



*The
Child,
the
Teachers,
and the
Community*

JØRGEN SMIT

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Jørgen Smit

Pedagogical Section Council of North America

Printed by:

AWSNA Publications
Publications Office
65-2 Fern Hill Rd
Ghent, NY 12075

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Title: *The Child, the Teachers, and the Community*

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Cover and Layout: David Mitchell

Proofreader: Ann Erwin

ISBN: 978-1-936367-13-9

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Foreword

It was on May 10, 1991, the day after Ascension, that Jørgen Smit crossed the threshold of the spiritual world. With his passing, we have seen one of the “giants” of the Waldorf school movement hand on the work to those of us who are active on behalf of children in this world today. The number of children who need and search for Waldorf education continues to grow. Undoubtedly, it will be with the help and guidance of thoughts like the ones contained in these lectures that we will be able to meet these needs. The lectures which you now hold in your hand are an expression of living anthroposophy. They are based on more than half a century of work with both children and adults. They came about because our colleague, Ekkehard Piening, of the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, Massachusetts, took the initiative to ask Jørgen Smit to come for the North American Teachers’ Conference at the Waldorf School of Garden City in the summer of 1989. Few of us knew beforehand what riches this conference would give us. No one knew that Ekkehard himself would cross the threshold on Christmas Day of that same year. We might well see these lectures, then, as a last, particular gift to the English-speaking world from these two colleagues. It is a gift which will continue to give sustenance to working Waldorf teachers for many years to come. The Pedagogical Section Council of North America is pleased to be able to make this gift available to all present and future colleagues who truly wish to work out of the spirit in these present times.

– James M. Pewtherer

I n t r o d u c t i o n

These lectures — which Jørgen Smit, the leader of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum, held in June 1989, just two years before his death — are a precious legacy especially for teachers in the English-speaking world. The steps which he so clearly describes here can serve as a path of understanding for every teacher who sincerely wishes to be an educator, whose teaching arises not only out of good techniques but from spiritual insight. Jørgen Smit's contributions to this Waldorf Teachers' Conference in 1989 illustrate the transformation possibilities of Rudolf Steiner's pedagogical impulses by someone who lived and worked with them for the sake of the child and also for self-education. Indeed one aspect of the uniqueness of Jørgen Smit can be found in the manner in which he applied anthroposophy as a schooling for life.

When we enter into these lectures, we find that basic aspects rest upon our willingness to wrestle with polarities. Those who had the opportunity to work with Jørgen Smit could perceive how he had a special capacity to fathom the secret of polarity, polarity as Rudolf Steiner describes this phenomenon in a lecture held in Berlin, January 14, 1913: "What is living needs polarity, needs opposites; one cannot just wish to do away with various opposites, but rather life strides forward in polarity. ...Progress cannot be made through neutrality, but through mutually maintaining and harmonizing opposites."

Since the founding of the first Waldorf school by Rudolf Steiner in 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany, the striving has been to educate children so that they can meet the demands of contemporary life with proficiency, insight and enthusiasm. Seventy years later we can experience in these lectures by Jørgen Smit how educators confronting major questions today can find paths which lead to creative solutions.

– Virginia Sease

Lecture I

The Spiritual Impulse of Waldorf Education

Waldorf education is a very concrete, dense reality, a human reality. I am not speaking of perfection or lack of perfection, but actually a concrete, dense, human reality. It is what happens during every lesson — where we meet the children, where children meet the teachers, and where we see what importance these meetings have on the long journey from birth to adult life.

We see what importance these moments have in the development of these human beings as they make small, new steps, as they overcome themselves, as their new faculties increase, and so on. And just as much of a dense, concrete reality is the meeting between teachers in the teachers' meeting and in the meeting of the college of teachers. I do not mean perfection or lack of perfection. I do not mean happiness. What I mean is also a kind of dense, concrete reality in such meetings. And just the same, if you look upon the whole school community, if you follow up what happens there in the founding of a new school, in the early growth of the school community, and during the following years, then you can find a kind of spiritual biography. Moreover, in every school it is a different individuality, a different spiritual being which is found in the whole school community, and this, too, is what I mean by a concrete, dense reality. But if you look around in the present times, this is not the mood that is

usually found. In all cities, in all countries, there is a tendency of masks, of ghosts. You have the feeling that what you see is not, in reality, what it actually looks like.

What is the reality behind the masks? What is going on? Are they really human beings or are they only ghosts who are speaking? That it appears that they think is also, somehow, a non-reality. But if you then once more look at this very concrete, dense reality of human existence and at the development of the students and of the teachers together, you come to a great challenge. For there you find very great human possibilities.

And all of us know those very great human possibilities which are within this path of education and of the possibilities in meeting together with the children and the students. How, then, does this very great ideal live within this concrete, dense reality?

It may happen that after the last lesson one day, we return home and are somehow totally, inwardly, smashed: flat! Somehow we are finished! Impossible to go on! And the same may happen after the college meeting: We return home, and that's the last thing! Nevermore!

It is no easy way. This is no pat way of happiness. But it is actually a concrete, dense, human reality.

We go forward, and, even though we do not realize perfection, and we go through disappointments, we also go through challenges and really move forward to new levels. "Whatever is happening?" we ask ourselves. Yet we move forward to the next step. It is a path of human evolution that we take together, in this meeting of human beings. And, if we look at this, then we can put this into the greater perspective of the present time. I mean by this that we find a true view of the problem, of the great spiritual task, that

is, of incarnation. Human beings, then, as spiritual beings dive into bodily existence in earthly life. How do they do it, how do they succeed in incarnating in such a way that the creative, divine force in the innermost being is really working within matter? How do they work into bodily existence, going forward, forming, transforming, and — yes — changing matter? Does the human being, the Spirit Self, dive into the bodily existence and disappear, only to appear there within matter? What is the pathway for the spiritual beings that leads from the heavens to everyday life with its television, cars, and jet travel? How is this possible? Must the spiritual disappear? For in the whole Western world, there really is a pattern of the soul-spirit diving too much into matter. It dives too much into the bodily existence and automatically sinks towards the animal.

Very often this animal side is taken up with a great efficiency, but this is not human life. It is not the next step in the evolution of a spiritual being. Instead, it is a diving into and a disappearing within. In the Eastern world (and sometimes in the West), the opposite tendency is very often the case. Here the spiritual hardly incarnates, and instead, it only touches and then hovers over and above the bodily existence. Here there is no great faculty of grasping matter and working within and transforming it, but only of touching it and then staying there above it.

If we look upon these two world tendencies (which we can recognize in all places, of course, not just those mentioned), then we once more can realize the great task of Waldorf education. It is to help these soul-spiritual beings to incarnate so that they are not front-line combatants, so to speak, in this spiritual battleground. And at the same time, it is to help them to avoid diving too much into matter, disappearing in it.

Rather, we want to help them to work into matter, changing it for every sense-perception through love. For in the end, this creative force of development is only possible through love.

Into every sense perception, into every conflict with which we must deal, we must bring love. We must do something with each challenge, live with it, go forward by transforming matter and by transforming ourselves. Of course, the children cannot do this out of their own initiative, but they can do it if the teacher helps them so that they gain a little bit at a time. The teachers help them also by giving nourishment and pointing out this great task: the development of the free human being who, more and more, creates faculties and abilities for himself. If we look upon these things, then a brave picture appears on the horizon in which human beings develop new faculties on the world stage.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, a great new faculty has been arising. This is the faculty of inner, living picturing. If we look upon the modern world, in all social situations, all over the world we can see things are going to pieces everywhere. One sees destruction and separatism, and this is our great unhappiness. All things are going to pieces are being destroyed. How can we deal with this, especially in social relationships?

Each one will again and again confront the other, but this confronting will be within the innermost living pictures as part of the whole pictures that we have within this, within and outside at the same time, in an embracing, inner, living picture. This faculty is really arising in the whole of humanity out of itself. But it must be cultivated and nourished because otherwise this newly arising faculty will be perverted and go in wrong ways, so that it does more social harm, causing more misery. The faculty is there, in every incarnating soul and in

the sub-consciousness. But it has to be cultivated, and now we turn again to this great task of Waldorf education.

In every human soul, inwardly, is a capacity for creating living pictures. In education, of course, the teacher himself must first live into the content; yet it is not just giving information to the children. At first, there is a living picture of the content in the soul of the teacher. Then, as nourishment, he gives it without pushing it into the children. Instead somehow, he makes it possible that the picture force in the child may arise, not too much as a finished picture, but as nourishment. Then the next step is for the children themselves to form their own activity, artistic activity, and this is made possible from this nourishment that at first had to be given.

At first, the teacher might say: "Teachers, the children must be graded according to achievement within a certain time." And now even that tendency is gone, replaced by the call to be creative. There is a certain attitude which supposes that the creative faculty should come out of the children at once, but this is a great error. It is only animal life, urges, that arise out of the children in this way. For at first, the children must have nourishment, and then this deeper force will be awakened as a result of leaving this "sleeping picture force" in them. And they can go now a small step further. This can be seen as one side of the great task of Waldorf teaching.

But then we have to ask ourselves, has the teacher really a conflict with the pupils, or did he come into the classroom having prepared himself very much with living pictures? There are the children, and he is speaking up into the air, over their heads. Has he a contact when he directly meets the children? Is there real communication with the children or is this only something he has produced in himself? I suppose, it is a little

bit of both. But then, suppose he could give this nourishment somehow to the children, independently, whether or not he had contact with every one of the children. Is there still a gap between the teacher and the children? Can we improve our faculty of overcoming this gap?

We could make an objection as to why we should improve where every teacher somehow already has this faculty in advance. And I would respond with this observation. You can see very many people have, without any training, a teacher within them. Such a teacher goes into the classroom and at once is there together with all the children, from heart to heart. This is what I would call a “teacherly faculty.” And of course this is good, that this is there in advance. But the question is, is this sufficient?

And there I am sure that, as the present time is a very earnest time, we can look upon this reality and see that the gap between human beings is not diminishing but increasing. And it would be a great illusion to suppose it is diminishing only a little bit and that in the next century the gap will be overcome, and all human beings will be in the great, planned kingdom. Error! This is not the case! This gap between all human beings will in the future be increasing more and more, becoming much deeper and wider than it is today. We are going more deeply into an illusion, so that in the future, everyone will be more and more alone. Everyone will feel separated in his own existence, and the gap will be deeper and deeper.

Therefore I am sure that with this teacherly faculty, we, all of us, actually have something beyond this connection with the pupils. And that is that we love them. We go into the classroom, and it is wonderful to live there together with others. We have this content and we can realize that

it is working. Yet, I am sure that even this alone will not be sufficient, because the gap is increasing every year more and more. Therefore, we have the great task of raising ourselves to a new level, where we can overcome this gap. This effort cannot be made only to increase sympathy; it must be at a level beyond sympathy and antipathy. And at this new level, we must work at the conflict with the students.

I will try describing one meditative way of overcoming this gap. But I emphasize that this is the second step. The first is, of course, this inner ability of a deeper picturing, this giving of nourishment. At first this is done in meditative life when those inner pictures may increase, live, and grow. But this is not sufficient. Then I begin with the second, this overcoming the gap. This begins with a working on one's self.

