

## CHAPTER 9 THE PEDAGOGICAL (EDUCATIVE) MEANING OF THE SCHOOL

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the first eight chapters of this introductory book, various theoretical aspects of the didactic activity and the way theory culminates in practice were dealt with. Thus, from a justification of the point of departure of didactic activity to a description of its essences, there was a move to practical examples of how a teacher can structure his lesson in a teaching situation. The emphasis was especially on an analysis of the phenomenon “teaching” as it is observed in the original experience of educating, and on the aspects disclosed by this analysis that enable a teacher to account for and explain his practice in a lesson situation. In these considerations, the school was mentioned only casually and it was stressed that it is a second-order structure in that it reconstructs, in formal situations, the original experience of educating (in the home) where teaching is known for the first time.

Because the school is the terrain for a future teacher’s professional activities and because, in modern society, it stabilizes and perpetuates the culture and everything created by culture, it must be examined as a social institution. The school can be described from various perspectives, e.g., from an economic, a judicial, a cultural, a purely social perspective, etc. It also can be described in such a way that it appears as if the school has its own identity and sovereignty in that it, by virtue of its structure, has its own professional-pedagogical task that has little to do with the home.

However, when a community establishes a school, it is certainly reasonable to expect that it will have certain aims and goals it would like the school to achieve. It is clear that the community expects the school to further, promote and actualized (make real) what it considers to be valuable. This pronouncement is more or less valid for any institution the community establishes, but it is incorrect to assume that all social institutions have equal status or pursue the same aims.

The question that now must be asked is: What is it that makes the school an institution of society? Expressed differently: If the school, as a second-order structure, must reflect the original experience of educating, what is it that constitutes its pedagogical (educative) meaning? In order to penetrate this question to its essential coherence, it is necessary to disclose the structure of the school and its relationship to society as well as to the pedagogical, as such.

## **2. THE CONCEPT "SCHOOL"**

Etymologically, "school" is derived from the Latin "schola" meaning a "scholarly investigation" of a particular phenomenon. The Greek "schole" means "free time" that is not reducible to a person's material existence, but is used to indicate a striving for knowledge merely for the sake of knowledge itself. The institution "school", as we know it today, is derived from the Greek concept "schole", implying that a science is studied in free time for the sake of knowledge itself and not for the sake of some material benefit.

The current situation really is quite different from the original because both the science studied and the didactic profession in school are involved with a world of work and effort. In this sense, the school has become a social and economic means: one need only list the various types of schools such as vocational, business, subject and technical schools. The nature of the various types of schooling reflects the state and degree of a community's social differentiation. To the extent that a community develops and grows and, in doing so, makes new fields of human endeavor necessary, to that extent the community creates differentiations in types of schooling. For this reason, there is a direct relationship between the differentiation of types of schooling and the differentiation of labor in a particular community.

## **3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL**

The fact that the modern school is clearly related to the cultural, economic, religious and social activities of a community leads to the acceptance in certain circles that it has its origin in and can be described in terms of one or more of these differentiated activities. For example, if one accepts that the school has its origin in the

differentiated occupational structure of society, this implies that if it is not oriented to or concerned with certain occupational fields, it will not have the status of a school. Such an assumption means that only one of the school's aims (i.e., to unlock reality in such a way that a child is able to create an accountable and responsible relationship to occupational reality) is elevated to ontic status. This means that the school is reduced to nothing more than its aim of orienting the child to occupational reality. The ontic status of the school is in the home, and in its turn, the home is integrated into the life world.

The essential character of the relationship between parents and children in the home is pedagogical-didactical in that the parents intervene pedagogically in the life of their children so that they can didactically unlock or disclose specific values and norms while what they teach them (their didactic intervention) is pedagogically meaningful and accountable. (For a full discussion of this interaction, the reader is advised to again carefully read Chapter 2). It is within the framework of the pedagogic-didactic intervention of the parents in the home that the school can be accountable for its structure and teaching contents, and thus, in this respect, the school is an extension of the home.

The spontaneous and naïve life world of parents and children at home must, therefore, be investigated to disclose the essences (meanings) of this pedagogic-didactic relationship. This investigation is the theme of Chapter 3 and, although certain aspects of it are repeated in what follows, a brief summary is important because it can better orient the reader to the matter of schooling.

The life world of parents and children in the home is spontaneous in that a child spontaneously establishes a relationship with reality, i.e., a child experiences reality spontaneously (from a didactic perspective this means he learns spontaneously). His spontaneous learning directedness to reality awakens his parent's responsibility to create spontaneous learning situations for him because reality is not harmless for him. Thus, spontaneity is the primary characteristic of the parent-child relationship as seen from a didactic-pedagogic perspective of the home situation. This

relationship is also naïve in that, although the parent carries the responsibility for the learning situation that he spontaneously establishes, he does not necessarily have at his disposal systematic didactic knowledge about what he is doing.

The contents of these spontaneous learning situations change according to milieu, cultural background and cultural heritage. For this reason these contents are particular. The form in which the didactic-pedagogic relationship shows itself is described as a didactic-pedagogic universal. In the description of this form it was indicated that the didactical-pedagogical can never be realized outside of its universal form. The form in which the didactic is realized is differentiated into play, conversation, example and assignment.

The spontaneous creation of learning situations by a parent, as his teaching activities are correlated with his child's spontaneous learning activities, is realized in one or another (or combination) of these four ground-forms. These ground-forms are not purely didactic but are also ground-forms in which the pedagogical is actualized; no pedagogic intervention in a child's world-relationship is possible without an adult unlocking values and norms, and such unlocking is essentially a didactic activity.

The grounds for understanding the school must be penetrated to eventually grasp the pedagogical (educative) meaning of the school. The parent not only unlocks particular cultural contents, e.g., activity structures [behaviors], skills, facts, relationships, etc., but also norms, values, attitudes, dispositions, etc. He does this under the imperative (demand) of adulthood. A parent must orient his child didactically and pedagogically to reality because his relationship to it must change. As a parent unlocks the modes of living for his child, a common world ("Mitwelt") is created in which the child experiences acceptance, love, safety and security. These are the foundations on which he can build his own life world ("Eigenwelt").

