience, individual and social responsibility*

The aim of education is to guide the child to become a person who is good, happy and has inner discipline (a free human being). A good and virtuous person "will fulfil his duties towards himself and others on his own; he will respect himself and others; he is just and good." (Kergomard, *L'Education maternelle dans l'école par Mme Kergomard* as quoted in: Harth 1983:131, author's translation). The educative environment in which the child grows up must mirror the qualities of a good *human being*. The child learns by examples and his behaviour is the outcome of the behaviour of his educators.

To become a virtuous and good person, the child should also (in addition to a good example) become acquainted with warmth and Kergomard for this reasons strongly emphasized tenderness and sincerity in the mother schools.

Before the child can become capable of inner discipline, of individual and social responsibility, he must experience external discipline. He has to learn to obey set rules. External discipline implies that education is initially of an authoritarian nature; not in the sense of being dry, serious and forbidding, but in the sense of being sensible and understanding. Kergomard thus pleaded that the preschool child

should not be punished harshly. Punishment could consist of merely a stern look or withholding a caress and should follow immediately upon the transgression. She also insisted that all children should not be punished alike; punishment should be sensible, should take the age of the child into consideration and be aimed at improvement. The child should always be made aware that his transgression has been forgiven. Kergomard sees rewards as being directed at "a feeling of inner satisfaction experienced by someone who has done something good." (Kergomard, *Ibid.* quoted in: Harth 1983:134, author's translation). Through discipline the child is helped to acquire individual and social responsibility.

By carrying out simple instructions (eg. putting away his lunch-box in his cubicle every morning) the child learns *individual responsibility*. Habituation and practice, encouraged by friendliness, is of importance in this.

Social responsibility is acquired by the child when he is made aware that he should not do unto others what he does not want done to himself. As a social being the child has to learn to place his individuality at the service of the whole, the collective, of society itself.

- *Education is preparation for life which can be achieved through play in the mother school*

Kergomard insisted that all the skills, activities and experiences of the child in the mother school must be of such a nature that they prepare him to fulfil his task in life as an adult with responsibility. These skills should all be learnt through play.

Kergomard made the following statements concerning play and its pedagogical implications: "Through games, and in particular playing together, the child begins the learning phase of his life in the company of his peers Playing is the labour of the child, it is his occupation, it is his life. The child who plays in the *école maternelle* is accustoming himself to social life. That is why a person can venture to say that he does not learn anything if he does not play!" (Kergomard, *Ibid.* 1983:141, author's translation).

According to Kergomard playing is therefore a natural expression of childlike activity and for this reason she places it high on the list in her educative programme. Play in infant schools should, however, not consist of activities initiated by the educator. It should be a spontaneous expression of something that the child experiences and which intrigues him. Through observing and examining the free play of a child first-rate knowledge of his true nature and characteristics may

be obtained. The educative environment may then be directed or changed in such a way that it may promote the progression of every individual child.

Kergomard distinguished between two types of play: that which took place "outside" on the playgrounds and that which occurred "inside" the schoolroom. Toys are essential for both types of play; not expensive, bought toys, but "working utensils" for play outside, such as small spades, buckets, wheelbarrows and sand, and for inside the classroom, those things dear to a child's heart; blocks, sand tables, buttons, rods, paper which can be folded and torn and slates for scribbling. It is also important that small children should not be expected to play with toys which interest older children - differentiation in respect of toys, taking into consideration the dexterity and capacity for comprehension of each child, is essential.

Pauline Kergomard's views on the theory and practice of infant education even now forms the basis of the French *écoles maternelles*. In terms of her universally valid opinions it is difficult to fathom why she is still over-shadowed by other eminent educators and pedagogicians. She can in fact be considered one of the forerunners of reform pedagogics of the twentieth century as it found expression in the New Education Movement. The International Association for New Education at a conference in Calais in 1921, for instance, formulated and published a set of principles of unity which very closely resembled Kergomard's pedagogical principles. In comparing her pedagogical views with those of the more prominent representatives of the movement it appears that Kergomard had expressed and in particular also practised these theories more than 30 years before most of them.

5.2.4.2 **Pioneers in the development of infant education in Switzerland and Germany**

(a) *Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 - 1827), the socio-pedagogue*

Pestalozzi represents not only the starting point of child-centred infant education and the Kindergarten movement in Switzerland and Germany, but his educative thoughts and activities have also found adherents throughout Europe, Britain and the USA.

Pestalozzi was first and foremost a social reformer. He was deeply concerned about the terrible conditions in which the lower classes of the Swiss population lived; a state of affairs for which he attributed the blame to inadequate teaching and training. After he gave up his studies (in the law and theology) he became a farmer because he hoped by his

example to raise the social level of the inhabitants of the region. However, his efforts did not succeed and to earn a living he started writing books. (Later on, in 1798, and again from 1799 - 1804, and 1805 - 1825 he was a teacher.) In 1781 he published *Lienhard und Gertrud*, a socio-educational village novel. This novel is a plea for dedicated family education. Pestalozzi considered family education in the home as the most important means to improve social ills.

Lienhard und Gertrud deals with the backward state of farmers in an imaginary Swiss village, Bonnal, which is gradually reformed under the influence of a capable farmer's wife, Gertrud. By her insight, dedication, patience and capability she succeeds in reforming her husband Lienhard, an unemployed drunkard, in giving her children a good education, in influencing her neighbours for the better, in drawing the attention of the local authorities to her work of reform and in convincing them that schools are the only means of salvation by which the entire country might be reformed.

The reform of a local community but also of the entire state by an exemplary mother and eventually an exemplary family is the gist of this book. The exemplary family, with the mother as inspiration, forms the core around which the church, school and civil authority centres and these institutions have the same ideals and are governed by the same principles as the family: the promotion of religious and moral moulding and physical care. In the final instance the realization of these ideals is the task of the educator who is designated by nature, the mother. Through her all the child's expectations are satisfied: the child involuntarily trusts and loves his mother. From this love is born a love of his fellowmen, at first of the father and other family members and thereafter of God. Also when the powers of darkness threaten, the mother takes the child into her protection: she remains the mediator between God and her offspring. In one of his *Letters on Education* (written to an English student, J.P. Greaves between 1818 - 1819) Pestalozzi described the mother as being qualified by the Creator himself for her task as educator of her child.

Pestalozzi considered the family, with the atmosphere of motherliness, to be the natural life-world of the child. He was convinced that true and fundamental education and natural instruction started in the cradle. Thus he always looked upon family life with all its formative powers as the first and most important school of life. Here education, teaching and the realities of life converged. By means of spinning, knitting and sewing, cooking and other tasks about the house the child is instructed in the realities of life; his knowledge, skills, opinions and relationship structure are achieved through practical tasks within the family. Pestalozzi for this reason rejected formalistic "word-education" as, in spite of its supplying formal knowledge, it contributed very little to the virtues of life.

Active family education leads the child into thinking and speaking and ensures intellectual and spiritual moulding. Physical development is promoted by such "homely gymnastics" as for instance walking and standing, throwing and pushing, running and jumping, taking toys apart and putting them together again and drawing shapes in the sand.