The teacher works upon himself. How? The first step of this meditation is described by Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of the book, *How to Know Higher Worlds*, but only the beginning of this meditation has been described there. It is the meditation that begins in the section entitled "Inner Tranquility," in the first chapter. There he says that it is necessary to have some small periods of time which I choose from my own life all the way back to childhood. Rudolf Steiner says, "Provide for yourself moments of inner tranquility and learn in these moments to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential." And further on he says that these moments of seclusion must be to contemplate and judge our own actions and experiences as though they applied not to ourselves but to some other person. Each must experience the power of confronting his own self as a stranger, to feel what this is. Every human being in modern times has a kind of inner spectator. It is not uncommon to experience oneself going, speaking with another person, doing

this or that, and somehow experiencing these moments as a spectator. Sometimes we don't know what we are doing, but somehow a small, realistic spectator is there within, observing. And if we only observe this inner spectator, and do not do anything with it, this inner spectator may also be very frustrated. I cannot just live continuously and not go into what it is that I am doing. This need to accept the spectator is somehow frustrating and some young people suppose, in very great error, that it would be good to obliterate it. But this is not the way. Then the spectator comes from the other side! There is only one way and that is the strengthening of this spectator, letting him grow, letting him be one with myself, and this will be done through such a meditation.

So now I really am pressing myself into this spectator and looking from above, looking down onto my life as if I were a stranger. Think upon this. Everyone can do this, but the next step is a little bit more difficult.

How can I then distinguish between the essential and the non-essential? I know people who try this meditation and say that the first step, this placing oneself at a distance as a stranger is no problem. "I can do it," someone says. "But to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential, that I don't know how to do. All of it must be there. How can I take something away and say 'non-essential' and 'essential'? It was alive, it was a whole. How is it possible to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential?" And then I have heard persons who were doing this meditation and then stopped doing it when they were unable to differentiate.

But it is possible to learn this, too. There is a key. There are many keys. And there are many ways. I will mention only one in which one has experienced in life, say, something very dramatic, resulting in a "small dent," a social disappointment. Soon, struggles follow and I must look at all the details.

Then I try seeing through it and ask how the forces of inner development have been furthered by going through this experience. It may be a hindrance, it may be a social struggle, it may not at all be what I want, but in every case, in every situation, there is somehow a deeper question: How are the forces of development, of evolution, going further to the next step? And if you look upon this question, it is always more essential than the limited content of thinking, feeling, and will in that passing moment. But this force of development, of ability, of growth, this has importance for a whole life. Therefore it is not only a question of distinguishing the essential from the non-essential, because everything is non-essential at the surface, while everything is essential in the depths, if you go through this process, reaching this real force of striving.

We need, however, language to describe this force. If you observe the German language after World War II, hundreds of English words have flowed into it. There has been an increasing anglicization of the German language. You can recognize this. I would not say this is bad, because if the words in the English language are good, and then they are used in the German language, this is, of course, an improvement. This is good. And so I might make a recommendation that one German word or phrase go into the English language because it is lacking there. The phrase would be: *der werdende Mensch*, which in English is “the becoming or the emerging human being.” This means that the human being is evolving to new levels, changing his inner life. But you have to describe it with many words in the English language. The German has *werde, das Werdende*. The inner changing of the whole emphasis of the spiritual being from one level to a new level can be expressed in this phrase. I believe this phrase to be indispensable. One could take it and

use it. Why not? Just as there are a hundred English words already taken into the German language, one could take this and either pronounce it in German, “werden” or “verden” in English.

In any event, it is just this force, this spiritual ability, which we have to realize, to recognize in ourselves in this meditation. We work through our whole lives, working through to this step, and then a next step will always come. This I will paint in a little more detail. We have our own life situation, a very comfortable and complicated one, somehow. We observe it for some weeks, looking from above upon it, with great objectivity, distinguishing the essential from the non-essential.

We research more deeply into what is really *der werdende Mensch*, what is really emerging there without others. There are always some other people [see Diagram 1] (of course the whole of humanity is there, but I mean the people nearest to us). The next step is looking upon this and discovering that in my own consciousness, all those other human beings are very small, silent and mute around the chief actor, myself. And

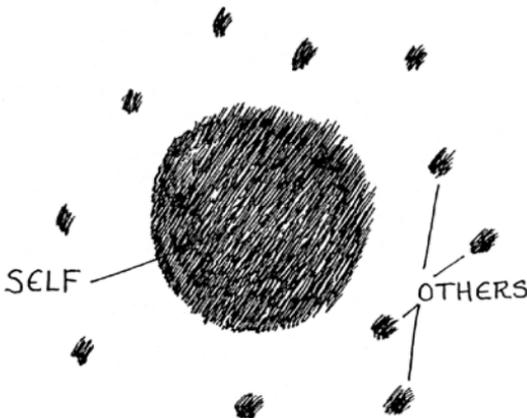


Diagram 1

this, of course, must be wrong. It cannot be true. It is quite sure. It cannot be true.

I perceive this but because I am always searching for the essential, a truth comes up, and now I discover in a new way, what I have not seen before. So now these beings around the central figure grow and I see their importance, for without them, much of the present situation wouldn't be there at all. Each of them is growing. Without them, this would not have been possible. And suddenly I see many human beings around me in this way. And now the central figure really begins to disappear. This experience can be there; it is a feeling for what is growing, and so I can feel that this person is growing and that person, too. All of them are growing and my own person is at the same time diminishing, diminishing and disappearing. And this is a very important point of this mediation. The others are growing. I am diminishing and disappearing into nothingness, into nothing [Diagram 2]. The others, then, are the reality and I am becoming nothing (and this also cannot be true).

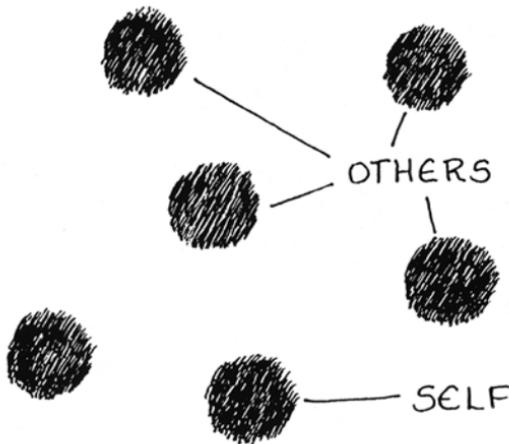


Diagram 2

And now in looking upon this level, something else comes, and that is that this central possibility of freedom of decision is not placed in the others. This possibility is only there in the center. The possibility of love, however, is not centered, but is found in the others here, around the middle. Therefore I discover myself in a new way, on a new level. It was not there in this first chaos [Diagram 1]. This has disappeared. The others are growing. I am at first totally disappearing and then emerging once more.

And now the question: Where is my true self? Here it is necessary to stay within this question for a long time and not take any shortcuts. For then I discover the surrounding essentials; those are just as indispensable if I would search for my true self. It is only possible to find it at the same time both in the center and in the circumference, in the periphery. In other words, to find it in the others. It is totally wrong searching for my higher self by going deeper and deeper there in the middle. It's not to be found, for it isn't there. Yet it is also there! It is not only in the others; this also would be wrong. It is at the same time just as much in the innermost center and can be found there, but only if, at the same time, I find it in the others.

And this experience can be carried through further steps into life. If I recall how I was at five or fifteen or eighteen years of age, step by step this exercise can be widened going through all the years, back to early childhood. And now this is one way of overcoming the gap with the children because you are overcoming your own non-essential and going to the essential. In this way, you go beyond your small person to the greater embracing one.

And now, if you are teaching in the first grade, then this exercise must be done in such a way that you, in your own

life, are going backwards until you come to this time when, as a child, you, yourself, were in the first grade. So you are able to reconstruct this. "I was sitting there on a chair together with my friend. There was a teacher, a lady who was around very much, but she was a little bit frenzied at the same time..." and so on. You see, we paint a concrete picture of the lady and the situation. And now going to this step, we find ourselves within ourselves, and within the class.

And now I am standing together with the children in first grade with this inner feeling: I am in those children and they are in me. Both of us on a higher level are beyond sympathy and antipathy. As spiritual beings they and I are each *ein werdender Mensch*. This spiritual being who is "on the way" is always in the center and in the circumference at the same time, working together, embracing and creating social reality. And always, where the teachers are unable to work for this we are falling out of this mood, staying with the non-essential. If we are here [Diagram 2], if we are standing in the world in this way, then we are finally with the children from the outer and the inner sides.

So, too, in the upper classes when the students reach sixteen years old, I must go back to the time when I was that age. In this way, I dive in to discover something from the inner side. At the same time, of course, I too look at them from outside, recognizing how they are, their way of behaving and so on. This is also necessary, but it is not sufficient. If we look upon the children only as objects of psychological research, then this will be the predominant attitude of every teacher. This is not bad in itself as a first point of departure. You have to look at all manner of behavior from outside first, but you must not stay with that only. You must dive into these deeper realms coming from the inside, so that all the

outer behavior, attitudes, and the sum of the observations are able to speak in a new way.

Thus, the spiritual being speaks and, therefore, I would call this the meditative path and begin here with the words in *How to Know Higher Worlds*. Here there are described only the first two parts of this meditation. The other part, described in other lectures, is more fully described there. Having taken these two steps, they have to move on to the next step also. So here we see the two great ways of teacher training. The one uses inner, living pictures that are artistically activating and give nourishment to the children. The other goes back into one's own life, to the essentials, diving to the deeper essentials of the children where we can meet them as human beings.

The next question is: "When in my whole life was this force of *der werdende Mensch* the most powerful?" And now we come to the crucial point. It was greatest during the first three years, from birth until age three. At first this is a bit difficult to understand until we remember that the child goes from immobility to walking during this time. If we take away this faculty of the development from creeping on all fours to an upright position and then to walking, if we take this away, we must think about how different the human being would be without this ability. Or we can consider the development of the next faculties from age nine: from sleeping to learning to understand and to artistic breathing; if we take this faculty away, the whole of later life will be disoriented. And third, we can consider the development of the thinking faculty, where dramatic development can be seen. Those three faculties are the great fundamentals of *der werdende Mensch*. *Der Mensch* is the true human being in this development, in his evolution, overcoming what is given. And just during those three years, when the "I" consciousness has not yet come, it is strongest. This is reality.

Now Rudolf Steiner describes out of spiritual research how the inner forming of the young child appears. He says that the inner forming of the young child is quite different before three years old and after, in other words, before the moment at which the “I” consciousness comes. We can, of course, see that the consciousness of the child is in quite another place. What is this like? To answer, we have to realize the following: Here we have the young child, before the “I” consciousness is there. [Diagram 3] The whole supersensible ordering is open to the spiritual world, which streams down from the primal spirit into the young child. Then “I” consciousness is awakened in the child, and the stream to the spiritual world is closed up after this “I” consciousness comes. [Diagram 4] Of course, freedom could never come then without this divine support of *der werdende Mensch* in the young child.

But the divine does not disappear totally. A small gleam appears throughout one’s whole life. Where do we find this stream going still further through life? It is always there



Diagram 3



Diagram 4

when this human being overcomes himself; then this force is there. The young children also overcome themselves, while adults many times are not able to do likewise, only repeating themselves for their entire lives. Overcoming oneself is seen in the child when it creeps and walks, and next, in all artistic activity; you cannot overcome yourself without changing both matter and self. You overcome yourself when you go somewhat more instinctually to *der werdende Mensch* in all artistic activity.