A parent and child are jointly involved in the latter's becoming. The parent creates opportunities for his child to explore reality. In doing so, he enables him to eventually emancipate himself from his

parental authority and accept responsibility for his own relationship to reality. By means of his didactic and pedagogic help, a parent guides his child to eventual adulthood, the ultimate aim of his intervention in his child's existence. A parent (educator) guides his child in such a way that he eventually understands the meaning of his own existence; that he will be able to understand himself and, therefore, also be able to evaluate and criticize himself; that he is aware of his own human worth as well as the dignity of others; that he is capable of making independent moral decisions; that he is responsible; that he identifies himself with the valid norms and values of the society within which he lives and applies them in his relationships to reality as criteria for understanding and assessing his own existence.

In summary, the pedagogic-didactic intervention in a child's existence is directed to his becoming toward the idea of adulthood, or to realize or reach the world of adulthood in relation to reality. A child has his own destination; it is described as adulthood, as a particular mode or way of being-in-the-world.

#### **4. THE FUNDAMENTAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ADULT AND THE CHILD IN THE PEDAGOGIC-DIDACTIC SITUATION AND ITS NATURE**

In the previous section, the form and aims of the pedagogic-didactic intervention were briefly discussed. The question now is: What is the fundamental relationship between adult and child in the pedagogic-didactic situation and what is its nature? An answer to this question will also provide the criteria by which the school can be evaluated as a pedagogical institution. In other words, the school must reflect the fundamentals of the relationship between the adult and the child in the pedagogical-didactical situation in order to have any kind of pedagogical (educative) meaning. A summary of the relevant pronouncements about the pedagogical-didactical discussed in the previous chapters can orient the reader to better understand the pedagogical meaning of the school.

When an adult and a child are together in a pedagogical-didactical situation, it is a normative situation in that the contents unlocked must be accountable to the demands of propriety. It also is

normative because the achievements of the child are always subjected to the values and norms relevant to his progress. The situation is embedded in the life world because the contents presented in the pedagogical-didactical situation are contents of living and the forms in which they are unlocked are forms of living.

In addition, the situation is invested with meaning. It is meaningful for parents to lead their child to adulthood and it is meaningful for him to subject himself to their support and guidance. The parent knows the importance and meaning of the situation and, therefore, he leads his child to experience and understand this meaning for himself. Because the pedagogic-didactic situation is a normative one, it also is a situation of authority-- by virtue of the authority of the norms and values underlying the meaning of the situation and by virtue of the authority of the parent (adult)--one of the criteria of being an adult.

The activities in the pedagogical-didactical situation are characterized by communication – the parent communicates reality to his child and he ventures in their dialogue; with parental guidance, he communicates with reality. Because in time, he approaches the adult's quality of communicating with reality, there is a qualitative and gradual difference between adult and child that is represented by a parent's accountable and responsible relationship to reality.

Furthermore, it is a formative and orienting situation. It is formative because the parent gives form to the necessary changes in his child's relationship to reality. It is orienting because the parent orients his child in light of the child's existing relationship to the world or reality to a relationship that still must be assimilated.

The nature of the communication indicates that it also is open and dynamic. It is open because both parent and child initiate a relationship to reality in light of the appeal it directs to them, and it is dynamic because it is always in motion--the child is moving in the direction of adulthood.

The quality and nature of the relationship between adult and child characterize the situation as a unity because both are involved in

and with each other. It also is rational because in their united situation they are involved with reality. Parent and child encounter each other in the world and this encounter can periodically become a pedagogic encounter in the narrower sense. The preconditions for the possibility of a pedagogical-didactical situation are, first, that it must be an existential situation. The participants, as subjects, persons and openness, are ontically dependent on each other (this mutual dependence cannot be reduced to anything else) and the one stands open for the other where there is thus mention of each going outside of himself, as one standing open for the other, of a meaningful encounter aimed at realizing a common future. The human situation is always subjective, personal, interpersonal and ethical. As an existential situation, it is characterized by informality where even its formal aspects are not dominant (but it is dynamic and goal-directed). The situation is further characterized by its purposefulness and by experiencing and fulfilling its (pedagogical) meaning. Experiencing and fulfilling meaning indicates that it is an active situation in which the participants require particular activities of each other in light of which particular criteria are realized in accordance with aims.

The situation is designed by both parent and child to be meaningful. In this mutual design it is characterized by a plurality of meanings simply because human existence is multi-formed and heterogeneous. Regarding materials, the situation is oriented in time and space. It occurs in light of a child's possibility to create a different relationship with reality, and in light of the particular situation, also with respect to the participants' composition that can change.

Because parent and child are subjectively involved with each other in the pedagogical-didactical situation, it is characterized by fundamental dispositions that affectively (emotionally) influence the participants' experiences. In the situation the child is provided with a safe, affective haven and in this way he is given a safe place.

Finally, each person involved in the situation constitutes himself as an individual, as do the other participants in their joint involvement.

The fundamental relationship between parents and children and the nature of the educative teaching intervention in the home, as discussed earlier, is the point of departure from which the school in its relationship to society must be penetrated and described because, as a social institution, it is merely an extension of the home where the original experience of “didaskhein” (teaching) is most clearly knowable. Because the school is an extension of the pedagogical-didactical situation of the home, and carries on, refines and further extends the aim of such intervention, it is a means for the child to create his own life world.

This creation of a personal life world is only meaningful by virtue of norms and values and that is why the school is norm centered. Thus, the school is not only directed to a child’s intellect; it must generalize normative knowledge and normalize universal knowledge and in this way humanize it.

Above there was reference to the home-school relationship and it was indicated that the school must manifest the pedagogical-didactical categories that constitute the pedagogical-didactical relationship at home. This implies that if the school does not manifest these categories in its activities, it cannot function as a “school”; then it cannot have a pedagogical meaning. Over and above the fact that the school is a second-order structure that has its origin in the differentiated nature of society, the community makes an additional demand on the school: it must be relevant to the community within which the child exists and is going to exist. This implies that the school must unlock concepts that are relevant and realistic in the sense that they must be true and faithful to life.

Any interpretation of what is relevant and true to life in this context is a matter of contents. The school unlocks these contents in terms of the following demands: they must be true in light of the spirit of the age and state of the culture; they must take into account the child’s situatedness; they must reflect the moral order of society and keep the future mobility of the child in the life world in mind.