Pestalozzi also emphasized the value of family education for the moral moulding of the child. Moral moulding, as the basis for cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotional) and physical moulding, must commence in the home.

As the mother is the key figure in family education, she is the first one who needs guidance and advice. For this reason Pestalozzi wrote the book *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt* (How Gertrude teaches her children) in 1801. In it he carefully instructed mothers on how it is possible to help their children gain knowledge by means of sensory practice, and in particular by accurate observation. This work (in the form of letters to his friend Gessner) was written after Pestalozzi had himself entered the teaching profession. This book represents an exposition of his teaching methods and points of departure which are based on the following pedagogical principles:

- Love (i.e. understanding) of the child must permeate the entire educative occurrence (including also the enforcement of discipline).
- In instruction the child's individual aptitude must be taken into account, but it must also be borne in mind that every child has the ability to be creative, and every child is able to understand and to love.
- Education is assistance aimed at natural, progressive and harmonious development of the child's aptitude and abilities (according to definite, orderly laws).
- The child's spontaneous activities in terms of the environment and other children must always be encouraged. This is how the child gets to know himself, his environment and other children.
- Knowledge for which the child is not yet ready, intellectually or emotionally, or which he does not understand, should not be taught. The learner progresses from his immediate reality to the reality which is the general, from the known to the unknown.
- Visual observation forms the basis of all thought and knowledge. Speech training must thus be accompanied by visual observation so that the child may learn the name and the characteristics of the observed object and form a clear concept of the object for himself. This implies that all instruction should be based on the learner's own experience and observation of real objects.
- All progression is self-progression and all education is assistance towards self-help: man forms his own nature and he does this according to this own individuality.

- Religion is a vital part of all education; a religious attitude must be formed before concepts or symbols are taught: "We should teach children to think, feel and act rightly, and lead them to enjoy the blessings of faith and love that are natural to them, before we make them commit various points of dogma and theological controversy to memory as an intellectual and spiritual exercise." (Quoted in: Green 1916:97.)
- Moral moulding depends on the principle of a voluntary obedience to moral norms and this moulding is accomplished through the family, the community and religion.
- The *child* is central to the educative occurrence, not the teacher or the subject matter; the teacher must merely guide the child. The entire matter of education should thus be viewed from the developing mind of the child and not from the already developed mind of the adult.
- The moulding of both the community and the individual is of the utmost importance because the individual can only truly exist within the sphere of the community.

Some of Pestalozzi's other pedagogical views may be summarized as follows:

- *The image of man and child*: Pestalozzi was convinced of the inherent goodness of human (child's) nature. Every human being (child) has a yearning for what is good. The child, however, needs protection against the evil which surrounds him and this protection must be given by his parents. According to Pestalozzi the child is "straight-away surrounded by the impurities of the world, it requires warmth, nourishment, protective and indulgent patience, all of which it finds in the protection and love of the parents. Under such influences the innocent child grows and matures to the full expression of love and power, and stands before his parents as the loving and active reflection of themselves . . ." (quoted in: Green 1916: 165).
- *The aim of education*: According to Pestalozzi the eventual educative aim is "not a perfection in the accomplishments of the school, *but fitness for life*; not the acquirement of habits of blind obedience and of prescribed diligence, but a *preparation for independent action*." (Quoted in: Green 1916:223; author's italics.) Pestalozzi emphasized that man has to realize that the aim of education can be nothing but assistance with a view to the individual's realization of true, genuine humanness.
- *Education of man in totality*: Education towards true, genuine humanness implies, according to Pestalozzi, a harmonious cohesion between morally-religious (the heart), intellectual (the head) and physical (the

hand) moulding: "To consider any one capacity exclusively (head, heart or hand) is to undermine and destroy man's native equilibrium." (Quoted in: Green 1916:269.) If it should so happen that one of the elements of human nature does not receive the necessary attention, the unity of man would be disrupted and the individual would not be able to fully realize his personality and would also not be able to maintain a harmonious relationship with other individuals and his Creator.

- *Discipline*: Pestalozzi insisted that discipline should at all times be firm but affectionate. It should never be used to inculcate a fear of severity or of punishment. He was against punishment of the child when the true cause of the child's "misdeeds" could actually be traced to the master or the system of education. If the child's interest were sufficiently aroused by an affectionate, interested adult, there would be very little cause for harsh discipline or punishment. Pestalozzi was, however, of the opinion that the child needed the discipline of regular work and effort in order to develop self-discipline.

The school which Pestalozzi founded at Yverdon in 1805 and where he was actively involved until 1825, in time became known throughout Europe. A number of teachers (the Prussian and Swiss governments, for instance, yearly sent a number of teachers to Yverdon to study Pestalozzi's teaching methods) and also, among others, Fröbel, visited Pestalozzi to observe the implementation of his ideas in practice.

(b) Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel (1782 - 1852) and the German Kindergarten

By the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries there were already a number of infant education institutions (under a variety of names) in existence in Germany. More and more educationists were also airing their opinions on the effectiveness and desirability of these institutions. A few of the more important authors and their works will for interest's sake be mentioned here:

- 1826 J. Wertheimer, *Über die frühzeitige Erziehung der Kinder*. (On the timely education of children.)
- 1830 C. John, *Kleinkinderschulen für Kinder von 2 bis 6 Jahren*. (Infant schools for children from 2 to 6 years.)
- 1838 J. Wirth, *Über Kleinkinderbewahranstalten*. (On infant care centres.)
- 1841 F. Hüffel, *Die Kleinkinderschule vom Pädagogischen Standpunkt aus betrachtet* (Infant schools from a pedagogical point of view.)
- 1848 J. Fölsing & C F. Lauckhard, *Die Kleinkinderschulen wie sie sind*

und was sie sein sollen. (Infant schools as they are and as they should be.)

1848 J.F. Ranke, *Die Erziehung und Beschäftigung kleiner Kinder*. (Educating and keeping infants occupied.)

1850 J. Fölsing, *Die Menschenerziehung*. (The education of man.)

The majority of these authors agreed that the infant school forms the foundation of the entire national education; that it presents the infant with a milieu in which he is prepared for his formal education in primary school; that it is a means by which the less privileged child can, even if only temporarily, be taken away from his depressing living conditions; that it provides the working mother with a solution to the problem of the care of her child(ren), and so forth. Fröbel found himself in this climate of thought and views concerning infant education and infant schools, and he made a contribution to this theme in his books as well as by his teaching activities.

Fröbel's most significant works are *Die Menschenerziehung* (The education of man), in which he describes the core of his theory on education and *Mütter- und Koselieder* (Songs for mothers and children), a manual for mothers. The first of these works was published in 1826 and the latter in 1843.

Fröbel in his work *Die Menschenerziehung* pointed out that character flaws in adults may often be attributed to the scars which they acquired during their infancy. It is thus essential that small children should be protected from unfavourable environmental influences and the poor example of adults: "Often the hardest struggle of man *within himself*, and even the later most adverse and oppressive events in his life, have their origin in this stage (0-3 years) of development; for this reason the care of the infant is so important." (Fröbel 1887:24).