In still another realm, it is also possible to overcome yourself through healing an illness. This varies in people; some linger in illness while others rise to new tasks after overcoming illness. This self-healing force is the same as that referred to in *How to Know Higher Worlds*. The meditative way can only be done out of this force of *der werdende Mensch*.

We can see that the teacher can recognize and further this element in himself. And in this whole question of education, it is a matter of reality, true, open reality on the path of development. This the children are in need of, meeting adults who are on the path of development and then nourishing this development in their own beings on their path of development.

But a new question arises. One side of this development can be called the “general” reality, or the same for all people. But how does each of us develop as individuals? This whole realm has two sides and we must deal with both. One comes as part of the general, human development, while the other deals with a specific human being. We will consider these two streams in our next lecture.

Lecture II

The General and the Individual Streams of Evolution of the Child

Let us begin today with a look at the individual's development from birth to the time of self-education. When we do, we see two very interesting points of view. The one main point of view is the general one. With it, we look upon the universal, spiritual aspects of the human being as he goes through different stages of development; here, deep, divine possibilities gradually can become manifest. If we take this point of view, we see the human being embedded within humanity, within earth's macrocosmic life. The other point of view looks upon a specific, unique human being at a particular place and time, at a unique, non-exchangeable individuality. The challenge is to view this period of development, from birth to age twenty-one, from both these points of view.

If we were to take the first point of view and wholly ignore the second, imagining that the human being were to unfold without hindrances or disturbances until age twenty-one, then the "I"-consciousness would occur with the ego's incarnation. But this is not the case in the present-day reality. The modern reality is full of disharmonious difficulties and hindrances; all sorts of dramatic events intrude. The "I"-consciousness already comes at age three, approximately, which is wholly out of phase with the incarnating ego. Hence, disharmony results because consciousness precedes reality.

We will now look at crucial points along this universal path of development and at crucial points where the opposite, individual stream is working. Rudolf Steiner used very radical words when he said that in reality you can only educate out of this general stream. The other stream, the individual stream, cannot be educated at all. We will return to this statement, which is very strange, very deep, and very important: The individual stream cannot be educated at all.

At first we must look at this general stream. Yesterday we looked at the inner force, the inner force as potentiality of every human being in the whole evolution of humanity. This force is active throughout development, molding matter and moving us forward. Of course there is a deep, divine source to that which dives into every child. It lives beyond the “I”-consciousness and does not come from it. It lies deeper, working through all stages of development. Then there are the general stages: the development of the physical body during the first seven years, the etheric body during the second seven years, the astral body during the next seven years, until the real birth of the “I” at age twenty-one can occur. All these developmental stages are also part of this general development, this general point of view. How, then, is the physical body created out of divine beings? How, too, are the etheric body, the astral body, and then the ego itself created as reality?

We can observe these stages of the first seven years, then the second stage to fourteen, then up to twenty-one years of age. During this time, we have the whole life of kindergarten, elementary school, high school and college, after which comes the change to self-education. Self-education, of course, begins a bit earlier and increases step by step. In the first seven years, from birth to age seven, we have one great law

working — the force of imitation — and this great force continues beyond age seven until approximately eight or nine years of age. It does not totally disappear at age seven. Then at age seven there awakens a new capacity to look up to and learn from grown-up people as beloved authorities. This begins in a preparatory stage a little bit in advance. So prior to age seven, at around age five, this capacity awakens. It is initially weak, then it becomes stronger between seven and fourteen, and then its aftereffects continue to work until age sixteen, approximately. During this second phase, one educates with inner pictures; artistic activity accompanies the education of this small, inner life awakening in the child. This development is the general one, for the etheric body is developing at this time. Then at fourteen, the force that looks up to authority gradually disappears, although this disappearing begins to show itself earlier. The new forces bring the possibility of forming ideals and of discovering the world in a way quite different from before. In the second phase, the children meet the world through grown-up people, who are a helping nourishment. In this third phase, young people are directly exposed to the world. They develop love and judgment, and they come to independent judgment directly. The teacher acts as a friend who shows the way. It is a time to develop great ideals, a time to discover the world. This is also from the general point of view. Then the birth of the “I” occurs, at twenty-one, although at about eighteen, something of it is already felt. We see over and over again this rhythm: a preparatory phase, then the main stream, then its aftereffects [see Diagram 5].

Thus these phases overlap. A main phase overlaps with either a preparatory phase or another’s aftereffects. But where two streams do not overlap, where only a main phase

is effective, you can see gaps. At these gaps, disharmonious beings, disharmonious forces emerge and work into the human being. Luciferic and ahrimanic forces emerge. So now we will look at what is happening at these three places where a door opens to allow intervening, disharmonious forces that become active at different times.

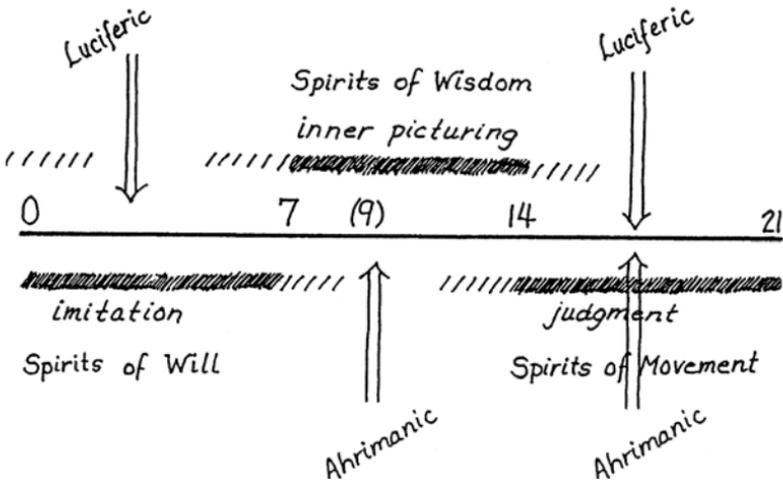


Diagram 5

We will begin with the first phase. We will look at the divine, spiritual beings that have created this physical body: the Spirits of Will. These are in the background of those divine beings working for the good of humanity. They created the physical body as a divine temple of the macrocosm. Then suddenly at age three something happens. Disappointed parents have come at this time and have said, "We do not understand anything anymore. What has happened? We had this sweet, little girl. Everything was okay in our family. The little girl was totally okay. And now, suddenly, this little girl has become wicked, like a witch. She cries, screams and

throws herself on the ground, and we do not understand anything.” Something like a volcanic eruption has come out of this sweet, little girl. This is the age of defiance, well known in all psychology as the age of defiance and opposition.

It is not possible to find the causes of this defiance in the surroundings, in all those sweet, grown-up people, because the causes are not there; they lie much deeper. Great, very powerful luciferic beings, who are at the same stage as the Spirits of Will but who have remained in the background, are diving into the human being. Therefore it is a power of will but not a harmonious power. It is disharmonious will, out of order, which comes up here. There are no external reasons. You cannot speak to this sweet, little girl and say, “Rose, this is not good.” She will cry and trample in any case!

A very cunning father had the following attitude. If he wanted his little girl to go out because the grown-up people were speaking about something he did not want her to hear, he did not say, “Mary, could you please go out?” He knew that she would then say, “No, Father, I will stay here!” Therefore he said, “Mary, I beg you, could you please stay here?” “No, Father,” she said, “I want to go out!” Or in the evening, to get her to go to bed, he did not ask her to go to bed, but rather, “I suggest that you not go to bed.” “Oh, no, Father, I will go to bed!” She did just the opposite of what her father suggested. This is characteristic of this stage.

It is not possible to educate this force, only to recognize it. When we meet the general stream, then we can educate. We ought to try to create a harmonious background for the young child so that the child can imitate it. These forces of imitation are good forces, divine forces, working in the body. The child’s surroundings must be as good as possible in order that the child can really imitate all that he is experiencing through sense perception. The good, imitating forces are at work and

this little volcanic eruption is only an event, alarming for the moment and not that easy, but not a very long one. It is only a short passage of time. But many parents are not aware that they should not try to work directly on the phenomena and that they should rather work on the whole background, on the whole environment surrounding the child. This difficult phase will pass, and something very important will have happened. These evil, luciferic powers do not create the "I." That is not the case. The "I" itself comes from the good divine beings. But these evil forces create disharmony for the individual stream, and it is just this little individual who must suffer this. This opens the question of what will happen. What are you going to do with this, the first gap that has been created and is open to the whole world? It opens the child to all other beings and makes him all alone. This first gap comes here, in the will.

I will tell a story which captures the whole situation in a picture. I was sitting on a train. I sat on one side and a family was on the other side, a father, a mother and a little girl about three years old. Suddenly this little girl began being wicked. She was crying, screaming, and trampling, and the father became very embarrassed in front of the other passengers to have such a silly daughter. At first he didn't do anything, but then he grew more and more embarrassed and suddenly he took the girl and beat her. He knocked the girl and beat her terribly. We sat there. What could we do? We are not allowed to intervene in another family. There is autonomy of the family. What he does is his right. If you are a passenger on the train, you cannot intervene. But the beating was getting to be so terrible that we began to think that we must intervene. We sat there, watching, when suddenly the following happened. The little girl stopped crying, stopped trampling, and began

kissing her father. The father embraced the child; he was a master of education! He had conquered the wicked girl — victory! But then the father went out to the toilet. At once the little girl began beating and knocking the mother. It was very interesting to see that what she was doing was a mirror picture of what the father had done. The father had been beating and knocking the girl, and now he went out and she produced the mirror picture by beating and knocking the mother. The education was an illusion! The father had not reached anything. The opposite was true. He had created something worse. Now this activity of beating was sitting within the little girl to be imitated for the rest of her life, at least a little bit, if nothing was done to remove it later on.

You see we are looking at very earnest realms. The child should experience only good things to imitate. For if the parents are thinking, feeling or doing evil, the child will also imitate this. Everything goes in through the senses. If a volcanic eruption comes, we must look upon it as we would an event in nature and allow it to pass by. All we can do is to strengthen the background, the environment of the child, to make it worthy of being imitated. After an eruption, this little girl would have had something in herself. She would have separated a little bit from her surroundings and begun to feel herself as a unique individuality. The unique individuality, however, can realize itself only with the help of those luciferic beings. Without them the “I” would never become a free, independent individuality. We must go through this experience of disharmony if the “I” is to develop.

To repeat: The good, divine Spirits of Will work in the physical body, in the sense perceptions, in imitation. Then come the volcanic, luciferic eruptions which begin to open the way for the coming into being, step by step, of an

independent individuality. It is still an open question how this works, but the possibility for such an individuality has been created.

Now we must look at the second gap. In this second period, where the etheric body develops, feelings in all their qualities become most important. Step by step, feelings become freed from being purely the result of bodily urges. At this stage, the child can really love the content of what he is learning. At this stage, he must have the love of an authority as a pillar in his life and as a source of nourishment, because the child, himself, is as yet unable to develop inner, living pictures. This, then, is the main stream or main phase, remembering that there is a preparatory stage before seven and the aftereffects beyond fourteen.