This actually implies that the lifestyle anticipated for the child in the future (i.e., as an adult) and the teaching style created by adults in the school must basically be in harmony. The lifestyle at which

the child is aimed indicates a social situation that can be contextually extended or enlarged with respect to both form and contents in the pedagogic-didactic activities of the school. Therefore, it is possible that either the form or the contents can be overemphasized. The predominant factors exerting a strong influence on a community will necessarily influence which is emphasized. For example, in our contemporary technological-materialistic society, the natural sciences and their technologies enjoy prominence. This is why these contents are given more emphasis and why in our schools there is a particular emphasis on technical-didactical aids.

If pedagogic-didactic activities in the school are foreign to the demands of modern life, they cannot meaningfully contribute to the modern lifestyle. This raises the following questions: What demands are made of the school by the modern structure of society? Is the school meaningfully related to society? To follow these questions and their implications to their rational conclusions, it must be asked if modern society has changed radically. The answer to this question will define the pedagogical-didactical problem with respect to its enmeshment with a socio-pedagogical perspective in the sense that historical concepts, alone, will only have a limiting function in evaluating and solving contemporary pedagogical-didactical problems.

The pedagogic and didactic intervention in a child's existence occur in a community-social as well as historical context. The social structure, in its relationship to a particular historical period, is extremely important if educating and teaching are to be faithful to reality. Teaching occurs in interaction with a particular social structure and a particular historical period.

Because cultures are subject to change, a youth's situation is not static and religious and moral interpretations also are subject to change. It is for this reason that the pedagogical and didactical form changes in emphasis in different periods of time.

At this stage, it is advisable to briefly summarize the above. Forms of living and pedagogic-didactic forms cannot be separated. Forms of living (lifestyle) are recognized in different historical periods by

different emphases. Pedagogic and didactic style changes to the degree that social structure changes. In order to determine the pedagogic-didactic relevance of the school, what is fundamentally social must be revealed.

The pedagogical-didactical implications of the above for the school are manifold. Socio-pedagogics, as a perspective on the pedagogic reality, must describe the pedagogical grounds of the child's social relationships so that socio-*didactics* can interpret them within the framework of the school.

The relationship between school and society can be clarified somewhat by an example. According to the traditional German "Bildungsideal" (formative ideal), the school's task is to "produce persons"; society will train the "finished product" to be vocationally skilled. In contrast to this aim, modern society expects the school to anticipate the adult life world, in general, in its relationship with the child to accordingly orient him to a realistic understanding of that life world.

The problem that stems from this aim, among others, is the following: What does "general formedness" imply, i.e., what are the general didactical criteria for general formedness? What school subjects can guarantee general formedness? Are technical-, vocational-, and trade-schools formative in the sense that childlike "Dasein" can be given form via these directions of study? Is a differentiated structure of teaching the consequence of previously justified pedagogical and didactical criteria? In what ways can differentiated organizational didactics be changed to be relevant to the pedagogical-didactical criteria?

Apart from these questions that the school must answer in one way or another to at least have pedagogical meaning, it is the case that a penetration of the relationship between society and school announces particular concepts that are imperative for the practice of teaching in the school; e.g., that the school evaluate the distance between the school, church, city and society in general and that the school must take a standpoint regarding all of them. This demands that the school evaluate each of these extra-school institutions in light of didactical-pedagogical criteria either to promote their close

collaboration with the school or to distance the school from them. Such an evaluation will necessarily force the order of the norm structure of society to the surface. For the orientation of the reader, it is important to more closely illuminate the relationship between this norm structure and society.

## **5. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE NORMS IN SCHOOL AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NORMS TO THE COMMUNITY**

If it is accepted that the pedagogical (the educational) can never be separated from values and that pedagogues always describe the pedagogic in the sphere of norms and values, then it follows that the value structure and value contents of a community and the values it holds are an intrinsic aspect of the pedagogic intervention with a child of that community. If this is so, it can be asked if the school must accept the value structure of the community or if it must propose or present particular values to the community. Both possibilities are valid.

Further, where a community has surrendered to particular values, must the school necessarily agree with them in order to remain relevant to the community? In such a case, is it not the task of the school to propose particular values to the community? If indeed this is so, does the school have the authority, influence and autonomy to make and carry through on such proposals? It must be remembered that the school essentially is an extension of the family and that the family is anchored in the community. Thus, axiological (value) changes are reflected in the school and family since norms and values (especially moral and ethical norms and values) are elevated by the community to matters of achievement. If the school, accordingly, proposes values and norms (or their interpretation), from where must the school acquire these values, norms and interpretations?

In discussing the school-community relationship, the axiological integration of the two is acknowledged. Because the pedagogical-didactical activities of a teacher in the school are initiated by him, the implication is that he must be able to account for (justify) his particular value-preferences. The pedagogue (teacher), as norm-observing adult who consciously and purposefully intervenes in a

child's existence, who views a particular system of values and norms as good and true, is directed by his hierarchy of values in his educative activities. Without the normative, as primary pedagogical imperative, there is no possibility of meaningful intervention in a child's existence because the meaning of the pedagogic help and support for a child is found in the idea of adulthood. This idea can only be described by values. At this stage, the following question is meaningful: What is the relationship between the value-preferences of the pedagogue-didactician (teacher) and the becoming child?

Prominent pedagogues indicate that a child can only become through a personal encounter with reality. This personal encounter is the result of the adult's pedagogic-didactic intervention, and it is through the adult that a child can properly relate himself to reality—this includes the norms and values of the community within which the child exists. This means that a child's becoming is determined by the structure of norms and values of the community in which the child is educated.

The tasks that these pronouncements present the educator are briefly summarized as follows. The teacher must possess a penetrating perception of the norm-value structure of the community in which a child is educated. He must possess and respect this norm structure himself. He must be qualified to meaningfully interpret these norms and values for a child. The teacher must be qualified to anticipate the shifting emphasis of norms and values and accordingly relate these changes to the life of the child while continually respecting the demands of propriety.

A theoretical pronouncement about the relationship between school and society only has value to the extent that it reflects reality. In the previous discussion reality is generalized. This can create the impression that it falls outside of practical considerations and hardly influences the course of teaching in the school. Such an impression can mislead the teacher regarding the fundamental problems he must solve in his practice. The reality of the social conditions within which the values and norms must be realized via pedagogical-didactical intervention deserves special attention.