Fröbel was of the opinion that infants should be placed in an environment where they can develop naturally and contentedly, in peace, happiness and security. In 1837, specifically with this objective in mind, he opened a school for infants in Blankenburg. After three years he coined the name *Kindergarten* (children's garden) for this small school because there the little ones were protected against the harmful influences of society like young seedlings in a garden.

Fröbel's ideas on infant education and his implementation of these ideas in the *Kindergarten* were based on his views of the world, man and child as well as his views on the aim of education.

- *World, man and child views*: A fundamental feature of Fröbel's views of the world, man and child was the idea of unity which controls reality in its entirety. God is the Creator of the world, of man and of the child which are bound together as a unity which finds expression in that which is external to man – nature; in that which is internal to man – soul, and in that which binds these two – life.

It is man's life task to become totally and clearly aware of his existence as part of a unity, of the sacred influence on him and thus of God himself. This awareness is brought about by education which "should lead and guide man . . . to a knowledge of himself and of mankind, to a knowledge of God and of nature, and to the pure and holy life to which such knowledge leads." (Fröbel 1887:5).

Fröbel's idea of unity gave rise to his ideas on being a child. He did not see childhood as merely a preparation for adulthood, but as of value in itself. The child is a self-active individual who is part of the sacred unity. The child, just like the adult, is a gift of God and should thus be treated as "a necessary essential member of humanity . . . , as related to God, to nature, and to humanity; as comprehending within himself unity (God), diversity (nature), and individuality (humanity), as well as also the present, past and future." (Fröbel 1887:16 and 17).

As social being the child's self-becoming and self-realization is only possible through his social relationships: "At its entrance into the Kindergarten the child enters into a manifold new relation to life . . . first of all into relations with a number of companions and with these companions as individual parts of a whole, but he is himself also a part of this whole, and, as he has gained or lost from the whole, he has also duties toward it." (Fröbel 1903:270).

- *The aim of education:* All of humanity arose from the eternal and the human goal can thus be naught but an illustration of the eternal in the temporal, of the everlasting in the transient, of the heavenly in the earthly, of the divine in humanity. Education is the means to achieve all of this; the eventual goal of education is thus, as Fröbel sees it, of a religious nature.

The immediate aim of education is to render assistance to the child, in order that his inherent abilities may be realized according to the sacred laws which are within his spirit and so that he may become aware of his unity with all that exists – thus also and, in particular, with God.

The individual's potentialities are in part the result of heredity but also in part of environmental influences (i.e. the opportunities which are available for exercising his inherent abilities). The increasing actualization of his abilities represents his reaching out (developing, improving, progressing) towards adulthood.

- *Phases in progression:* In terms of this important aspect the following may be stated: Fröbel believed that human progression is a gradual, progressive, continuous, upward and lateral development. In the light of this he identified five phases of progression in the life of a human being, namely the phase of being a baby (birth to one year), early in-

fancy (one to three years), infancy (up till the seventh year), youth and adulthood. During the baby phase education can be mainly attributed to the sense of touch. In early infancy the infant's activities are concerned with using his sense of touch, vision and hearing. Infancy is the time of imitation and creativity. This is a phase which should be spent in the Kindergarten.

With reference to the progression (development, progress, advancement) of man in each of his phases of progression Fröbel expressed the following views:

- *Progression through self-activity*: Only by means of self-activity on the part of the child can his abilities be practised and developed. The urge towards self-activity is, according to Fröbel, man's original and most potent passion. Being created in the image of God, man also wants to create and do as God does. In this there is a deeper meaning; the higher significance and actual goal of labour, of creation and activity.

The desire for self-activity, which includes creative possibilities, is particularly obvious in the young child. The child is thus a creative and not merely receptive being. Fröbel repeatedly stressed that the individual realizes his own abilities and constitutes his own life-world by means of self-activity.

- *Progression through continuity*: Life is a continuous progression occurrence and for this reason education must also be continuous – every part of education must be connected to every other part and the degree of difficulty should gradually increase. Facts which exist in isolation, bearing no connection to each other, do not constitute knowledge. Facts must be compared, classified, organized and connected before they can be termed knowledge. Knowledge is acquired when new facts are correctly related to facts which have already been organized and classified.
- *Progression through contrasting*: Fröbel was of the opinion that the essence of an object can only really become known if it is brought into relation with its specific opposite and is in fact compared with a third object which is similar to both the first and the third. This principle of progression through contrasting was specifically implemented by Fröbel in his Kindergarten.
- *Progression through observation*: According to Fröbel a very important part of all teaching is the observation of nature and the surrounding world. The teacher should therefore take his pupils on "long walks or short journeys" at least once a week. *Geography* as subject should develop from this first environmental teaching.

After the pupils have become thoroughly familiar with their surroundings, specific objects found in nature must be examined

more closely. These are divided into (a) natural objects (animals, plants, minerals, etc.) and the observation thereof later develops into *natural science* as a subject; (b) man's artistic achievements or the works of man, and in the observation of these the emphasis is to be more on man than on the objects produced by man: the labourers in various fields of labour, the spiritual men in the churches and the magistrates and officials in the courts are observed and discussed; which culminates in visual *history teaching*.

The above observations do not deal with the specific characteristics of the objects: this takes place in language instruction which goes hand in hand with the observation of nature and the surrounding world, in morphology (which starts with observing the classroom and its furniture) and in the study of colours.

The story is very acceptable to the child as it deals with things he has seen, handled or put together. It is not only a valuable aid in the intellectual, aesthetic and ethical progression of the child, but also serves to relate and unify all the different sections of the work done with small children to each other. Other valuable functions of the narrative as a means in the child's progression are: it extends the child's vocabulary and manner of expressing himself, i.e. his language ability; it develops his ability to think and to abstract; new knowledge is easily transmitted by means of a story as it satisfies the child's desire to know and stimulates his imagination; the narrative ensures that the child is kept usefully occupied.

To ensure that children will find the stories vivid and fully comprehensible, they should be presented orally, and also be dramatized, sung and illustrated by using paper, clay and blocks.

One of the most difficult but at the same time most satisfying tasks a teacher can undertake, is to attempt to extract the fullest value out of the story. Clear, careful thought and an innovative and lively presentation of the story are of great importance in this respect.

- *Play as an aid to progression*: Fröbel understood the particular importance of playing and he utilized this as an educative aid in practice. He described play as "the purest most spiritual activity of man at this stage [early childhood] and, at the same time, typical of human life as a whole - of the inner hidden natural life in man and in all things" (Fröbel 1887:55). It affords happiness, freedom, satisfaction, inner and external rest and peace with the world. The play of children is not mere playing, it is a manner of revelation with profound significance. For this reason Fröbel suggested: "Cultivate

and foster it, O mother; protect and guard it, O father! . . . (it) discloses the future inner life of the man." (Fröbel 1887:55).

- *Learning content which promotes progression:* In deciding upon the learning content for the first two years of learning, Fröbel proceeds from points of departure. In the first place he tries to determine what it is the child needs during this time. The answer to this is that the child needs: learning content which will mould his spirit (religion), learning content which will familiarize him with nature in his environment and learning content which will enable him to give utterance to and to relate and organize that which lives in his spirit and which nature can teach him – thus language and art.