At approximately nine or ten (of course there is no fixed age when this occurs), another quality enters into the development of the child's feeling life. It is not, as before, a volcanic eruption. On the contrary, it is a cold stream. As this cold stream enters the feelings, the nine- or ten-year-old begins to experience the world at a distance. This was not the case earlier with the volcanic eruption and defiance. At this new stage, the child looks upon the teacher, looks upon the parents and feels: "They are not that good." The child criticizes. A little cold stream of criticism, of the possibility of criticism, flows into the child. A gap is there. And what happens because of this gap? The feelings from this point on can have the character of sentimentality. Very young children can never be sentimental. The possibility for sentimentality first arises at nine or ten when a cold stream of perception and soul flows into the individuality. At the same time, the child feels a little bit "old." Of course no philosophic consciousness is actually born but rather a feeling of being old and unique, and of being very much alone develops at this time.

Earlier, in the first or second grade, all children, as a matter of course, form a group. They are each one within the whole community. They are small bits of a whole. But at this age, they step out of the whole somewhat and feel themselves as separate from, and as looking at, this whole.

The cold stream that now flows comes from abnormal beings. During this larger phase between seven and fourteen, the primary divine stream consists of the Spirits of Wisdom, those spirits that have created the etheric body. They are the divine, common ground of humanity. Now spirits of this quality or of this stage exist which are disharmonious, out of order. They are ahrimanic forces, that are also forces of wisdom, but they are out of order. They create a distance. They remove the child from feeling embedded within the community and simultaneously create an inner space within the child. It is through these forces that very intimate qualities can develop in the relationship between the child and the teacher.

Now, with our education we can meet the general stream flowing through all the children. But no education can meet this individual stream. How can we help the child with this passage? What do we bring to the class that all the children need?

If we look at children in first or second grade, the child lives within nature and we give living pictures of nature to the children. Nature speaks: Animals, plants, the sun, and the moon all speak. These pictures are no longer appropriate for the children when they begin this new passage. The children would mock us. We must accept the distance that they have developed and begin to find a new relationship to nature. For example, with this new relationship we can describe and compare and not merely let the animals speak out of their natures.

How is the animal to be compared to the human being? How do the forms of the head, the lungs, the heart compare to one another? What is the behavior of a particular animal within its whole life situation? You see, we must take up this distance, this detachment, which has been created by this cold stream. Rather than work to overcome it by lovingly insisting that the children not have a distance from nature, we must work with this situation. We must not push them to feel nature; that does not work at all. Instead we must describe the animals, describe their qualities, and the teacher must love and be interested in these qualities. The child then discovers the animals in a new way — in relationship to the human being. We must always make this connection. We can look at the recommendation of Rudolf Steiner in a new way. Not only must we as teachers be interested in the animals and love their behavior, but in the fourth grade we must begin with the human forms: the head, the heart, the limbs. From these human forms we can proceed to the animals. Then we should return to the human being. After that we again return to the animals, and so on, thereby overcoming the distance, overcoming the gap. One must have a living understanding of real qualities. The distance has been created within the children and a new possibility is there because of this distance. If one does not take it up, it is as though one were expecting the children to remain at the stage of first grade for their whole lives. To stay within the harmonious nature is not the way of the human being. We must go through this gap, this second gap between ages nine and ten. This we have worked out through the general stream.

But how do we meet the specific, individual stream at this age? First we must look a bit more at what is going on. There is at this stage a slight difference between what happens to girls and what happens to boys. It is possible to talk

about children in the first, second, and third grades without distinguishing between boys and girls. One can simply speak of children. At this stage it becomes necessary to speak of boys and of girls because their whole inner life of feelings becomes different. Also, the children begin to separate themselves from one another.

I have spoken with many children over the years, and I conclude that a large percentage of boys have stolen a little bit when they were nine or ten years old. Very often they are not thieves; by the next year they will have stopped stealing. But they are experimenting: What will the grown-ups do if I do this? It is an experiment they can do with their new-found distance. They also can lie a little bit. All the while they are watching the grown-ups: What do they see? What will they do? They make a small experiment in evil. Girls sometimes do so as well but not as often.

With girls you can see a different quality developing, that of feeling misunderstood: “Oh, the grown-ups do not understand me. My father and my mother, my teacher and all the other boys and girls do not understand me. I am alone.” The young girl starts to cry. She lies on her bed with her head on her pillow, her tears streaming: “I am alone and the others are evil. Now I shall die. Then I will lie in the coffin and the others will bring flowers and stand around, and they will regret and repent, but it will be too late!” Here also is a gap, and wonderful feelings flow in, wonderful feelings of being alone — experiencing one’s own unique existence.

At the same time, the feelings become a little bit sentimental. Here we have a new realm where the feelings are not harmonious within the whole community. Instead, the self feels itself as separate, and with this new “I” feeling, new dangers arise as well as new possibilities. We have to make a distinction between these evil forces, between the ahrimanic

forces that create this gap, and what the human being makes out of it. The possibility for a free, independent human being has been taken one step further. At first it appeared in the realm of will forces. Now it appears in this realm of feelings.

Now, we must look at the meeting of the individual child and the adult. The whole general stream of education is insufficient to help the child across this gap. But added to the general stream of education is this meeting. This I do not consider part of education. What happens at this meeting? This is a meeting between the teacher as a spiritual being and the older child who is now going through this gap. Does the child see that the adult recognizes him or her? Rudolf Steiner emphasizes the importance of this meeting when he says that if this does not happen, something is lost which cannot be replaced in the whole of later life. Of course, very much can be done later, but not the great experience of this meeting.

This meeting is between the adult and the child. What is essential is that here the adult is not his authority. That belongs to the general stream of education. It is not possible to define what is important; it is only possible to describe some qualities that are important if this intimate meeting is to take place. We can say the following: If the teacher persists in emphasizing all his authority in the belief that this is what he ought to do, and if his authority is somehow insensitive or inconsistent, somehow solid, then the child will be very disappointed. This is not what the child is looking for in this meeting. Without thinking it, the child is searching for a transparent being, not for a weak person but a strong one, strong but nonetheless a transparent one. If the child can find what he is looking for rather than an insensitive, inconsistent person, the child experiences, not philosophically but in his feelings, a deep confirmation of his own existence. This

confirmation reverberates through the rest of the child's life, giving inner force and strength to his feelings. A strength that in no way opposes the world. It confirms the individuality on the way to becoming a free individuality.

Now we must look upon the third attack on the growing child. It comes when the child is about sixteen or seventeen. I have made an arrow from above at age three and from below at age nine [Diagram 5]. Here we must make arrows from both sides attacking very strongly.

Who are the divine, good spiritual beings working in this third realm? They are the Spirits of Movement, the Dynamis, out of whom the astral body has been created. Now opposing forces of different qualities cause chaos in thinking, feeling, and will. At this age, authority carries no weight, while at the same time the "I" has not yet been born within the child. This creates an open space that makes this a very exciting period. Something is happening in deep water, in the ocean of the soul. All the pillars of which I spoke are falling down.

If you approach the young people with your moral rules, the young people, if they are strong and earnestly searching human beings, will reject these rules. They will find them for themselves. The grown-up people can only be helpers by showing how and where they themselves have found moral qualities. Will these young people find adult friends who go a few steps ahead and show them the way during this third gap? For just here there is experienced a very great loneliness and this is necessary for the next great step — the birth of the "I." If a young person only dreams his way through this gap, then at the beginning of his or her twenties, the birth of the "I" will not come in the same way as it would if this gap has been enormously deep. In such a deep gap, all the pillars fall down. If this occurs, the young gentleman or lady will become a

Parsival being. He or she will have been quite alone searching for forms, finding new ways on the path to the Grail.

I would like to take a small detour to describe two illnesses that have emerged in the last twenty years, although they existed less frequently before that. They have been appearing more and more although still in only a minority of people. If we look at these two illnesses, we can discover some very important qualities. The one illness, anorexia, appears more often in girls than in boys, usually between the ages of fifteen and seventeen. With some, the illness passes and normal life resumes. Others, who stop eating, eventually die from the illness. Somehow, something in their inner life is saying, "No!" to the whole world. The impressions are there, the experiences are there, but they are too much. The young person cannot bear them anymore and "No" is their inner attitude to all sense perceptions. Occasionally this occurs in boys, but most often, it is girls who refuse the world in this way. With boys the opposite can occur with the illness called bulimia. There are some, a very few, who cannot stop eating. At first they eat a little bit more, then they eat even more until they go into the kitchen at night and eat everything. When they eat so much that their stomachs are full, they vomit and eat more again. They feel very ashamed doing this. They can feel such shame that sometimes they commit suicide. I knew some boys who during this period committed suicide because they were unable to stop eating because of this illness. Their inner life had become totally chaotic.

Now we must compare these two illnesses. The one says "No" while the other says "Yes" with an ever-increasing desire. With both these extremes, a sense for quality disappears. If I always reject or if I repeatedly devour food, then a real meeting with the world is lost. Love disappears. We can see

that the middle way between these illnesses is the way of love. Through love we unite with the small, little-noticed qualities of sense perception. We neither reject nor devour them, but we dive into them, live with them and thus unite ourselves with the world. This active perception leads over to the great realm of artistic activity. Without artistic activity, it is not possible to let the middle realm grow. It is just this uniting oneself with the world, with the qualities of the world, that overcomes the stormy, abnormal Spirits of Movement that are raging in the underground, in the subconscious. In the one case, these abnormal Spirits of Movement create a desire for more and more, and on the other, a rejection, a blocking out of the whole world. But the middle sphere must grow slowly to mediate these extreme tendencies. Love must first come to the sense perceptions and then, though it is more difficult, to meetings with other people. Here the balance lies between the search for community on one side, while healthily developing one's individuality on the other. In this way, we must overcome the third gap. From there, we go on to become adults where we experience the effects of all three attacks that have occurred along the way. And these attacks must occur. It is good that they occur. Without them, there can develop no free, independent individuality.

As adults we must face the great question of the next step. How can we, through the middle way of the heart, all the while maintaining our free individuality, find our way to nature and to other human beings? How can we have a new meeting, a new community in the colleges of teachers in Waldorf schools? How do we participate in the school community together with the parents, the children, and the young people of the upper grades as a whole school community? This we will have as a theme tomorrow.

Lecture III

The Teachers' Meeting as the Heart Organ of the School

Yesterday we tried looking at some qualities in the stream of education that we can call the general stream, belonging to the whole of humanity, and we also tried looking at the polarity, which we call the individual stream of development. In this latter stream the unique individuality awakens and walks his own path. In this stream everyone is different, everyone is unique. We were able to look at the way anti-social forces work to create a basis for this individual stream in order that it can be fulfilled. Without these anti-social forces, we would only sleep and dream within a divine wholeness. Both of these streams are there. What we do in education should stem from qualities within the general stream as it unfolds through the children at different ages. At the same time we must meet and recognize what is happening in the individual stream. But out of this stream, you can say that there is no education. Education comes only out of the general stream. From that stream we must give nourishment, and from it we help the whole evolution of the child. On this level there is equality. In a deep (not to be confused with a legal) sense, all children are equal.

Now it is interesting to look at something. During this century, whenever educational systems have become a bit too rigid, the following has sometimes happened. The opposite stream emerges. We can look at this century and see that after

1970, a small stream in Europe began to emerge which called itself the “anti-pedagogical movement.” What does this mean? People were saying: All pedagogy is wrong in all instances. There should not be any pedagogy at all. A child is equal to a grown-up. We have only the task of meeting and recognizing the child. We have to decide nothing. We have to say nothing. The children ought to decide all things concerning themselves.