## **5.1 The social order**

The above explanation makes unavoidable the question of the nature of the spirit of the time and the quality of the culture and how they manifest themselves in our society. What is the youths' situatedness? What is the moral order of society and how is it knowable to the teacher? From the nature of the matter, are the grounds for these questions so intertwined that an answer to the one must be sought in the other? The spirit of the times and the moral order of society are the background against which the situatedness of the youths must be projected. In other words, the youths' situatedness is understandable and even explainable against the background of the spirit of the times and the moral order of the society in which they live.

This should limit unjustifiable optimism for an introduction of this scope and nature to try to provide a complete and fundamental answer to the above questions. Consequently, only a broad indication of the scope of the problem is indicated. For a good ordering of the explanation, the spirit of the time in which we exist today is first attended to.

## **5.2 The prevailing spirit of the time**

The type of community in which the future teacher will have to teach cannot be predicted accurately. However, the social circumstances of the whole world are changing and there are strong indications that the changes that have taken place during the past two or three decades will multiply and increase in diversity at the end of this century. There is little historical evidence that a community can ever really remain static (although particular historical periods can be described as relatively static). During relatively static periods educating and teaching are characterized by a need for solidarity and convergence because then it was generally accepted that the existing order would be equally valid in the future.

The opposite is true for communities subject to rapid change. For such societies educating the next generation will require greater divergence. It must invite the child and the teacher to be aware of

the conditional relevance of what for the children are interpreted as norms and values.

The following generation will also experience an additional differentiation in reality as a result of the increasing technological development originating in the Industrial Revolution. This not only has the consequence of revolutionizing the material world but it also takes the form of deeply and radically changing contemporary Western society.

Indeed, most social historians accept that contemporary Western society enjoys its particular world position thanks to (or because of) the technological developments (also known as the Second Industrial Revolution) associated with it. Some of the results of these developments are: the uprooting of rural communities; breaking away from cultural traditions; urbanization; the disintegration of an old and established rural lifestyle; the change of social relationships on which the community was established and which, in turn, led to a social differentiation based on economic factors, etc. The consequence of this was materialism and its different variations.

In addition, the Industrial Revolution resulted in increased tension between the “haves” and the “have-nots” and between the individual and the state. These tensions resulted in unrest in the social, economic, industrial and political fields. Modern persons are often lonely because they cannot manage to create an intimate community within this industrial culture. This resulted in the social alienation of the individual. A modern human being is confused by the overwhelming technological developments and achievements.

The above influences on the existence of modern persons result in him preferring to avoid these individual and societal problems. In this way, he loses himself in an existentialism where freedom without responsibility prevails. He maintains the appearance of diligence and keeps involved by losing himself in the procedure while ignoring the aim and essence of his involvement.

This degeneration is evident in most spheres of life but educative teaching certainly offers the most noteworthy example: in the midst

of an impressive quantity of available teaching techniques as well as teaching- and learning-aids, there is an obvious weakening of convictions with respect to the ultimate aim of educating and, thus, of teaching. In the wider social sphere this weakening of convictions ends in a chaotic value-structure that certainly is the most alarming character of our contemporary society. The eventual result of such a chaotic value-structure is nihilism, and by annihilating his values, a person loses his personal structure. The individual's surrender to the State or to the community can be explained from this because in his surrender he avoids personal responsibility.

What is the origin of this condition? Sociologists and other scholars agree that modern human beings have difficulty integrating technological developments into the structure of their system of values. As a consequence of this inability they have tended to ascribe a godlike quality to technology under the assumption that what cannot be experienced by the senses need not be seriously considered. The "soul", "consciousness" and "conscience" cannot be experienced or clarified by the senses or measured and ranked technologically and, therefore, their existence is doubtful. Hence, these concepts do not have important implications for a person-world relationship. This attitude manifests itself in materialism, in hedonism (the view that only pleasure is worth striving for), in utilitarianism (in the sense that the basis for moral differences is in those actions that result in success) and in a sensualism.

Our highly developed and differentiated society has a number of social forms in which the boundaries among social institutions overlap (e.g., church, family, school, youth organizations). The aims of these institutions are often either vaguely formulated or are not in harmony with each other. For this reason it is not strange that conflicts occur among them. Our technological culture also promotes conflicts, albeit unconsciously, because it creates a plurality of relationships and values that, in turn, create further tensions. In this context one thinks of pollution, the depletion of natural resources and even the menacing extermination of mankind. It can rightly be said that these tensions have placed modern persons in a boundary situation regarding whether their decisions are true and valuable, that is, where the sense and meaning of their existence is at issue.

The importance of the above for the teacher cannot be underestimated. The teacher must not only orient the child in such a way that he can establish a relationship with reality; he must also lead him to choose values and to identify with a certain view of the world and of life. The modern teacher cannot depend on contemporary values being valid in the future. The spirit of the time demands that the teacher help the child to accept and understand those values that will be flexible and applicable to the future and that will be capable of meaningful integration of the changes that so rapidly follow one another in his own existence. This is especially true for developing countries. Changes that took ages to occur in the developed countries must be given meaning and integrated in developing countries within decades. Expectations are therefore often made of education that sometimes can be met only with great difficulty. A good example of this dilemma is the rapid urbanization in developing areas that creates crises concerning housing, sanitation and health services, transportation and education. The same problems occur where the economy changes from a rural to a manufacturing-industrial based economy.

This brief sketch of the social order and the prevailing spirit of the time within which teaching must progress meaningfully is the background against which the contemporary situatedness of youth must be understood. Once again, a complete explication of the youths' situatedness is not possible within the scope of this introductory work and the above cursory discussion must suffice.

### **5.3 The youths' situatedness**

In order to understand the situatedness of youth, the teacher must be thoroughly acquainted with them in spheres outside of the formal school situation. He will have to determine the relationship between the school and other social institutions like the church, athletics and other recreational activities, politics and the media. He will have to determine how these institutions influence the child and what contribution they make to his forming (development) in these situations.

The teacher's task of leading and supporting a child to adulthood in our modern society and circumstances is difficult. His task is difficult because youths in the secondary school are inclined to identify themselves with the norms and values of working youths, i.e., with the world outside of the school. Some researchers in this field even go so far as to describe modern youth as the skeptical generation: they are skeptical of the established order and actively attempt to replace it with their own views. Apart from this their world-relationship is described as anti-traditional, without the romantic, radical and realistic.