In attempting to decide on learning content for the child, Fröbel in the second place wants to determine what the family has already provided the child, as the school (Kindergarten) has to build on this.

In terms of the above-mentioned two questions Fröbel then demands the implementation of the following learning content for the infant: religious practice, physical moulding, observation of nature and the environment, poems and rhymes, language practice, construction, drawing, a knowledge of colours, games, narratives, journeys and walks, numbers, morphology, practice in speaking, writing, reading, gardening and caring for pets.

Fröbel's philosophy of progression was thus based on four very important and fundamental principles: (1) Education is a natural event. (2) The child is an organic whole and develops through creative self-activity (playing) according to the laws of nature. (3) The individual is an organic part of the community. (4) The universe as a whole is an organism of which lesser organisms form a part.

- *Home education*

The goal of home (family) education, which is essentially the responsibility of the parents, is "to awaken and develop, to quicken all the powers and natural gifts of the child, to enable all the members and organs of man to fulfill the requirements of the child's power and gifts" (Fröbel 1887:64).

These things are accomplished intuitively by the natural mother, without instruction or guidance; yet Fröbel maintains that this is not enough: "it is needful that she should do it consciously, as a conscious being acting upon another being which is growing into consciousness, and consciously tending towards the continuous development of the human being, in a certain inner living connection" (Fröbel 1887:64).

By means of purposive questions or instructions such as "Where is your hand?", "Bite your finger!" and so forth, the mother guides the

child towards an awareness of his physical totality by means of self-activity. Along the same lines motherly love should guide the child in the use of his limbs, senses etcetera. "Thus maternal instinct and love gradually introduce the child to his little outside world, proceeding from the whole to the part, from the near to the remote . . . arous(ing) to full activity all his limbs and senses" (Fröbel 1887:66).

The true, natural mother, to whom God has entrusted the child, will cautiously follow and guide the slow, all-round progression of her child. Her valuable insight is derived from motherly love and sympathy for the child. According to Fröbel the family's home is the place "where understanding of the higher values of life are fostered in such a way that cognition and action are never isolated from each other, but are always in close association" (Fröbel, "The young child" in: Lilley 1967:79).

- *The "Kindergarten"*

- (1) *What is a "Kindergarten"*: A Kindergarten should not be a school in the usual sense of the word – the child must develop in freedom, yet under the supervision and guidance of the teacher. The child should not be confined within four walls, except on rainy days. If it is at all possible, the little ones should be outside, in the garden, playing in the sand, using little spades and rakes (perhaps in a corner somewhere), examining the flowers, in short: enjoying nature and deriving physical and spiritual benefit from it.

The best toy for a child is, according to Fröbel, another child and their association can best take place out of doors. By playing with their little companions the little ones also learn all types of social concepts and social virtues; for instance, rights and duties, compliancy, helpfulness, tolerance, and others.

In the Kindergarten everything revolves around handicrafts and the all encompassing principle of self-activity is based on free play. Fröbel advocated: let the child play and do nothing else until his seventh year; first let him meet up with the concrete and avoid abstract ideas.

- (2) *The aim of the Kindergarten*: The Kindergarten should not only take into its custody those children not yet of compulsory school going age, but should also keep them busy with those things which are in accordance with their nature, which will toughen their bodies, exercise their senses, provide the necessary nourishment to their awakening souls and familiarize them with nature and the world of men. The heart and mind in particular should be guided correctly in order to help them to achieve a unity with God. Practi-

cally speaking, the aim of this type of institution was to help mothers to care for their children, to give an example of how children should be kept busy, to teach young girls to associate with children and to teach children how to associate with each other.

- (3) *Play "gifts" as teaching aids:* Fröbel claims that the human mind can only develop as a result of productive interaction with material things (play "gifts" – also sometimes referred to as occupational "gifts") which take account of childlike interest and development. The play "gifts" should not only help the child to master geometrical figures (the so-called *forms of knowledge*) but also symmetrical figures which should help to develop aesthetic taste (the so-called *forms of beauty*); in the third place, life forms must be learnt by means of play "gifts", i.e. knowledge of things as they appear in everyday life. Gifts of play served a dual purpose: they had to supply sensory experiences and had to contribute to the child's physical development.

The following play "gifts" may be mentioned:

- (a) *The ball:* This first object or play "gift" consists of a set of six balls, each in a different colour of the rainbow. These balls are slightly buoyant with a core of horsehair covered in a thin layer of wool. The child has to start off by feeling these balls. They were then fastened to a piece of string so they can be swung backwards and forwards; this gives the child his first realization of object, space and time. The movement of the ball should be accompanied by spoken or sung words, eg. bim-bam, or tick-tock. The child will then start playing with the ball on his own and perform twisting, swinging and hopping movements with it. With these movements a little ditty is sung. Apart from this game with the ball while the child is seated at his desk, the ball is also used in the so-called movement games – games played out of doors by a group with one ball.
- (b) The second object or play "gift" consists of a *sphere*, a *cylinder* and a *cube* made of wood. Why exactly did Fröbel choose these shapes? We have already noted that one of Fröbel's principles is that of progression through contrasting: an object can only be known if it is related to a specific opposite and at the same time compared with a third object which has something in common with both the first and the second object (the so-called reconciliation). To return to the second play "gift" set. The *wooden sphere* and the *wooden cube* are opposites: their only resemblance is in the material they are made of; they differ in all other respects.

The sphere has one surface, the cube many; the sphere has no sides, the cube does; the sphere has no corners, the cube does, the sphere can roll and is at all times mobility at rest, the cube remains in a fixed position and can be thrown or slid but is not readily moved. The *reconciliation* between the wooden sphere and wooden cube is formed by the *wooden cylinder* which can be rolled like a sphere yet can also remain fixed like the cube.

- (c) The third object or play "gift" consists of a *cube* which has been divided into eight smaller cubes. Fröbel demands that the forms of knowledge and of beauty and the life forms must be observed. What does he mean by this?

Man as a being thinks or knows, he is emotional and he acts or wills. If a person is therefore serious about educating a child, material must be presented for thoughtful understanding, for his emotional feelings and for his active will. The forms of knowledge and beauty and the life forms are the means whereby this can be done.

The cube, the third play "gift", must successively be divided by the child into two pillars consisting of four cubes each, into two horizontal layers of four each, in four pillars of two cubes each, etc. He must also determine the angles, levels and lines which form the boundaries of these figures, how many "beams" there are in one layer, and so forth - these are *forms of knowledge*.

The eight smaller cubes of this piece of equipment may also be used to form stars, crosses and so forth. As symmetrical figures are conducive to the sense of beauty, Fröbel refers to these forms as *forms of beauty*.

A third possibility is that even more figures may be built out of the small cubes which to some extent resemble objects from everyday life, such as for instance a table, bench, chair, ladder - these are *life forms*.

- (d) Other forms of play "gifts" are mosaic tiles, puzzles, beads, peas, plaited mats, laths, clay, sand, paper and cardboard.