You see, of course, this is ridiculous. It is wrong. But it is interesting to see how, if the education out of one stream is not really working, if it has become too rigid, then the extreme opposite emerges to wipe out, to obliterate, this whole general stream of education. Instead people want to emphasize only the individual stream where there can be no education, only a recognizing and a meeting. Therefore our great task is to embrace both streams. We must work very deeply and embrace all that we are doing throughout the grades out of the general stream. We also must meet each child as a specific human being.

It is very interesting to recognize that the opposite stream is always emerging within the Waldorf School Movement. I have real descriptions by teachers within our movement saying that children, already from kindergarten age, have equal rights to those of grown-ups. You see, this is the same imbalance. These teachers are not working out of both streams, making the distinction between them and then recognizing that at one point we are in the general stream or now we are going over to the other stream. Instead they suddenly want to wipe out the whole general stream and say that we can only meet the children, we can only live with the children, and such things. If the opposite stream begins to emerge in this way, then we must put ourselves to the test and

ask ourselves: What is the reason? Perhaps the general stream has been working a bit too rigidly. This is only a question, a test. Then we can go on to a deeper, widened conception of both streams and into practical activities out of them, whereby we work differently out of each of them.

Before I approach the theme for today, "The Teachers' Meeting as the Heart Organ of the School," I should like to try to widen our whole point of view. I will begin by quoting a very well-known statement of Rudolf Steiner's in the first lecture of *Study of Man (Allgemeine Menschenkunde)*. There he makes the astonishing statement that one of the most important tasks of the teacher is to help nourish, to help the children so that they may sleep properly, sleep in the right way. This is a very astonishing statement at the beginning of lectures concerning education. Of course, the children are sleeping very well. There is no question of their not sleeping well, but Rudolf Steiner is speaking spiritually. He is looking at what is going on through the night in their deep, sleeping consciousness. Every day we have many experiences. We go through events where we discover new things, where we love and unite ourselves with words, with other human beings and so on. Out of this will always come fruits. We take these with us when we fall asleep at night. Within these fruits are seeds, and these seeds ripen during the night in the deep sleep consciousness in the spiritual world. New faculties ripen there. New spiritual impulses stream into the new day, awakening in the body, in the physical body. But are seeds always there, or can it happen that in falling asleep the children have no seeds? Is it possible that, going into sleep at night, they have nothing in their souls and that then quite different processes occur during the night? The teacher ought to help the children to have seeds rather than empty

nothingness for when they fall asleep. When do children go to sleep with empty nothingness? This happens when they have not loved anything during the day, when they have not united themselves with any content, when they only pass by events; this is to experience nothingness, nothingness, and more nothingness. When they touch only the surface of things, then they fall asleep into an empty nothingness. And now ahrimanic, elemental beings creep into their souls, which make things much worse by the next morning.

But when the children have loved what they are doing, loved the content of what they are learning with an inner, still, quiet enthusiasm, then there will be seeds. This inner experience of “still-living-within-the-qualities” of what they are learning forms the seeds. When these seeds are created, the children come the next morning with fresh, new spiritual impulses in their souls. I suppose that all teachers know this subconsciously whether or not they realize it consciously. They may recognize that if they really succeed in this living process during their lessons that the children come the next morning in a quite new way, with sun forces in their souls from out of the night. They enjoy and love the next step in the lesson. If nothing has been taken into the night, it is not the same the next morning. The lesson is much worse. It can be disastrous, even a catastrophe.

This is what Rudolf Steiner says in one of the first statements of the lecture cycle *Study of Man* given at the founding of the first Waldorf school. Rudolf Steiner widens our point of view. He does this because mankind today turns all its attention to the day only. People see what happens during the day, what concerns the material world, and forget the deep night of spiritual beings, even though without this realm we could not live at all. We live by the grace of what

comes to us during the night. However, we cannot assume that it will come. It may come. We must do our duty during the day to help the children in order that something will stream into them at night. If the teacher helps to create those seeds within his students, then the teacher himself will find his connection with his angel during the night. Just as spiritual strength streams into the children, so will it stream into his work.

We have been considering how a teacher can work with his children with a widened consciousness that encompasses the night. But now I would like to deal with something that I would like to call an “illness” which befalls almost every teacher at the beginning of his work as a teacher. I say almost all teachers because I have observed this and it is almost universal. Teachers need to go through this initial illness. It is the following: The task of teaching the lessons, the task of educating the children is so great that the teacher must put all his capabilities, all his inner awareness into what he is doing in his lesson with the children to the extent that he forgets to consider all the other teachers in the other classrooms. His consciousness is only in his lessons. When one lesson is over, he leaves. It is finished. Another teacher comes in to teach a foreign language, eurhythm or something else, and the first teacher feels this has nothing to do with him. He goes into another classroom. There another teacher has been working with the students, but when he enters the classroom, he does not consider what has gone before. Instead he simply gives his lesson. I would say that this illness is almost necessary because we ought first to concentrate all our forces on our own tasks. Then suddenly (I hope very soon), we discern that this is not right. It is not true. We are within the whole school. I do something and this becomes the basis on which another teacher works. When I go into a class, another

teacher has been there, engaged. He has been working with his angel with those children. At first a teacher does not take this into consideration. His consciousness does not widen to encompass this and he does not work together spiritually with the other teachers in the whole school. I am not accusing anyone. I, myself, have been in just this situation. I have gone through this illness myself. I know it very well. We must go through it to experience how necessary the next level is.

Now we can recognize this deep stream of cooperation which is always there, for we cannot really be separated one from another. We may forget this, but then we can make it conscious again and discover the other teachers in this stream of cooperation. On this now higher level, specific seeds may come. Just as seeds may come to the children who sleep in the right way, so on this first level of the individuality of one child, of one teacher, the seeds at this higher level may or may not form. When we awaken to the cooperation among ourselves, higher seeds will come into the whole life of the school which will be carried into the night by the teachers.

These seeds are not of the level of the angels, but they are of the level of the archangels. A single angel follows and helps one human being. Where a group of human beings is awakening, when a group of free, independent individualities comes to this higher level so that they take seeds into their sleep, something can stream into them from the archangels. Many archangels work together to create this community, but they cannot do it without our doing our part in advance. It is just as with the angels, who, if we do nothing during the day, have nothing to reinforce during the night. Nothing will come from them. Nothing. When we work on this higher level, the archangels also can be active. One must not think of this as the mere additive process with the addition of the work of one teacher to that of another and another and so

forth. It is a kind of multiplication, for it goes from each individual to all the others. A higher level of seeds ripens such that something new, that is, courage, streams into the next day of school, not only into one class but into the whole school. Spiritual courage that overcomes disappointments, failures, and disasters flows into the school. In earthly life, there must be failures, there must be disasters. There exist many anti-social forces, of course. We do not have perfection here. However, a great spiritual courage can see us through all of these difficulties and can further the life of the school.

One must ask: Is this activity working or is it not working? Are the teachers moving apart, the one in his classroom, the other in his? Are they separated and not working together in this spiritual community? Are they not approaching this higher level?

Now we can look at the teachers' meeting as the heart organ of the school. This is where this higher process can be made conscious. Out of this heart organ, a new stream of spiritual courage can carry the whole life of the school in a new way. As far as I can see, looking at the schools in Europe and in the whole world, how we approach this next level is one of the most burning questions in the whole movement of Waldorf education. We can no longer stay only on the first level where the individual activities of single teachers may be very good. Individual teachers do a great deal of fine work in all the schools throughout the world. But we are not yet approaching this next higher level, although we are trying to reach it. I am quite sure that for the next decade and in the following century, the whole life of the Waldorf School Movement will depend on how much we move from the first level of individualities, who are separate, to the next level of free individualities, who are co-working.

It is possible to describe some qualities we must look for in this heart organ, the faculty meeting. I should like to make some contributions, but these are not definitive because it is not possible to describe this and say that the description is finished. This attitude is always wrong. Community-building is such a great spiritual realm of the future of humanity that we should be very careful. We can only make contributions in order to make conscious some very important aspects of this community-building, but we cannot say that we are describing the whole. One indispensable aspect is that every teacher in this whole community appears in the consciousness of the other teachers. All the teachers must be interested in recognizing how one teacher is working. Everyone must be aware of what is going on in the other classrooms. Of course it is not possible to recognize everything that is being done, that is not what I mean, but the interest in it must be there. If you recognize only one event in another classroom, a door will be opened. It is not necessary to look at every detail. One can make a small test after one year to see how it has been working. Suppose we have worked together in the teachers' meeting during the whole year. We can ask how many teachers have not appeared at all in the consciousness of the others. This is a very helpful exercise.

I will tell a short story. I was visiting a school and was present in the teachers' meeting. We took up a theme and I made some contributions, after which one of the teachers spoke to the theme. Then the same teacher spoke once more and then once again he spoke. After the meeting, I reviewed it for myself. Almost all the other teachers had been silent the whole time. One old, very intelligent, very capable teacher had spoken the whole time. This is not wrong, of course, if this happens once in one of the teachers' meetings. He may

have had much to say that was worthwhile. So I asked the others, "This teacher spoke very much this afternoon. How is it in the other teachers' meetings throughout the year?" They answered, "We cannot speak at all!" This, then, was the situation. Of course there will always be some teachers who are more capable, who know more than the others and that is not wrong. They ought to make their contributions, but it is a task of the teachers' meeting that everyone should speak out, not at every meeting but at least at some time during the year. One can schedule such things and say that now we are going to go around and each teacher will tell about one of his activities in his lessons. He may choose what he likes, but everyone has to share something out of his activities. In this way, all the others can recognize these things.

In many teachers' meetings, I have seen it happen that a very few teachers speak while many others are silent until a catastrophe occurs in one teacher's class. Then we have to deal with this catastrophe. Now this poor teacher is spoken about and we must recognize and deal with what is going on in his class. This is not unusual. We must also deal with catastrophes. That is not wrong. But we ought not wait until they come. Rather throughout the year, we should tell one another, one after the other, what is going on in our lessons when there are no catastrophes. If this is done, then a mood will be created within which we can deal with the catastrophes. You see, here is a great task. Of course we are not aiming for perfection but to create the interest in making something like this happen so that we really deal with this human being and that human being and with what is living in this and that classroom. When we do this we are awakening to this higher level where the archangels work at night, and they will pour their forces of courage into the whole college of teachers of the school. Rudolf Steiner called

this process the reverse ritual, or the inverted ritual. This is a strange expression with the following meaning. In religious rituals, spiritual beings dive into all the processes of the ritual actions and words, permeating what can be perceived with the physical senses. The spiritual forces permeate the physical processes, the physical actions during the ritual. The spiritual beings dive into these and by letting the ritual echo in their own hearts, those who are participating in the religious ritual can unite with these spiritual beings. This is the usual ritual.

Now what is the inverted ritual? It does not begin with formed physical actions but with free, independent individualities who are working on their own paths of knowledge and who approach, through difficulties, this higher level of the archangels where they awaken to the spiritual activity in other human beings. They do not awaken to the bodies of the other human beings, nor to their sympathies and antipathies, but to their spiritual activities. Then seeds are created on a higher level, and they are reinforced by higher beings. These higher beings are present. It is a ritual, but one which is reversed, inverted, because the individuals must come up to this higher level.