The inclination of modern youth to lose themselves in the masses by which they give up their individuality by identifying themselves with their contemporaries on a horizontal level is an additional matter of particular importance to the modern teacher. Existential decisions are all the less a personal matter for these youth; they readily allow themselves to be led by others. Even in their everyday existence they cannot escape their continuous confrontation with superficial cultural forms and unintegrated sources of knowledge.

These tendencies are partly the result of modern communication media by which knowledge is disseminated but in such a way that the youth often view it as sufficient. This makes the school and what it presents particularly irrelevant to their lives as prospective adults. Whatever the teacher may do to attempt to vitalize and make his teaching more interesting, he apparently does not make a clear impression on the already satiated outlook on life of his pupils. This classroom atmosphere is so widespread in Europe that it seems that teaching in school cannot really offer an answer or solution to contemporary and possible future problems of youth and society.

The mere fact that the teacher recognizes these circumstances does not mean that he is entitled to capitulate or surrender his responsibilities as a teacher. The fact that he will acknowledge them is really a proclamation of his resolve to reinterpret his role in teaching, but in such a way that his ultimate pedagogical aim remains unchanged (to help and support the youth toward full fledged adulthood). This also means that the teacher teaches in school in such a way that the child must experience the values and

norms that describe adulthood and in terms of which an adult, as such, must be evaluated. To present these matters more clearly for the reader, the meaning of the school for the child's experience of normative reality must now be considered.

## **6. THE MEANING OF THE SCHOOL FOR THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE OF NORMATIVE REALITY**

On the basis of an increased intellectualization as a result of the early technological era, in the course of time the school drifted away from the surrounding reality and established a separate identity. The danger of this for the teacher is that if he thinks about the school as a concept he will attribute a particular identity to it that is not necessarily true. In other words, where a separate identity is ascribed to the school it is not necessarily in harmony with the reality that surrounds the child. When a teacher thinks about the school in this way, there is a tendency to fall into a didactic objectivism and, e.g., to present norms that hold for the school as an institution but that do not necessarily have validity outside of the school situation. When this occurs, the school becomes estranged from life and it can only contribute to the child's forming in haphazard ways. The child in school is not a different child from the one in the family, the church or the one on the athletic field or the one who must participate in social life.

In order to arrive at the essential meaning of the school in the life of a child it appears that there must be a return to an "uncontaminated" way to get to the original pedagogical givens to infer from them the sense and meaning of the school. In this way it is possible to arrive at a purer perspective on the school as a social institution. Although a good deal of what follows has already been considered in other chapters, the idea here is to try to place these findings within the framework of the school as a social institution.

In the previous chapter it was clearly stated that the child begins to learn from the moment of birth. From the day of his birth he is involved in learning to know the reality that surrounds him and in one way or another to make himself familiar with it. To put the matter as clearly as possible, a child goes to "school" from the first day of his life although, naturally, this is not meant in the normal

sense of the word. To go to school is an inevitable activity that awaits each child. To go to school also is not a matter about which he has a choice.

A child's first school is his home. From the beginning the home is the place where he is taught certain contents that must be mastered in order to become a full fledged adult one day. Our experience, confirmed by scientific analysis, shows that a child's primary intention is to become an adult. When we observe a child in life situations (during play, in his relationship to his parents and other adults, in church, when he eats and dresses himself, etc.), his need and resolve to be independent are conspicuous. The parent offers sufficient teaching in natural and spontaneous ways for their child to explore and grasp the immediate world (reality) in and around the home.

The reality within which the family exists is only part of the greater whole a child must learn and know if he is to show progress in his resolve to become an adult himself one day. He explores the reality in and around the home spontaneously, intuitively and without obligation and this gradually puts him in a position to acquire and master that reality. However, as he becomes older and enters his toddler years, it is evident that this exploration and mastery appear to be inadequate. The quality of mastering language, quantitative relationships, social activities, etc. in the home are not adequate because the complex and systematic reality outside of the home must also be mastered by him.

The cultural structure of a people or a society within which a child must grow up is closely related to the complexity and composition of this reality. The richer the cultural heritage and also a person's command of the technological terrain of the reality outside of the home, the more complex and difficult it is for him to acquire that reality. This reality outside of the home is an ordered and systematized whole that eventually can be mastered only by adults because it is categorically structured and ordered. As far as the categorical structure of reality is concerned, it manifests itself, e.g., in terms of religious, economic, social, physical and esthetic categories with respect to which the adult (the teacher) also manifests particular points of view, preconceptions and dispositions.

When a child is now educated in a life situation, this also means that the adult will be attuned to orienting him to these aspects of reality, to force his own standpoint on him, and to expect that he will display a particular positive disposition toward these various aspects of reality. This orientation of him to reality is the adult's educative task.

If the adult or teacher ignores these aspects of reality in complex, modern society, this means that the child's reality will not only be incomplete but that it will be foreign to and removed from reality. It is for these reasons that the child's natural educators (parents) necessarily attend to harmonizing the world outside of the home with the world within if they are to contribute to his most fundamental intention, namely, to become an adult.

To try to guarantee this aspect of the child's life-course to adulthood, adults (parents) through the ages and in all societies have proceeded to establish schools, that is specific places where the child is systematically given the opportunity to learn to know and understand the world outside of the home thoroughly so he can master it. In this way the adult places the school on the child's life-path with the direct aim of helping the not-yet-adult fulfill his journey and in this way to try to guarantee his future (his full fledged adulthood). It is for this reason that he, in his way through the world, must inevitably arrive at the school and that it forms an inseparable part of his experiencing, orienting and eventual mastery of reality.

The school must therefore be seen as a facet of the child's life world. It also must be seen as an opportunity created for him to give meaning, under the guidance of an adult, to what he experiences as world and life. In this way the essential aspects of being an adult (an educator) and being a child (a being-committed-to-education) are harmonized in the school. However, a school is only a school in the pedagogical sense of the word when it makes possible the meeting and interaction between adults (teachers) and children (pupils).

In our modern society, the pedagogical meaning of the school can only be understood properly if it is interpreted in light of the

educative aim that the adult has in view and of the need for educating that is present in each child. Also to become an adult, the child has a need for education in the broader sense of schooling. Viewed in this way, the school can never be a child-centered institution. The aim of the school is always the eventual adulthood of children. For this reason, it is rather an educative-centered institution by which not only being a child but also becoming an adult constitutes the meaningfulness of the mutual involvement of child and adult. The path along which and the way in which a child becomes adult indeed is not determined by the child, as such, but rather by the idea of adulthood that his educators aim for in his becoming.