- (4) *Manipulative and dexterity activities as teaching aids:* As soon as the child had mastered the play "gift", he was introduced to manipulative and dexterity activities in which he was expected to create his own forms. These were related to the physical, cognitive and social progression of the child and introduced him to the concepts of diversity, resemblances and differences. Fröbel considered all this of cardinal importance in order that the child may eventual-

ly understand the essence of reality. He had four chief activities in mind, namely, folding paper, drawing, the arrangement of small sticks and gardening. Pedagogically speaking the latter was the most important activity as the child's activities in the garden with others contributed to his socialization and self-discovery.

The significance Fröbel had for educative thought and practice may be summarized as follows:

- Fröbel was the first to emphasize the educative value of learning by *doing*, and to emphasize *motor expression, self-activity* and *creativity*, particularly through *play*. The chief benefits are here not only physical but lie in fact in the improvement of intellectual, social and moral values.
- Fröbel emphasized *nature study, gardening* and *school excursions*, not only because they supplied factual knowledge about nature, but also for their value as means for morally-religious moulding and spiritual insight, and because they serve as foundation and stimulation for the child's inherent interest and spontaneous activity.
- Fröbel was the first advocate of the educative value of being actively involved in *handicrafts* as a means of expression, for development by constructive creativity, for practical application of abstract thoughts and eventually for moral, religious and aesthetic moulding.
- Another aspect which also deserves mention is his emphasis on education through social cooperation as a means of developing thought and moulding character.

Fröbel's views became highly influential in Europe as well as Britain and the USA and it is therefore not surprising that we find a number of his ideas still existing in the modern Kindergarten.

5.2.4.3 Pioneers in the development of infant education in Britain

(a) Robert Owen (1771 - 1858) and the first "infant school"

During the eighteenth as well as the nineteenth centuries dame schools (run by housewives) came into being in British cities and towns. These schools were usually opened by indigent, elderly ladies who were prepared to look after the children of working parents for a few pennies a week. These dames were usually poorly educated and were not teachers in the true sense of the word. The dame schools were nevertheless the predecessors of the subsequent care centres or infant schools.

Robert Owen was one of the people who were deeply affected by the fate of the neglected children in Britain. He was co-owner of cotton spinning mills in New Lanark (Scotland) and the founder of the first infant school in Britain. Owen believed that all evils could be laid at the door of being illiterate/uneducated. He had the following to say in this connection: "Idleness, poverty, crime, punishment, are all necessary consequences of ignorance." (Owen, *A new view of society, or essays on the formation of the human character* (1813) as quoted in: Raymont 1937:70-71). Owen maintained that the child's nature and thoughts were already formed by his second year and it was therefore essential that he should be exposed to the correct moulding influences from the moment of his birth.

Considering his firm belief in the importance of education, it is easy to understand why Owen in January 1816 opened a school (named the "Institute for the formation of character") for the children of his factory workers. The section of the school housing the youngest children was known as the infant school. In June 1816 Owen described the activities of the school as follows: "The formation of good habits, and of a disposition towards mutual kindness and forbearance The children are also taught whatever may be supposed useful, that they can understand and this instruction is combined with as much amusement as is found to be requisite for their health and happiness." (Owen, *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Education of the Lower Orders of the Metropolis, Third Report, London*, as quoted in: Raymont 1937:78).

Owen appointed James Buchanan (1784-1857) as teacher in the school and instructed him that: no corporal punishment whatsoever was to be used and infants were not to be "worried" by books. They were rather to be instructed by means of simple talks about the usages and characteristics of the usual things around them in such a manner that their curiosity would become stimulated so that they start questioning him. (In 1818 Buchanan moved to an infant school in London. In 1839 he was sent to New Zealand as a teacher in the infant schools which were established there, but he decided to stay behind in Cape Town. He subsequently moved to Pietermaritzburg where he stayed until his death in 1857.)

Owen's educative ideas were basically founded on his opinions concerning human nature and the influence of instruction and environment on character. He maintained that human character was *never* formed by itself but by his education and environmental factors. Because man is born good, proper education and the correct environmental influences will permit this goodness to prosper unharmed. For this reason Owen insisted that children should be taught from an early age to think and act correctly and should be prevented from developing false and unacceptable habits. He for instance emphasized that character is chiefly formed

during infancy and that lasting impressions are formed during the first years of life. In spite of the importance he attached to infancy Owen did not want formal teaching to be commenced at too early a stage.

He was aware of the disadvantages inherent in over-taxing the developing abilities or in allowing memorizing to usurp the place of *reasoning and observation*. All instruction also had to be made interesting by appealing to the child's senses, not merely his ability to remember. Education also had to include a large element of *relaxation and recreation* for children of all ages. In fact, for the younger children it should consist entirely of the latter. A young child should receive no direct instruction, but should be surrounded by an atmosphere of mutual consideration so that the right foundation may be laid for subsequent formal education. Owen's system of education for the young child was, in the moral sphere, mainly aimed at *prescribing and social moulding*.

It was not Owen's wish to mould everyone according to an identical model: he wanted there to be space for the development of both the *personal and social potential* of every human being. He also had a firm belief in the child's ability to *learn and think independently*. He thus also stressed that it was essential for the teacher to study every child in order that every one who needed assistance (to understand as well as merely learning off by heart and repeating,) might be seen as a reasoning being.

Owen particularly emphasized the importance of involving more than one sense and that in teaching both hearing and seeing should be used. He felt that children should be taught out of doors during summer. They should go for walks in the fields and study nature at first hand, and they should play simple games. In education, maps, pictures coloured squares and blocks should be used; in this way the visual aspect of education becomes involved. He consistently warned teachers against over-taxing the child by demanding his attention at all times and presenting lessons which require mechanical learning without proper insight being reached. (Apart from elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, singing and dancing should also be given an important place in teaching.)

Above all it should be kept in mind that Owen did not only demand education according to these guidelines for a few privileged individuals but as a birthright of all children, however poverty stricken their parents might be.

Owen's teaching principles in the New Lanark school

Owen's eldest son, Robert Dale Owen, an enthusiastic supporter and disciple of his father's ideas, taught in the New Lanark school for a number of years. In 1824 he published an interesting book on the educative work done at New Lanark during the period 1816-1824. The following extracts

are from this book which was entitled *An outline of the system of education at New Lanark* (Glasgow, 1824).

The principles underlying the teaching at New Lanark:

- (1) The children were to be regulated not by severity but through love and friendliness; they had to be awakened to diligence by instilling the wish in them to learn everything in which they were instructed as well as possible.
- (2) All forms of punishment or reward should be avoided; all that could be permitted was the *natural* reward which flows from the deeds of the child, i.e. their obvious results, whether immediate or removed.
- (3) One of the main objectives of education is to ensure the happiness of the child. For this reason singing and dancing was included in the instruction; it would contribute to the health and happiness of the children. The child should nevertheless continuously be made aware that his own happiness is very closely bound to the happiness of the community of which he forms a part.
- (4) A child who misbehaves is not blamed but pitied. The point of departure here should be that if the child fully realized what the consequences of his bad behaviour would be, he would have changed his behaviour. The task of the teacher is to bring this realization home to the child.
- (5) In those instances where admonition becomes essential, it should always take place in a spirit of love and humaneness.
- (6) Pupils should be fond of their teacher – they should never fear him. Although pupils may speak to their teachers at any suitable time, the teacher's authority should not be undermined by this fact.
- (7) The learning content which pupils are expected to master, should be presented to them in the most enjoyable, happiest and most interesting manner possible.
- (8) If it appears difficult to gain or retain the pupils' interest and attention, the cause should not be looked for in the child, but in the lesson itself and the manner in which it is presented by the teacher.
- (9) The pupil's attention should never be confined to one topic for too long.
- (10) Any unnecessary limitations imposed on the child should be removed and the child should in all respects and as far as it is possible, without disrupting orderliness, be allowed to enjoy total freedom.