But does it work? Does this inverted ritual work at all? This is always an inner question. We must test ourselves and look for all the hindrances that are preventing it from working. When we do, we come up against all those anti-social forces that we looked at yesterday. These have accumulated throughout the whole life of every teacher. We find all sorts of anti-social forces in feeling, thinking and will. There are many such forces and there must be. These are not bad. They are necessary because they separate us from the whole world and create the basis for our being free, independent individualities. We have arrived at this century when we are at the height of the consciousness soul,

when I experience myself confronting the whole world. I am concerned about it and must consider what I think, what I feel, and what I will, and this is right. Of course, it is right. We must reach this height of the consciousness soul. We must confront the whole world. But it is not necessary to stay at this point. From this point, it is on the basis of anti-social forces that the consciousness soul, the “I”-consciousness, has been created and exercised. Here it is possible to ascend one more step to the next level. The necessary condition to taking this step is to experience and recognize others.

It is a rule, as I mentioned in my first lecture, that there is the center and there is the periphery, and in discovering others, I find myself not only in myself but in the others at the same time. When I emphasize myself, I can never come to my higher self — never. I find the higher self in the innermost being of myself but also in others at the same time. In order to truly meet another person, we must not meet merely in sympathy and antipathy, but we must recognize the spiritual being of the other human being. We must have an interest in doing this, and each of us must take a few steps in this direction.

There is a great meditation recommended by Rudolf Steiner that can help us. Make a picture of another human being in your inner consciousness. Not just one picture but also a second and a third, each one in a quite different way. In the first picture we must embrace all that we recognize of this person. We must try to make a portrait, a painting, a picture of this human being. We should finish this picture in all its details, as much as we can. Of course, it will not be perfect, but we must bring all that we can together and create a picture. Now, a picture, a portrait, is never identical with the spiritual being who is the subject of this portrait. It may be a good portrait of the spiritual being, but still it is a picture.

Now that I have this portrait, I can say to myself: I have a picture of this spiritual being, I do not, of course, have the spiritual being itself. This is the first picture.

Now you can ask how it is possible to make a second picture when you have taken all that you know and made it into one finished picture. The second picture ought to be quite different. This first portrait must be finished. The second cannot be finished, not finished at all. It is always being painted. If I dive into this second picture, then I will make a very astonishing discovery. There exists in every human being a tendency, like a heavy gravity or pull, to stick with the first picture. I feel that I know this person, who he is, and that my picture of him is finished. When he comes through the door, I already know who he is. But I can never know just what he is thinking now, or just what he is feeling. I can only know what I experienced yesterday. Only yesterday is fixed.

For example, yesterday I had a strong conflict, an argument with another person, and I discovered that she was lying. My picture of this is terrible and it is finished. The next morning the door opens, and this “liar” comes into the room. At first, when I speak to her, I do not speak to her but to my picture of her, my finished picture from yesterday. Ghost-like, unreal, unfinished pictures may be true, they may be untrue. But while I speak to the picture, there is a human being standing before me who, in the meantime, has discovered that she was lying and has regretted it very much, and she is now trying to go beyond it. This is all possible. I do not know. My second picture of a person must develop every moment, every second. It is never finished.

If I compare the two pictures I have made within myself of each of the other teachers in the faculty, I will discover how heavy, what gravity there is in the first picture. This picture is not wrong. We must make this first picture. We must include

our experiences exactly as they have happened. But we must not stay with the first picture but be open to the next, the second picture, in order to see what is happening now.

Then we come to the much more difficult third picture. This picture will be painted in the future. If I have one picture formed from my experience and a second created in the moment, I still do not know what will come of this human being in his next incarnation. We do not even know what will become of him the next day, not even tomorrow. We cannot yet know. In every human being, there is a great, unknown future. A very great, unknown future lies within this spiritual being. If I am oblivious to this and hold only to the first picture, in reality I am only looking at the past. In the second I am open to what is happening in the moment. The third is just as necessary. We must also concern ourselves with the future of the children in our classes. I have pictures of them garnered from many experiences, and I must be open to what is going on in the moment, and I must ask what will become of this child when he is grown and when he is reincarnated. I must leave this question open and carry it in my consciousness.

Rudolf Steiner recommended another exercise, one that is done by picturing the physical body. First, one pictures to oneself the head as it is composed of finished forms. The second picture should be made of the lungs and heart, which are never finished but are changing at every moment. When we look at the limbs, which are the focus of the third picture, what is significant is not their particular forms, for example, the form of the fingers. What is significant is also not, as it is with the heart and lung, the activity within them. What is significant is what a person does with his fingers, what he will do in the future. Thus the physical body can only

be conceived by forming three different pictures in three different ways. This is also true when we try to conceive the whole existence of another human being. When we approach other people in this threefold way, in carrying out these exercises, we begin the great task of building a higher level of community within the teachers' meeting from which may flow a great stream of courage into the whole life of the school.

We must now go into details of the life of the teachers' meeting. We will look at what happens, what qualities must be found there, and some of the dangers there. We need to deal with the difference between the faculty and the college and ask wherein lies the difference and whether there must be a difference. Also, we must ask how the college of teachers works together with the parents and how the parents in the school community deal with what goes on in the whole school. Can the school community develop as a living entity, can it be a spiritual organ with its own biography which develops through different phases? Then there is the much deeper question of how this school community, with its individual biography, lives within society as a whole in the present time. How is the Spirit of our Time living within the school community? This last question will be the theme of our last lecture tomorrow.

Lecture IV

The School Community in the Society of the Present Time

Yesterday I tried to make some contributions to our great task of community building, spiritual community building. At the same time, we looked at this heart-organ of the whole school, the teachers' meeting. Now we have to look more into details because this great spiritual task has to be realized in practical life. And by doing, by building, by running a school, we have of course to deal with all the small details of practical life in different ways. How does this spiritual impulse then show itself as it is being realized there? Does it then disappear and something other, some other thing, show itself? The spiritual substance, of course, is always the beginning; it has always to be renewed by free initiatives of individualities in cooperation with others. But it has also to permeate all that we are doing and there the great difficulties arise. So now we have to look a little bit into this whole process.

At first we have to realize the very great difference between the two following situations. Imagine at first a small school, just having begun. There are four teachers, forty or fifty children, a small group of parents, a pioneer situation. And then imagine, on the other side, something like the Sao Paolo school, with one thousand children, from grades one to twelve, grades 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, upwards until grades 12a, 12b, one thousand children in all. And here are eighty teachers

who don't know them. The teachers cannot know all of them. It is impossible. How do they really live in such a school?

Then picture The Hague School, larger than Sao Paolo, the Helsinki school, also larger than Sao Paolo. And there are other schools in Germany that are just as big. Imagine the very great difference between the tasks in a very small school, just like a big family, and this great big thing which is growing. Of course, every school will have the tendency to grow. And it is an open question as to what will go on there and how the community's tendencies and forces will meet this great task so that the spiritual substance may permeate the whole, so that the wholeness is there.

And now, I will try, from different points of view, to describe some of those forces and tendencies present in every school and how we have to deal with those necessary practical tasks.

At first you can look upon the following. We have here a circle representing a wholeness [Diagram 6a]. But I am not yet saying that this is the teachers' meeting as the heart-organ of the school, that is, of the whole school community and the staff. I will deal with those questions a little bit later. But at first there is a wholeness there, and after some time, you can see two different tendencies, both of them necessary. These are not always cooperating; at the beginning, they are always cooperating, but after some steps, it's not quite a sure thing. The one tendency is that every school must have new initiatives. Without new, fresh initiatives out of the co-workers, of course, the school would die. But, and on the other side, there must be sufficient continuity. If the school is always going in all directions without continuity, then there is no school. So, how do those two necessary approaches work together?

Festivals are one example: the Michael festival, the Christmas festival, the Easter festival, the midsummer festival, in addition to the monthly festivals where all children are involved, and so on. There are dozens of possible festivals. Let us look at only those great festivals of Christmas and midsummer. In one school, a very capable person has created such a festival for the whole school, and the whole faculty is enthusiastic about this. Then the next year, the same person is doing the festival, and not only this one but also the others. And the third year the same person does the festivals, and the fourth year and the sixth year and the seventh, for an entire decade, the same person is doing the festivals! Of course, she is very insightful and very capable. This organizing is not bad, it is good.

But then some newcomers are there, saying, "Oh, we have an idea how we can do this festival!" Then the others are shocked and say, "Oh, this is impossible! This lady is doing it! What do you mean!?" There you see, you have these opposite tendencies. On one side, fresh new initiatives and on the other side, continuity, good continuity. Why change a good thing?

You see, we have, at the one side here, initiatives [Diagram 6b]. Here are initiatives, and on the other side, there is continuity. And of course both are good, but how do they work together? And then you can see they must live within this wholeness. Therefore I have drawn this circle. Because there is a tendency that this task of continuity somehow goes beyond this.

And here then is a kind of castle, and in this castle things remain unchanged. Security comes first, but it is no longer within this whole circle. On the other side, new initiatives may increase so that there is somehow a wild fancy, wild ideas,

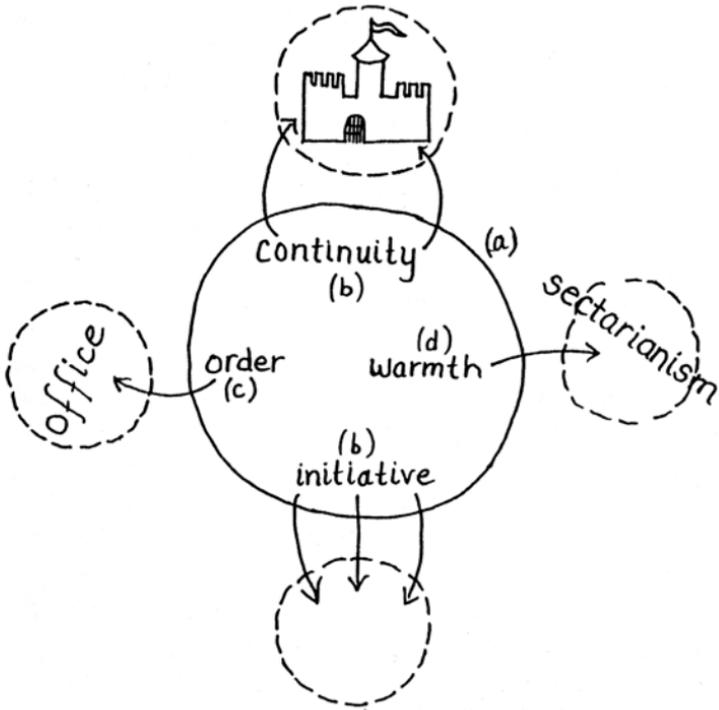


Diagram 6

which demand that now we must do it in this way or that way. For instance, someone suggests, "Let us do the Christmas festival so that it is only by conversation! Yes, why not? As an experiment!"

You see, now we come to the next step. All new initiatives, in order to stay within this circle, also have to deal with the responsibility of the consequences and effects. If they do not, then they are somehow running wild outside the circle and destroying the school. But new initiatives are not only necessary, they are indispensable; without them, a school cannot live.