For a child, going to school means to bring to a completion certain aspects of his education and for the adult it means to intervene in and influence his becoming adult. The aim of all of the school's activities is the eventual adulthood of all pupils.

The point of departure of the school's activities is adulthood and the school's aim is also for the child to reach adulthood through its interventions with him. This amounts to the fact that the events in school begin with the decisions of adults and are meaningful because they lead the participants (children) to greater adulthood. This does not mean that the school is established merely for the sake of the children but neither is it established for the sake of the children remaining children.

The task of the school is to complete the education that the child has had in the home. Educating manifests itself as being involved with norms; the contents of these norms are inseparably rooted in the life- and world-view of the adults who educate the child. These norms and the teacher's interpretation of them are the central aspect of all of the school's activities. It is for this reason that the school's activities, and especially its character, are described as norm centered. This is not necessarily in contrast to being child centered but it shifts the emphasis with respect to the school's aim.

When a school is established for the sake of children this does not necessarily mean that it is directed to child centered teaching because with such a claim one would really elevate the child to a

norm for the school that, because of the nature of things (in an educative sense), indeed is not possible. On the other hand, a school without children is no school, but a school without adults also is no school. Consequently, one of the constituents (children, teachers) is not more important than the other.

The quality and nature of the activities in the school emphasize the fact that it is an institution where adults systematically and purposefully provide answers to the questions and problems that appear in the child's life world. As far as the child is concerned, the school is a place where he learns. It bridges the world of the child to the future world of adulthood. Therefore, the school provides him with the opportunity to move from a naïve, spontaneous and not yet responsible involvement in reality to the more closed, normative, obligatory life world of adults. The school supports him to establish a *specific* image of reality. In addition to this, it is the school's responsibility to help him order the images and conceptions of reality. Furthermore, the school aids and supports him to create his own image of the world.

In formal terms, the previous statements are reduced to the fact that the school supports the child to establish his own life world. Because his experience is always central to his relationship to reality, the above responsibilities of the school are of decisive importance. Since the aim of this book is primarily to orient the student teacher, the following aspects of the dynamics of the school are briefly described and ordered.

### **6.1 The school anticipates the child's future**

The distance between the world of the child and the adult's world is equivalent to the distance between the child's world and the cultural world. The school bridges this distance in formal ways because teachers are concerned with helping the child master the form systems and life contents of a culture that lend a particular lifestyle to a particular life and world view. This amounts to the adult using certain methods as well as contents (learning contents) that place the form systems within the child's reach.

However, this is not the only task of the school. The contents that the school presents to the child are artificial because the school situation must continually attempt to imitate or represent life situations that occur outside of the school. To overcome this artificiality, teachers expect children to go beyond or exceed the reality imitated in school. This means they must apply and interpret the contents mastered in school in situations outside of school. His knowledge of the calculation of area must, for example, enable him to calculate the number of floor tiles for a bathroom. But this is not all. It is also expected that he give meaning to contents. The sense and meaning given to reality manifest themselves in his life in that the reality exposed to him in school is the basis for him to create his own image of reality.

The most important learning task the child must master is to create a normative image of reality for himself. Reality (also cultural reality) is normative; it is in terms of it that his future forms of living must be discovered and acquired such that in his activities he can show the image of adulthood. From this it is concluded that the school is an anticipatory bridge between two forms of living, namely, that of being a child and that of being an adult. In essence, the school offers the child the opportunity to learn to become an adult, i.e., to learn to know and master the adult form of living.

## **6.2 The school is an intermediate world for the child**

When a child goes to school he enters the world of formal time and ordered contents. One can therefore understand the child's apprehension when entering the intermediate world of the school for the first time. Although he is fearful of leaving the safe and stable climate of his home, few children have a negative attitude towards school. The reason is that he wants to become an adult. He also knows that this means that he will have to learn, i.e., learn to know, appreciate and eventually to master life contents. His fundamental resolve to become an adult is manifested in his willingness to learn, that is a willingness to answer, with the act of learning, the tasks that the reality in and out of school present to him.

The dynamics of the child's readiness and willingness to learn provide the teacher the opportunity to offer him help in going out to reality. In other words, in school he will venture into reality and the adult will support him in this venturing activity. By creating opportunities for the realization of his willingness to learn and venture, the school offers intermediate opportunities for him to broaden his horizon and extend the boundaries of his existence. In this way the school is an intermediate world for the child who is on his way to adulthood.

In the school the child acquires the opportunity, under the protection and guidance of the adult, to construct a gradual but systematic image of reality that makes his eventual going out to life reality less risky and thus also pedagogically more accountable. In school the teacher offers the child help, support and guidance to master contents so that he can safely enter the life world of the adult.

### **6.3 School activities always are (should be) purposeful and never haphazard**

All activities in the school are carefully planned, conscious and purposeful. The reality that is unlocked for the child in the school is carefully structured according to a definite plan. The dynamic meaning of this is summarized well by indicating that no educative event really can be done justice if it is not also an activity that is thought through didactically. The spontaneous unfolding of these activities is the ground structure of the matter but this spontaneous unfolding is not a deterministic matter; that is, the result of the didactic activities in the school cannot be compared with a mechanistic result.

In contrast to a deterministic result, the school shows various developmental moments that through an accumulated system of guidance is analyzed, managed and motivated by the adult. The guidance the teacher provides the child must be thoroughly anchored and justified if haphazard educating or teaching is to be avoided.

Teaching is the means for realizing education by orderly and systematic support of a child concerning the actualization of his intention to learn. In this way the school insures that the learning contents he is confronted with do not lie beyond his reach. The purposeful, planned and protective character of the school avoid all fortuitousness or haphazardness (in so far as this is possible); this means that all casual or accidental learning or achievement is avoided. Fortuitousness in this sphere results in the child casually creating and establishing his own world. However, should this be the case, the implication is that the teacher, as the one who accompanies, helps and supports the child, can be excluded from teaching. When the teacher is excluded from the event, he cannot be accountable for the child's fulfillment of his learning and, thus, also for his safe passage from the world of his childhood to the cultural world of the adult.