Robert Owen summarized the activities in this school as follows:

The children are received into a preparatory or training school at the age of three, in which they are perpetually superintended, to

prevent them acquiring bad habits, to give them good ones, and to form their dispositions to mutual kindness and a sincere desire to contribute all in their power to benefit each other; these effects are chiefly accomplished by examples and practice, precept being found of little use, and not comprehended by them at this early age; the children are taught also whatever may be supposed useful, that they can understand, and this instruction is combined with as much amusement as is found to be requisite for their health, and to render them active, cheerful and happy, fond of school and of their instructors. (Owen, *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee appointment to inquire into the Education of the Lower Orders of the Metropolis*, as quoted in: Rusk 1967:131.)

Although playing was seen as natural and a valuable aspect of child behaviour, and was allowed at school, Owen did not fully grasp its pedagogic significance and thus insisted that all play should take place outside in the "play grounds". The little ones had enough opportunity for this as they only had "classes" for approximately two hours per day and the rest of the day, although under supervision of a young lady, they were completely free to move about in the paved school grounds and to amuse themselves.

During their time in the classroom the little ones were treated with love, taught good, courteous manners, and were at the same time instructed in the art of associating in a friendly and calm manner with their peers.

To summarize it may be stated that there was a rich store of common sense in Owen's educative thoughts. His theory concerning the *moulding of character* is basically correct, his emphasis on the *moral foundation* of education as way of cooperating with nature is centrally sound and worthy of the attention of modern educators. Also his insistence on *good health and healthy recreation* as the foundation of educative effort is still of value today. There is agreement with his views that *good habits*, which are to a great extent dependent upon the health and physical habits which are acquired in youth, are profoundly influenced by *spiritual nurture* and that most of the opinions generally accepted by the community are the products of the social and cultural environment. Finally we agree with Owen that true education should interest as well as instruct, and that both the child's imagination and memory should become involved.

(b) Samuel Wilderspin (1791 - 1866) and the Infant School Society

Wilderspin was trained as an infant school teacher by Buchanan (former teacher at the New Lanark infant school) in London and he started

teaching in the *Spitalfields Infant School* in 1820. This was the second school based on Owen's model. Owen himself gave Wilderspin general and detailed instructions on "how to act with the children, and to govern them without punishment, by affection and underlying kindness" (Owen, *Life of Robert Owen, written by himself*, quoted in: Rusk 1967:147). Wilderspin was also influenced by the views of Pestalozzi through his relationship with J.P. Greaves to whom Pestalozzi had addressed various letters concerning his methods (cf. par. 5.2.4.2(a)).

Based on the success achieved by Owen with a somewhat "improved" or adapted "Owen model", (Wilderspin for instance made use of the monitor system which Owen had rejected and corporal punishment was also allowed in his school) infant schools were soon established in many of the larger cities of Britain and in time an Infant School Society was founded. After the death of his wife (and help-mate in the school), Wilderspin became the itinerant secretary for the London Infant School Society with instruction to deliver lectures concerning his methods and to establish new infant schools.

Wilderspin wrote quite a number of influential books on infant education. His first, *On the importance of educating the infant children of the poor* which appeared in 1823, was also accepted widely in Europe and the USA.

Wilderspin's pedagogic opinions and principles may be briefly summarized as follows:

- Education during infancy is of utmost importance because "it is confessed on all hands that our first impressions are the most powerful, both as to their immediate effects and future influence; that they not only form the character of our childhood, but that of our maturer years." (Wilderspin, *The infant system, for developing the intellectual and moral powers of all children, from one to seven years of age* (1840) as quoted in: Forest 1927:74).
- The educative aim must be comprehensive and provision must be made for the religious and intellectual moulding of the child.
- The big secret of successful infant education is "to descend to their level, and become a child . . . and not to expect in infancy what is only the product of after years" (Wilderspin, *Early discipline illustrated* (1832) as quoted in: Rusk 1967:148 and Raymont 1937:103).
- The child is inherently good but it should be borne in mind how readily he imitates the "evil inclinations" of adults. They do, however, also copy what is good and "examples of virtuous behaviour – propriety, temperance, the provision of innocent amusement – by parent or teacher were the best antidotes to anti-social tendencies in children." (Wilderspin *Infant poor* (1823) as quoted in: McCann & Young 1982:55). Wilderspin also postulated that God had instilled an eternal

conscience in every child to enable him to distinguish between right and wrong. Teachers and parents were, however, to guard against this inherent gift's becoming blunted.

- Children learn by means of their senses. By making use of their eyes and hands in particular they investigate all things and thus discover (acquire) new knowledge. For this reason sensory perception by means of objects and/or picture lessons had to form part of instruction.
- A child has three natural characteristics: he is inquisitive, he wants to imitate and he wants to be active (occupied). The educative event has to take account and make use of each of these three characteristics. For this reason diversity, movement exercises and opportunities for active participation are essential elements in the classroom situation. According to Wilderspin the child's mind is attuned to "endless variety" and perpetually seeking new objects of interest.
- Education should proceed in a series of consecutive phases in accordance with the child's level of progression. (Wilderspin, however, did not support the idea of free progression as put forth by educationists such as Rousseau. In fact, he warned that the practice of allowing children "to develop naturally implied a preference for the savage rather than the social life".) It is the task of the educator to decide, in the light of his more profound insight and ability to judge, what should be taught and how this is to be achieved. The child had to be given the opportunity to think for himself and to discover on his own, yet this was still to take place under the guidance of the teacher.
- The intellectual powers of the child should not be over-extended. He should be led step by step along the road nature indicated: one thing must be mastered before the next is attempted. Wilderspin totally rejected the "unnatural" system "which gives children tasks beyond their powers, and for which their infantine faculties are not qualified". The correct method was to encourage children "to examine, compare and judge, in reference to those matters which their dawning intellects are capable of mastering." (Wilderspin, *Bolton Chronicle*, 2 May 1835 as quoted in: McCann & Young 1982:157).
- Children learn in different ways and the actions of the child are not an infallible indication of his intellectual possibilities. The child's apparent lack of participation in the classroom, for instance, does not necessarily indicate laziness or stupidity, it may simply be his "method of receiving instruction".
- Playing is of utmost importance as it allows expression of the infant's "instinctive impulse to activity". The playground should thus be equipped with adequate apparatus for playing, by means of which the child is given the opportunity for exercise (i.e. physical moulding). The playground apparatus must be of such a nature that when the

children make use of it they will derive the necessary exercise and even acquire knowledge.

- Sympathetic guidance, friendliness and affection are far more effective in the disciplining and moral moulding of the child than corporal punishment. An affectionate and loving teacher is usually successful in this.