And now we look at this great task, within this circle, of all those who are there, all those concerned. I don't define who it is, there are different possibilities, but it includes those concerned. These people must deal with the tasks with an open attitude of receiving new initiatives. But at the same time, they must cultivate responsibility to maintain sufficient continuity but not without space for initiative.

You can look into all schools and see that one goes a little bit in this direction and another goes a little bit in that direction. It is an open question, and there is no model that says how to do it. There is no prescribed rule of how to run a school. Those concerned have to deal with it. You must be sure that the polarity of these two forces will always be there in every school. For there must be order in a school; without order there is no school at all. But what kind of order is this, and who is dealing with the order right down into the small appointments, and into all the small details? In the pioneer situation, it is no great question. Then all the co-workers are dealing with all decisions, as well as all order and form, and if someone is doing a little bit in a wrong way, then it very quickly will be corrected and so on. It is a small situation with only four teachers and fifty children, a pioneering situation. A little bit of disorder is not that bad. You can manage it. But think of Sao Paulo, with one thousand students and eighty teachers who do not at all know the names of all the other teachers. What is going on then? There must be an order to the life of that school too.

And now we come to a very important thing: the office, "bureaucracy." The teachers say, "Oh, we do not have time for this. You have to make an appointment with the manager who will do this for us." It may happen in a school that someone is appointed to order the school. And this is not bad. It is a question of how this human being will do this. Is he

really diving into the spiritual substance of the school? Is he participating and doing this and helping the whole school, or is he now making his office outside the circle [Diagram 6c]? Step by step, are all decisions emanating from this office, so that somehow a power will be centered there? Then you see this order is no longer within the circle but going out it. Of course, there can be an office, that's not bad. But here you have another sort of office outside, as management appointed only to run this great business of the school.

In this case we have a large school as a kind of great business. Management is over there to one side, and you see that there is now a cold stream in the school. It is really cold, especially if this man is very clever. I came on one trip to a school, not in the Americas, and I did not know what the school was like. I was invited, I gave some lectures, and then I participated in the teachers' meeting. They asked me how to create, how to form the whole faculty meeting, and I asked some questions. "Tell me, what is the theme of your knowledge-building activity, your common spiritual activity? With what do you begin the faculty meeting?" And they said, "Oh, this we have done in earlier years, but this year we have had no time for it."

"Oh," I said, "no time for cooperating in spiritual scientific content?" "No," they responded, "we have no time for this."

"Oh, I see, you have a great deal of artistic activity, perhaps, of eurythmy, painting, and so on?" Again, they answered, "No, you see, we have had this in earlier years. Then all the teachers came to the meeting and did eurythmy together, but now we do not have time for it. This year we have had no time for eurythmy, no time for singing, no time for painting, no time for knowledge-building activity."

“But what do you do instead of this work?” I asked. They said, “The whole year we have struggled with the manager!”

You see, there was a very clever man making all the decisions and taking the power of the school into this office. And now the teachers’ meeting became a fight, a struggle between them, and all the time, the whole year through, was somehow occupied by this struggle.

Of course, this is an illness in the school, and here we need to look at the quality of the illness. What is illness? It is always, in some way, something of an organism’s going outside itself, being separated, being isolated, so that it is no longer within the wholeness. Then there is always illness. Therefore, here on the circle [Diagram 6 at a, b, and c], illness is coming, and illness here, and here; on all sides illness is somehow present, because good forces are going outside the circle.

I am, of course, not against order. There must be order, sufficient order in every school. There may also be the opposite situation, where there is no manager and also no order within the school, so that nothing at all is there where order ought to be.

An example: At the Goetheanum, I am trying to cooperate with all the schools in the whole world. We have organized three great world teachers’ conferences: 1983, 1986, and 1989. Before these conferences, I send circular letters to all schools with some recommendations so as to coordinate the preparing of study activity. So, on one of my trips, I visited a school, and I was very interested to see if the school faculty meeting was dealing with those recommendations. Of course, it is up to them, they are not required to follow them, it is a free choice. But I was very interested to hear what they were doing with those recommendations for fostering cooperation in the world school movement. Therefore, I asked some

teachers, “What have you done with the recommendations in my last circular letter?”

They said, “What? Circular letter? What circular letter?” They hadn’t read it at all! Then I inquired a little bit further. It became clear that nobody in the whole school had read the letter! Was this somehow a failure of the post? No! The letter lay in a drawer in the desk of the office, only having been put into the drawer, not having been read at all! A letter comes and is put into the drawer! This I would call a little bit lacking in order. We can see that here in this whole, there are some qualities that must be sufficiently there, and then they suddenly can be too much. But outside the whole, where there is management, this would not happen with a clever manager. He would know exactly about all letters, there in his office outside the circle. We see that it is an open question, a living process.

And now opposite to this order (which is good but can become cold when it is outside), here on the other side, there is warmth [Diagram 6d]. Every school community is in need of warmth, heart warmth, penetrating the meetings of the teachers with the students, with the teachers, with the whole school community. This realm cannot be cold. A cold school community is on the way to dying. There must be warmth. But now this warmth can increase and become too hot. I should like to make one little picture, perhaps a little bit extreme, but it is not my fancy, I have witnessed it. It has happened.

Every morning all the teachers gather, before the first lesson, singing in chorus a holy verse by Rudolf Steiner. And then the oldest teacher, the founder of the school, is going around and kissing everyone on the forehead. This is, somehow — “hot.” Hot, kissing, humidity! Of course, this, too, is beginning to go outside this circle. It is sectarian.

We can see that the warmth must be there, heart warmth penetrating the whole school. We cannot live without warmth of the heart, but this warmth may also go out beyond the circle, and then this tendency of a sect appears there. Of course this is a very rare exception I have described, but it really has happened. But the same tendency may be there a little bit, a potential in this direction, and then you can consciously meet it. There is no way of obliterating the warmth, for we are in need of it. But it has to be within the whole in cooperation with all sides of this organism.

Now you see, I have not made a model, a prescribed model, of how to run a school. This doesn't exist at all. Rather there are concerned people, joining together out of spiritual existence, contributing substance to create all the necessary elements. And then all of these forces, all the tendencies, must be there. It is an organism, just as we need lung and heart and bone and so on, so all the forces must be there. But we have to work with the organism so that it can be permeated, with the polarities taken into consideration, and then deal with it so that it can develop to the next step.

Now, the next great question (which came to me in the break the day before yesterday): Do I speak of the faculty and staff or of the college of teachers? And here we see a new, very important question. In the pioneer situation, this question doesn't exist at all. Everyone does everything together, of course. The school is slowly growing. Some teachers hold the opinion that the school must never leave the pioneer situation. They feel that if the school then grows, it is better to found a new school, because the school ought not to be too large. If the school grows too large, we cannot manage it anymore, we cannot permeate it spiritually. They would reject such schools as those in Sao Paolo, or The Hague, or

Helsinki. Some might say that it is bad, wrong, that it can't be done. And I don't know, I would also prefer a not-too-large school, but those concerned have to decide this issue for themselves. Those outside cannot say that they ought not to do it. They have themselves to decide how large a school they want to have. They must ask themselves whether they permeate what they have created. So here we have come to a law, an unwritten law of spiritual life: It is always those who are concerned who must decide things themselves and never those from outside.

But now we can deal with this question of faculty and college of teachers. If the school is growing to such a degree as Sao Paolo, then many of those eighty teachers have only three or four lessons a week. Some of them are half time, have a half-time job. And of course, it is not appropriate (since they are only "jumping" a little bit into the school and offering good but limited help) that they should participate in all the decisions and considerations concerning the real continuity in carrying the school forward. This would not be appropriate, and they usually don't want to do it, anyway. They want only to offer this small help for the school. Then where is the limit? How much must a teacher do within the school, to what degree must his involvement be so that it is appropriate that he now is within this group of human beings really carrying the school continually further on? If it is a growing school, then this differentiation has been made there in many grade schools. Not in all of them, but in most of them, they say that the faculty/staff meeting is attended by all the co-workers. But then there is another step to the college of teachers, to those really dealing with this greater task of carrying the continuity of the school further. And both groups are satisfied that it is established in this way.

But there are problems. Both organs, the faculty/staff and the college of teachers, in such a large school are just as important, but they are different. You have to consider what must go into the whole faculty/staff meeting and what must go on in the college of teachers and how to decide this. There are open questions, and these may be solved in different ways in different schools, for there is no model in advance. But in growing schools, this necessary differentiation comes about.

The next important question is: How does a teacher go from being a member of the faculty/staff to a member of the college of teachers? The most important thing is not how this is determined, but that it is quite clear for all members of the faculty/staff and the college. If this is not clear, it is always bad, very bad. It becomes secret, somehow. But if it is open and clear, then there may be different solutions. Some are more or less good. I will describe two different approaches from different schools in Europe.

In the first school, those in the college tell all members of the faculty/staff that there is a condition to be met before going into the internal conference, the college, and that is that one ought to have been at least one year on the faculty or staff. But after one year on the staff, anyone may, if he wishes, ask to join the college, and then the door is open and he can join. The one-year waiting period is required because at first, in such a large school, one ought to recognize the other a little bit more, both new and old. The newcomer, especially, needs to recognize how those teachers are. He must ask himself, "Will I join them?" And the others must ask, "What is this newcomer like?" But then the door is open; he can ask, and then he joins the college. It is an open situation and quite clearly understood by all.

Here is another example in quite another mood. The newcomers, after one year, may not ask to join. This is not

sufficient. Rather they must be invited by the college, and the college discusses the application. They ask themselves, "Would we like to have him, or not?" If no, then they don't ask him at all. Then he cannot join, although he may want to join, because he has not been invited by the college. You see, there, the continuity has been emphasized very much. "Who is ripe to join us?" is the question.

But there is a middle way, between these two possibilities. The one leaves the door totally open, but does not make it too easy to join, so that nobody can, so to speak, "jump" into the college. There has to be a very earnest conversation at the door. Yes, he may join if he will. But at first, there is an earnest conversation describing the consequences of and the responsibility towards what the members are doing in the college of teachers. You see, it is an additional activity. You must do much that is in addition to your normal duties, taking much more responsibility on yourself. It is much easier to remain a faculty member only, giving lessons and saying, "Well, the others may do that, I will not join this group." But if you say, "Yes, I will join," then you take on all the responsibilities of the destiny realm which is carried by the college of teachers.

I do not say what is the right decision for each one. I am only trying to describe how, with open doors, membership could be a little bit too indifferent. If you make a castle, on the other hand, it can be too closed. When you have both an open door and a very earnest conversation at the door, then you have an open situation and, at the same time, the strengthening of the school's task by the college.

Again, I do not say which is right, because those concerned must themselves make their own decisions as to how to deal with every task. This is the law of spiritual life: Never a model from outside! Yet it is possible to describe and

to learn from effects that eventually come if you work in this or that way.

Now I would like to deal with a much more difficult problem, and not only a problem, but a task, a very interesting task. It is one that I have seen in the Waldorf education movement throughout the world, one of the most burning tasks for the next decade and century. That is the cooperation of the whole school community, including also all parents. In the pioneer situation, you don't think so much about these considerations. All things proceed from out of the growing school. As the school grows, then of course there must be strength in the college of teachers and the whole faculty/staff, however you achieve it. But then the question arises, where are the parents? What are they doing? Are they joining this effort? Are they cooperating? Are they dealing with the decisions or are they excluded? Is there a wall, and all things are done by the teachers, with the parents only giving money and not participating in any decisions in the life of the school at all? All modern human beings who are asked — and are themselves wanting actively to participate — will, of course, also participate in the decision-making processes. This is quite surely a law for the whole future.