The school is, therefore, the place and space within which the child creates his world as well as future. In this context, going to school means that he accepts the challenge that the future holds for him; that is, he is dynamically involved in creating his own future in order to be able to live the image of adulthood but with the support of his teachers. All of this is possible for him because the school he enters is not completely unfamiliar.

The child in our culture identifies early with the idea that he will eventually attend school. One need only take note of how intensively the pre-school child "plays school", especially if he has an older brother or sister. This "playing school" expresses his expectation to which he looks forward, although he may be anxious or tense the day he actually starts his school career.

It is important for the teacher to know that the child's expectations of the school can be explained by the fact that it represents an opportunity for him: going to school is the first step to becoming an adult! To become an adult means to become emancipated, to create one's own future and to learn to know one's potentialities and limitations. The school is the place where one is squarely confronted with one's own potential and where one learns to know oneself. The quality of self-knowledge will be a determining factor

for the way he becomes an adult. Another determining factor is the quality of his learning intention.

The child's learning intention is normally so strong and intact that the usual failures every child experiences cannot disturb or neutralize it and these failures are often used to motivate a positive learning result. Every learning situation appeals to him to venture into the future. However, in the school situation the future is actually a matter of the immediate. There is an aspect of reality that must be understood and mastered here and now. The teacher's unlocking the contents for him, therefore, must be meaningful for his present existence.

The child's directedness to come to terms with immediate contents is a meaningful and creative aspect of his development towards adulthood. However, to the extent that he progresses, i.e., to the extent that his conquests increase, he also gradually works through to a reality that is not immediately present. This is a reality that lies more remotely in his future.

The adult knows this future reality as one of values and norms. The realization of values is apparent early in a child's life. This realization appears as knowledge of, a feeling for or sensitivity to and an obedience of the demands of values. Learning correct table manners is a good example of what is meant. In essence values are a matter that is projected towards the future in terms of which the quality of the child's eventual adulthood will be measured.

The pronouncements above are extremely important for the school. In educating, norms cover and include every facet of the life world. In this way the norm, in the broadest possible sense, is central to all teaching and school activities. As a pedagogical institution, the school must create the opportunities for the child to create a miniature world in the classroom. This little classroom world serves as an analog of the greater world outside of school where everything normative and valuable is exercised. The world in the classroom is therefore a reflection of the world from which the school chooses when it orients and directs the child with respect to reality.

In this respect, the task of the teacher is that in his teaching he continually nourishes the child's expectations of mastering. This means that it is only when the child fully ventures with the learning or school contents that he will eventually proceed by means of his mastered activities to venture with the life contents from the life world.

#### **6.4 The school must complete the initial educating in the home**

Usually the child enters school directly out of the home. For him, the school is an intermediate or "between" world in the sense that he is systematically introduced to the greater reality outside of the school as well as the home. In this way, the school bridges the spontaneous, naïve and informal experiencing of reality to the more calculated and formal command of reality by the adult. In order to achieve this the school must make provision for certain pedagogical foundational principles and incorporate them in its activities because the child's going out to reality is influenced by them.

The first of these principles is that the school situation must provide security and protection for the child. He will feel secure only if he is accepted. If the school does not provide security, if there is not the necessary attitude to and inclination toward acceptance and if no opportunities to emancipate are present, then in all reality it is not a pedagogical (educative) institution. In this case the school misses its basic aim. For this reason the child's experience of security in the home must be continued in the school. As we know, the educative situation in the home is a matter of playing, learning and working. In fact, these three activities express the nature of the basic characteristics of a child's existence. The child's lifestyle cannot be adequately or accurately described outside of playing, learning and working. The child also nourishes himself and breathes, but his pets do the same. The identity of the child is clearly revealed in the fact that he plays, learns and sometimes also works. It is only logical that the school must provide for these forms of existence. As far as children in the home are concerned, play is certainly stressed. Yet parents continually transpose the playing activities to the other forms of existence, namely, learning and working.

The activities that the parents initiate are actually sporadic. From time to time they lead their children from playing to learning and working activities. The school has an important completing task in this transition of activities. Where there is no regular task acceptance and task completion, the child's transition to an adult form of existence is hindered. The school is specifically the place where a child is continually confronted with specific demands and tasks for a certain number of hours of every school day. He is supported in the execution of tasks but at the same time he is expected to behave responsibly. In this way, the school completes the initial, sporadic activities of educating in the home concerning task acceptance and fulfillment by creating situations in which the child must accept tasks and subject himself to the evaluation of the teacher, but always with the aid, help and support of the teacher.

The task of the school to complete the education started in the home has important meaning for the child's future occupation. However, the value of this task of completion is not only confined to his future occupation. In every facet of life outside the school and the home, task acceptance is of paramount importance. The systematic organization of time in the school day, school week and school year offers opportunities to lead his education onto a more closed path.

The meaning of each one of these aspects is that a child enters a specific relationship with reality in the school. This relationship is of decisive importance in the eventual image he will have of reality and of the image of a person that he will one day show as an adult. The question of whether the school will be a life reality for him is inseparably linked with the question of whether the school will adequately and accountably support him in designing his own image of the world. As a social institution, there are many dangers the school will have to contend with in this context. If the teacher is really to aid and support the child, he must be thoroughly aware of these dangers.

In the first instance, there is very real danger that the school acquires its own identity for itself. That is, it attempts to create its own autonomous character that, especially on the basis of its academic attitude and involvement, can easily degenerate into

activities that are foreign to the child, i.e., foreign to the home and to the world outside the school. Where this happens, the child becomes lonely and solitary in the school situation and this hinders him in his attempt to break out of the smaller (confined) world of the home in order to become involved in the greater social structure. In this case the school is obviously not a pedagogical institution but merely a teaching center where educative aims are achieved only accidentally. This kind of school creates a greater distance between the child and the world instead of bridging or narrowing the distance and leading him into reality.

A second and related problem is that the school does lead the child into reality, does accompany him in his examination and exploration of it, does assess and evaluate his achievements, but without creating opportunities for or supporting him to transcend reality. When a child grasps and understands reality he must be able to objectify it. This means that out of this reality he must attain a new structure, find new application possibilities, master new situations; that is, he must constitute or create his own new reality.