Wilderspin's far-reaching influence has already been indicated and his contribution to the infant school movement cannot be over-emphasized.

Although Fröbel was not personally involved in infant education in Britain, he can nevertheless – owing to his influence in Britain – be classed, along with Owen and Wilderspin, as a pioneer in the development of infant education in Britain.

(c) The influence of Fröbel on infant education in Britain

The first Kindergarten based on Fröbel's model was opened in Britain in 1854. This institution as well as the Kindertgartens which were founded subsequently, bore a great resemblance to the infant schools, but they were intended for the children of the wealthy. During the period 1854-1894 Kindertgartens were established, not only in London, but also in Manchester, Belfast, Dublin, Croydon and Bedford. In 1874 the Fröbel Society was founded in London and there was an immediate attempt at providing lectures for the training of teachers. From 1876 examinations to obtain a certificate of competence in the principles and practice of the Kindergarten became compulsory for all those employed in Kindertgartens.

The regulations of the Fröbel Society (for the year 1880) which applied to the examinations for Kindergarten teachers, give an indication of the type of knowledge required of the candidates. They read as follows: "Kindergarten Gifts and Occupations. Candidates will be examined orally in Class, and will be expected to show a practical knowledge of the following: Gifts I-IV, Paper-folding, Stick-laying, Drawing, Painting, Planes of Wood, Laths, Rings, Sewing, Pricking, Modelling, Paper-plaiting, Paper-twisting, Paper-cutting, Pea-work. Candidates will be required to have worked out fully Fröbel's Drawing, and two other occupations to be announced two years previously. No work other than the occupations named will be required, and quality rather than quantity will be recognised." (Raymont 1937:285).

The founding of the National Fröbel Union in 1887 led to a concentration of that section of the Kindergarten movement which was concerned with examining and issuing certificates to teachers. Minor changes were made to the examining programme by the Union from time to time but it was not until 1906 that the "gifts and occupations"

was removed from the syllabus to be replaced by "educative handicrafts". The latter included: (a) handicrafts as a means of expression in various materials, (b) construction work – weaving and pottery, and (c) handicrafts which require a high degree of manipulative accuracy. These changes were brought about chiefly as a result of Dewey's experimentation and writings (cf. chapter 6 par. 6.4.2).

Fröbel's educative ideas were just as readily accepted in the USA as they had been in Britain, and in particular by such influential educationists as Henry Barnard, Elizabeth Peabody, Susan Blow and William T. Harris. These and other American educationists who made a contribution to infant education, will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.4.4 Pioneers in the development of infant education in the USA

(a) *Henry Barnard (1811 - 1900) and the introduction of Fröbel's ideas*

Henry Barnard (former secretary of the *Connecticut Board of Education* and later Commissioner of Education) published the first pedagogical magazine (*The American Journal of Education*) in America in 1855. It was most probably owing to this publication as well as Barnard's intervention that the American pedagogical community was introduced to the German Kindergarten movement.

Barnard's contribution to the propagation of Kindergartens in America was of such importance that he is often referred to as the "Father of the American Kindergarten". His first introduction to Fröbel's ideas occurred during a visit to a Kindergarten exhibition at the *International Exhibit of Educational System* in London in 1854. He was so impressed that he published an article entitled "Fröbel's System of Infant Gardens" in July 1856 in *The American Journal of Education*. He also delivered a number of public papers in this respect.

As founder member of the *American Froebel Union* he emphasized the value of women as Kindergarten teachers and maintained that "the motherly instinct of female teachers can constitute a powerful force for checking the passions of men, which threatens to turn class against class, section against section." (quoted in: Osborn 1980:59). According to Barnard the Kindergarten was by far "the most original, attractive, and philosophical form of infant development the world has yet seen." (Barnard, "Letter to President of the American Froebel Union" in: *Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers*, p.3 as quoted in: Weber 1969:24).

As Commissioner of Education (1867-1888) Barnard continued to promote Fröbel's Kindergarten programme. It was his influence, his ad-

vice, his correspondence and his publications that helped to establish the American Kindergarten Movement. In the introductory remarks to his *Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers* he made the following plea for effective infant education in America:

Our hopes of a better popular education for our country and the world rest on the universal understanding and recognition in the family and the school, of the fundamental ideas of Froebel as the law of human development, and of the institutional methods of both Pestalozzi and Froebel, as the surest process at once of mental discipline and valuable attainment. (Barnard, *Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers* as quoted in: Weber 1984:44).

Barnard created the right atmosphere and attitude for the founding of Kindergartens in the USA. At this point Margarethe Schurz enters the stage.

(b) *Margarethe Schurz and the first German "Kindergarten" in America*

Carl and Margarethe Schurz arrived in America in 1852 having immigrated from Germany. They settled in the German community of Watertown in Wisconsin. With Fröbel's Kindergarten in mind, and for the sake of the education of her own children, Margarethe started the first Kindergarten in America in her own home. Her own two children and four children of family members were instructed here in German according to the Fröbel method. After more children of family and friends joined the group the "school" was moved to a building in the centre of town. Fröbel's play "gifts" and handicraft activities, his games and songs, were used to keep the children occupied. This school closed down in 1858.

In 1859 Margarethe and her daughter, Agathe, met Elizabeth Peabody. This historical meeting was to have a far-reaching influence on the extension of Kindergartens in America. Peabody was so impressed by Agathe's behaviour and became so interested in the Kindergarten idea that she opened her own school shortly after their meeting.

(c) *Elizabeth P. Peabody (1804 - 1894) and the first English "Kindergarten" in America*

Apart from the introduction to Fröbel's ideas by Margarethe Schurz, Peabody's interest was also aroused by Barnard's article in which he described the London Kindergarten Exhibition. After having read Fröbel's

introduction to *Menschenerziehung* (Education of man) which Schurz had sent her, she opened the first English Kindergarten in America in Boston in 1860. This school became an immediate success and soon an assistant (Peabody's sister, Mary Mann) was appointed to assist Elizabeth. In 1863 Peabody and her sister jointly published the book *Moral Culture of Infancy and Kindergarten Guide*. This was the first American manual on Kindergartens in which Fröbel's philosophy was advocated and the use of object lessons was emphasized.

Notwithstanding the financial success and the obvious happiness of the children in this school, Peabody was of the opinion that her understanding and implementation of certain of the principles of Fröbel's philosophy was not what they should have been. She undertook a study tour of Europe at the age of 55 (1867-1868) in order to supplement her knowledge. After her return to Boston she devoted the rest of her life to the correction of her initial "mistakes" and spreading the "true" principles of the Fröbel system by means of articles, as well as discussions and lectures which she conducted all over America. She also revised the *Kindergarten Guide* in 1877 under the new title *Guide to the Kindergarten and Moral Culture of Infancy* and also published her lectures in a volume entitled *Lectures in the training schools of Kindergartners*.