But with this done, the problem is not solved. You have to ask, in what decisions, and in what forum and through what organs, can this participation evolve? There must be some organs to deal with those processes or decisions and to decide what is appropriately dealt with only by the teachers in the college. What are appropriate subjects to deal with in an organ in which the parents are involved, with full right to cooperate as well as to participate in the process of decision making? How should this be done? This will be different in all schools. It is a very exciting and very interesting process in the biography of a school. There are schools which were

founded mainly by some very active teachers, with parents joining later in response to this initiative. Conversely, there are schools founded by very active parents with no teachers at all. In this case, the parents resolve at first, "We will have a Waldorf school here." An example of this is in one city in Denmark, where I was invited in 1961, a hundred years after Rudolf Steiner's birth. There, some active anthroposophists and parents had joined together, saying, "We will have a Waldorf school in our city! But not at once. We will have to prepare it." I was invited to give the opening lecture, not for the school (there were no teachers, no children), but for the forming of a small association of those interested in founding a school in the future. Yes, I gave the lecture and was invited once more the next year. So I asked, "Will you now found this school?" They said, "No, not yet; we will have to prepare it." And they prepared the school for ten years! From 1961 to 1971 there was not a school. No teachers, no children, only parents and friends, joining, deepening, permeating the task of preparing to found the school. And you can imagine, what a strength there was in this small school association.

And then they decided, "Now we will begin." And I was asked to give the opening lecture for the beginning of this school. Now you can see the problem: Four teachers came to this very strong association of parents and friends who had already worked ten years with courses, lectures, deepening work, and struggles of many kinds. And now the four came to teach. Only four small teachers are there with a great, solemn circle of parents and friends. Many know what a school should be. What does the little group of four know?!

You can see that the problem is, will the faculty and staff now increase and grow enough to be sufficiently strong for the school to be healthy? I tried to describe all this for those parents and friends, to suggest what was necessary now in the

next steps of the school. However, there was a complicating law in Denmark. (For every school, you also have to examine the state education laws because this is a kind of “frame” for the school life. You have to take account of these laws when you wish to have a school.) The law in Denmark said that any parents could found a new school if there were more than twelve children. This would be sufficient for the school to open its doors. In this way, a new school can be founded, and the state would then be obliged to pay all costs while also being obliged not to meddle in the method of education. As part of this law, the parents must make a small association that has the right to hire and fire the teachers. Now, of course, Waldorf parents don't do that. They are good people. They say this is only the law. We will have a Waldorf school here and, of course, we will not hire and fire the teachers! There must be a college of teachers, free spiritual life, and free cultural activity. We will join together and help the school.

But what will happen if, after awhile, the teachers are struggling against each other? Then suddenly, the parents awaken: We have the right to fire them! And then, they do fire them! You see, in the background, the law is there, somehow, as a threat. It only shows itself if the teachers are not co-working. If the teachers are harmoniously cooperating, no one among the parents considers this law. They want to have a good school with good teachers who cooperate with one another. Yet, here we are looking into a whole complexity of forces and considerations because every school exists within a society at large and you have to look at what the possibilities are in each particular place.

Now you can see that, if such a law exists, it has a double face. On the one side, it is very open: You may found new schools, the financial problems are not there, the state supports but does not mix into the education; it is open and

free. Yet, on the other side, the parents can hire and fire the teachers. Then in dealing with this, one can then see, here more than elsewhere, that we must so strongly consider this community of spiritual beings that this law is left totally out of consideration. It must somehow cease to exist at all.

The spiritual life is there if we look behind this need for parent-teacher co-working. But I have seen that in very many schools a conscious permeating of this task is lacking. Only in some schools is something going on in this or that way. But in really permeating this whole task, we must get down to the how, the what, and the how much. It is in this way that we must determine through which organs we can cooperate with the parents in the whole school community. There must be a greater organ, not only the teachers' meeting as heart-organ of the school, but one in the whole school community where the parents are present, too. I suppose that new organs must be created step by step. Perhaps these will be different in every school, but it has to be that we consciously form what we are doing together.

One problem is sometimes there. It may happen that something is wrong in a class. A teacher has done this or that to cause concern, or perhaps it is the parents who are at the root of the problem. We don't know in advance what the problem is, but there is a controversy, a conflict. Then the parents go to the teacher and he refuses to deal with them. "You don't understand this," he says, building a wall, a thick wall. They cannot speak with him, so they go to another teacher. He says, "No, you are parents, you don't understand this. Go to the teacher directly and speak to him." "We have spoken to him," they reply, "and he refuses to deal with us." They now go to another teacher, ask him, and find another thick wall. There is no organ where they can deal with the problem. In some schools, we have created a specific organ

made up of some parents and teachers where parents can go if they cannot find a direct relation to the teacher involved or to the others. Then there is already an organ there in existence. There is a very great difference between an organ not being there and therefore only created for a particular conflict. This is bad and very different from an organ being there in advance to deal with any conflicts that may arise. In some schools, this organ has been created and is working very well. While not necessarily overcoming conflicts, it provides for conversation between teachers and parents. You see, we have to realize that the whole school community needs to be a real, living organism. It is not that the parents have to decide on every matter. But they have to participate in some decisions.

Here is an example. The teachers want to have a new teacher, thereby increasing the total number of faculty. Now the decision, if the organs are there, will go through three steps. First, the teachers alone decide that they really want to increase the size of the faculty. But this is not yet a school decision. This then goes to another organ, the financial committee, where both teachers and parents meet, now discussing only the financial situation. They must see how this will be for the whole school because, if the number of teachers increases, then also the financial support must increase. After consideration, the group agrees. Again, the decision is not yet completed, and now returns to the college of teachers, only now, they have the financial basis. They decide who this new teacher will be, among themselves, without the parents, because they have to work with this new teacher. But a key step was the discussion in the financial committee.

Lacking that, the following situation is risked. The teachers decide to add a new teacher, increasing the staff. "We must have money," they say. "Please give us money." And the

parents say, “No, we have not been asked about this until now.” (This is modern. They don’t like to pay if there is not consultation in advance.) But if teachers first speak about it, then have a conversation with the parents, and then make the appointment, the parents will say, “Of course, this is necessary and we will pay more.” You can see, how necessary is the task of creating sufficient organs in the school community. It is up to every school to decide how they will do it. Then this whole school community is placed within society at large.

Now there are two great tendencies in Waldorf education which I would like to describe. They are polarity forces that work counter to each other. One I would call “pressure” and the other I would call “suction.” What comes from “pressure” attacks and is really a threat to the whole school. This pressure comes, for example, in the form of very hard laws in one city in Europe. Some compulsory examinations are required after the third grade, but at the same time, different educational means, resources, math books and so on, are also compulsory in teaching the children of the first, second, and third grades. And there are all those new things in the math books that the children must know. The examinations are keyed to these resources. You can see that if you use these materials and methods, you have lost the Waldorf approach to arithmetic; it is impossible to combine them. If you don’t use them, then the children will fail the examinations. This is pressure, an attack, and there ought to be a fight against it. All teachers, on the basis of a free culture, should struggle against and conquer such a threat. They are, at the moment, trying to do just that. I hope that they will succeed.

There are many other such pressures, for example, examinations after the twelfth grade. This is a door to university studies and, in Germany, these are so hard that

their shadow is cast down into the ninth grade. Some lessons are already affected by the knowledge that the examinations are in four years.

This pressure has been overcome in Scandinavia where the students can enter the university based on the recommendations of their Waldorf school teachers. Moreover, the state pays 85% of the school costs up through twelfth grade without interfering in the education. Here the pressure is not in evidence, but this is more the exception than the rule. But the struggle in some ways increases the spiritual radiance of the Waldorf school, so that more people are coming to understand its aims. This helps to change the cultural climate so that such demands will not be made. The great task of the next decade and the next century of the Waldorf school movement is to address this pressure.

On the opposite side is the phenomenon I call “suction.” An example of this can be seen in the demand of 35,000 trade union members in a Swedish town. These people wanted to have Waldorf education for their own children within state schools. The education ministry agreed and the teachers in the state schools came to us and asked for training courses in order to meet the demands from the parents. Where will we find the time? Are we not overworked already? Have we one hour left to help the state school teachers to create Waldorf schools there? Must we not put all our strength and forces into our own schools? We have too little strength in our own schools. But can we refuse? Society at large has begun to ask; must we not say yes? In Sweden, we have decided that we can do nothing else but say yes. And so we have.

This is what I call “suction.” We are called to go into something else or something more, but will we lose ourselves in the process by being even further overworked? We must

find a middle way of going forward. Is it possible to really do something in the state schools? Of course, something can be done if the teachers want it. But there are limitations. Within the state schools, the teacher can do a little or a lot, depending upon the rules and his creative capabilities. Why not help these to increase?

But there are also limits to what a single teacher can do in a state school without this heart-organ of the teachers' meeting within the whole living organism of the school community. Yet whenever we can affirm the possibility of doing something anywhere in the world, then we are seeing the central task of real, fulfilled Waldorf schools. These are schools with a spiritual biography, schools which are founded, which grow, which go through trials at various points. These are whole organisms of free, independent individualities uniting themselves with a high spiritual community: teachers, parents, and children in the school community.

The more we recognize those demands for this education, the more we can say, "Yes, take it. Do as much as you can!" But then we must do much more in the Waldorf schools themselves, so that the Waldorf school can grow. And then we must cooperate all over the world, not just in one country. This was also the intention of the Pedagogical Section of the School for Spiritual Science and of The Hague Circle in inviting teachers to the World Teachers' Conferences of 1983, 1986, and 1989 — really to further international cooperation in the cultural situation of the present time. Because, of course, the schools are for those children who are there within the larger society of the present time. Therefore the schools are in service to all humanity, in service to the good spirit of our time.



Born in Norway as the second of seven sons, Jørgen Smit was raised in the Norwegian cities of Bergen and Oslo. He studied Classical Philology in Oslo and Basel, Switzerland, with Ancient Greek as his main subject. For 30 years he was a teacher at the Rudolf Steiner (Waldorf) School in Bergen before becoming the main teacher at the teacher seminar for Waldorf teachers in Järna, Sweden, from 1966 until 1975. In that year he was appointed to the Executive Council of the General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach, Switzerland, where he also headed the youth section and later the pedagogical section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum.

In all, Jørgen Smit delivered 4889 lectures—more than half of them during his 16-year tenure in Dornach—at conferences and meetings around the world. Most of his publications are derived from these lectures, which he gave in German, Norwegian, and English. Titles include: “How to Transform Thinking, Feeling, and Willing,” “Lighting Fires,” “Deepening Education through Meditation,” “Meditation,” “Transforming Our Lives for the Encounter with Christ: Personal and Social Transformation,” “Freedom, Equality & Fraternity in Everyday Life,” “Working with Anthroposophy,” “The Practice of Thinking,” and “The Steps Toward Knowledge Which the Seeker of the Spirit Must Take.”

He crossed the threshold in 1991.

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