Peabody respected childhood as the period when communion with God is most readily achieved. She saw the potentially perfect being in every child; to her "every individual child . . . (is) . . . a momentum of God's creativeness which the human Providence of Education must take as its datum". (Peabody, *Lectures* as quoted in: Weber 1969:26). There was good in every child, but it had to be cherished and brought to light. She thus emphasized the religious and spiritual aspects of education in her lectures, and convinced her audiences of the elevated and beneficial influence that the Kindergarten could have on every young child. In this connection she maintained: "Moral education is the Alpha and Omega of the Kindergarten." (Peabody, *Ibid.* quoted in: Weber 1969:26-27).

Peabody was supported in her pursuance and propagation of Fröbel's ideas by Susan Blow and William T. Harris.

(d) Susan Blow (1843 - 1916) and William T. Harris (1835 - 1909) as the founders of the first non-private "Kindergarten"

Susan Blow (a dedicated teacher from St. Louis) and William T. Harris (Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools in Missouri, 1868-1880, and Commissioner of Education, 1889-1906) were the leaders of a small but dedicated group of teachers and teaching management who supported the institution and expansion of Kindergarten tuition as part of the public school system in America. It was in fact Harris who requested

Susan Blow to open a Kindergarten in the Des Peres Primary School in St. Louis in 1870. Blow, like Harris, had been interested in the possibilities of a Kindergarten for some time and she readily agreed to this task. In 1873 the first non-private Kindergarten was opened as part of a public primary school. In 1877 Blow travelled to Germany in order to expand her knowledge of Kindergartens.

Harris declared in his 1875 annual report that the Des Peres experiment was highly successful. He saw the significance of the Kindergarten in the moulding of active individuals and in the moulding of "the will in correct habit, and . . . the intellect in a correct view of the world." (Harris, "How imitation grows into originality and freedom" in: *Kindergarten Magazine*, XI, May 1889 as quoted in: Weber 1969:88).

Blow herself had a very high regard for the Kindergarten. She for instance stated that Kindergarten children subjected themselves more readily to school discipline than those children who went directly into primary schools; that they were capable of working independently; that their abilities in respect of observation, arithmetic, nature study and language were higher than those of their peers who had not attended a Kindergarten and that they soon became the leaders in the primary school classes.

A particular contribution made by Susan Blow was in the many innovative ideas she brought into the American Kindergarten: visits to homes, mother's meetings, expeditions into nature, nature study and gardening as supplementary didactic "material" need to be mentioned in particular.

In line with other educationists, Blow recognized child's play as an important facet of the educative occurrence. To her the infant's inclination towards personification of inanimate objects was an indication of his intuitive understanding of the unity of all things and she interpreted his imaginative or "analogical" play as proof of his power to think symbolically. She was aware that in his concept formation the child generalizes before he differentiates. For this reason she was convinced that symbolic toys (such as the father's walking stick as a horse) were essential to the child's intellectual moulding; a too realistic toy would substantially inhibit the child's imagination.

Apart from certain adaptations which were implemented and changes that were made, the nature of Kindergarten education in the USA basically reflected Fröbel's ideas until the end of the nineteenth century. During the final decade of that century a change in attitude towards Kindergarten teaching became apparent, in particular owing to the influence of which the scientific (psychological) studies of the child by G. Stanley Hall had on the supporters of Kindergartens.

(e) ***G. Stanley Hall (1844 - 1924) and the influence of his scientific studies of the child on "Kindergarten" practice***

Hall's training in Germany and America in an unusually broad spectrum of fields (among others a study of theology, philosophy, psychology, physiology, anthropology, biology, anatomy and neurology) equipped him ideally to be hailed as the "father of the study of the child". He was the author of one of the first scientific publications concerning the child, entitled *The content of children's minds on entering school* which appeared in 1880. His findings were based on investigations which included careful and controlled observations of children. Based on these findings Hall emphasized, in particular, three important general educative principles:

- Educative methods and content must take into account the fact that the child develops according to scientifically identifiable developmental phases.
- The child's larger major muscles develop sooner than the smaller secondary muscles. The small child should thus be given large toys to play with in order to exercise the major muscles through free movements and at the same time to strengthen the secondary muscles. When the secondary muscles are sufficiently developed the child will be ready for Fröbel's play "gifts" and to occupy himself with handicrafts. Hall therefore indicated that Fröbel's play "gifts" were not appropriate to the young infant's physical (and intellectual) progression.

Hall's three educative principles contributed to the gradual refinement of Fröbel's play "gifts" to make them suitable for the developmental phases of the child. They also led to Kindergarten teachers such as, among others, Patty Smith Hill, becoming convinced of the value and necessity of a thorough scientific study of the child. In the following discussion it will be shown how Hill implemented the results of Kindergarten studies to improve her work in Kindergartens.

(f) ***Patty Smith Hill (1868 - 1946) and innovation in the "Kindergarten"***

As a result of Hill's success in approaching, and where necessary changing, her Kindergarten activities according to the results of appropriate research, she became renowned as an "innovator of infant education" in the USA as early as 1893. In 1895 she worked with Hall on techniques for scientific studies of the child which also contributed to her moving away from Fröbel's philosophy of education. Although she was still following many of his principles and also used play "gifts", she changed the methods of presentation by allowing much more time for free play, ex-

perimentation, creativity and constructive play. She did, however, completely discard the use of his handicraft activities and in their stead introduced realistic toys such as dolls, carts, houses, small beds and other types of furniture to the infants. Her choice of toys mirrored her insight into the interests of the child.

The curriculum followed by Hill included nature study, music and games with for instance dolls, artificial material and blocks through which the activity and freedom principles (two principles which dominated the American Kindergarten of the twentieth century) were strongly emphasized.

By the end of the nineteenth century two schools of thought concerning the Kindergarten in America could thus be clearly distinguished. One was the orthodox Fröbelistic and followed Susan Blow, while the other was heterodox and followed the Kindergarten principles expounded by Patty S. Hill, among others. The following chapter will indicate whether either of these two schools became dominant during the twentieth century.

5.3 Conclusions regarding infant education in the nineteenth century

The previous discussion clearly indicates that the child was gradually being taken into account in the reflection on and planning of his education. In this connection the following important gains were made concerning the education of pre-school infants:

- The education of the child is an all-embracing and inclusive moulding event (education is a totality event). A cultivated, civilized, educated person is a person whose psychic, physical and intellectual potentials have been equally moulded and sharpened. This implies that all the essence structures which distinguish civilized man are in a balanced relationship. In terms of infant education this signifies that all the aspects of adulthood (or the essence structures of being human), for instance, the physical, the aesthetic, the religious, the ethical, the economic, the national, the rational and the volitional aspects need to be moulded.
- Education should accord with the child's faculties for comprehension and his interests. More than that he is ready and able to give should never be required or demanded from the child. The impossible should never be expected of the infant. When a child evinces genuine and consistent interest in any matter, it is, more often than not, an indication that he is ready to receive instruction in such a matter. A child's interest normally corresponds with his developmental phase. The infant should learn through playing.

- The importance of sensory perception and spontaneous activity as constituents of the instruction and learning occurrence can hardly be over-emphasized.
- Understanding, respect, affection and a loving association are essential preconditions for successful educative intervention, particularly in the case of the small child.

The implementation of these insights regarding the education of the pre-school child, together with the results of continued child studies, led to the twentieth century being dubbed the CENTURY OF THE CHILD.

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