A good example of this misconception is that teaching that is strongly examination-directed and that the evaluation of the school's contribution to the child's becoming a person, measured in terms of examination results, provide the child with no opportunity to transcend reality. This does not involve him in his security or exploration and therefore it damages the opportunity for emancipation in such a way that he is hesitant and even will refuse to enter the broader life world of the adult outside of the school situation. If this occurs, the school cannot guarantee the future adulthood of its pupils and also there is no mention of vocational adulthood and full-fledged socialization during the child's school years.

By viewing the pedagogic significance of the school as discussed above, it is possible to infer that the responsibility for the school's occurrence cannot be thought of apart from the initiative, insight, aims and ingenuity of the teacher. Where the teacher is not present, the child can experience the school as a museum or an archive or even an encyclopedia but not at all as a school in the pedagogical meaning of the word. The child's passage to the adult life world,

i.e., his constituting his own life world in terms of what the school offers him, moves the adult (teacher) to the center of the activities in the school. In light of what was said at the beginning of this chapter about the pedagogical and the school, it certainly is important to look more closely into the encounter between adult and child in the school situation.

## **7. THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN ADULT AND CHILD IN SCHOOL**

The sense and meaning of a child's attending school lies in the opportunities the school offers him for his use in order to reach his destination as a person (adulthood). The child cannot be held responsible for what the school offers in formal ways. The contents as well as the organizational structure of the school are and remain the responsibility of the teachers who in school aim to establish the child's way to adulthood. Where the child enters the school to learn, the adult enters school to teach with respect to the child's learning activity—this means the teacher directs the child's learning intention by unlocking things for him that are life valuable.

Irrespective of the differences between adults and children in the school, both enter it as people. This means that the relationship established in the school is above all a human and interpersonal relationship. The teacher presents an important image (example) of adulthood that in fact reflects the image of the future world the child is aimed at. The encounter of the child with the teacher therefore actually means there is an encounter with the contents the teacher unlocks; these contents are matters still to be grasped, understood and applied by the child in the future.

It is important to understand clearly the concept "encounter" and what it implies in the school situation. The question really is: How does the teacher realize an encounter in the learning situation in the school? The importance of the concept "encounter" in the school situation is discussed below so that it can be clarified as a constituent (category) of the pedagogical in the school-didactical situation.

In modern pedagogics there is the danger that the word “encounter” is used commonly and as a platitude in the human sciences. As in the case with the concept “school”, the teacher must be aware that “encounter” is used with a definite meaning. As a concept, it is a particular description of a human being’s involvement in reality.

To be able to penetrate to the essence of the concept encounter it first must be remembered that a person always stands before everything that really is. That is the whole of reality is continually thrust upon a person and he accepts as a task the ordering of this reality and by ordering and thinking he discloses, discovers and grasps it for himself. A relationship between person and reality arises and exists on the basis of the fact that he turns himself to reality in intentional (conscious) and directed ways. The fact that a person continually comes forward to meet reality is a person’s original form of living. (In this connection see the discussion in Chapter 4 of a person’s original relationship to reality). There is no human being who does not continually come forward to meet reality in one way or another. This does not mean coming forward to meet reality, as such, but indeed the pedagogic task is that an adult in the school must design reality for the child into which he can enter without the danger of being harmed.

In this respect the adult is aware that by entering (encountering) reality the child experiences a unique and personal connection with it and therefore also proceeds to discover its meaning within this relationship. It is from the sense that a person has of reality that his joy and clarity of life spring. In this connection it is important to indicate that the entry into reality of each individual is a personal matter. This encounter with reality continuously demands decisions regarding three aspects of reality: the metaphysical, the inter-human, and objects and things. The decisions made depend on a person’s knowledge of the phenomena and the meanings he attributes to them.

The task that a person’s relationship to reality presents to him is that in the above-mentioned ways he must penetrate to the essences of reality. This means that here he encounters the mysteriousness of life itself and from his appreciation of it he must try to clarify and master it. The mysteriousness of life also forces his being

bound to time and space upon him. His insignificance with respect to all that is, his impotence with respect to a particular piece of reality usually strikes him in his deepest innermost being. In this moment a person encounters his God and fellow persons and he also has an intense experience of reality. It is during this moment that a person changes and becomes different. Consequently, it also is the moment when the form of living of each person comes to fruition. This essential relationship to reality is of particular significance for pedagogics and, therefore, for didactics.

A brief explication of what the encounter implies can be expressed as follows. When concrete reality imposes itself upon a person in a particular way, this is a moment of encounter. Thus, it is a moment when a person stands squarely before a given piece of reality with respect to which he must choose and decide—reality demands that a person act; the encounter is a mysterious event but, as such, it also is necessary in the course of life and living of each person. The moment of encounter is thus unavoidably on a person's path of life. Because a person encounters, as a person he really has no choice about it. A person encounters reality because he is a person; in the encounter he exceeds and transcends reality i.e., places it in the sphere of the metaphysical and extra-personal. In the encounter a person is confronted with the most fundamental questions and problems of his existence such as those involving eternity, his helplessness as an individual human being and his concept of life. For this reason, the encounter is also a ground-form or ground-situation in the person's existence and it appears to be given with being human. In this context, the encounter is an ontic given.

Now the question is: What has encounter to do with the meaningful course of the situation and activities in the school? The answer is that if the school from time to time places the child in ground-situations, it must design its practice in such a way that it will compel the child to develop a growing or maturing style of making decisions.

In school the adult is in fact aimed at providing the child with the opportunity to change, to become different, i.e., to become an adult. For this reason he confronts the child with contents in terms of which he must choose and decide. Very often the adult (teacher)

represents these contents in his own person. In his encounter with the teacher as an adult, the child encounters his own future. Therefore, the adult must create purposefully and with insight an atmosphere or climate of encounter in the classroom.

It is important to indicate that the encounter includes communication, i.e., communication between persons that clarifies the meaningfulness of the communicative situation for them.

Now it is the case that the classroom is not necessarily a place of encounter. However, it can be one if the events that occur there are really meaningful to the child. As far as the adult is concerned the classroom situation is always meaningful. However, where the situation in the classroom can be called a place of security and accompanied protection, when it really is a home and a place where the child is accepted and feels welcome the teacher has already accomplished much to prepare the child for an encounter.

In light of the above, the teacher must be aware that he must continually implement particular pedagogical-didactical means in order to involve and direct the participating child in the learning situation. Didactic means, as far as possible, must serve the aim of presenting the mysteriousness of life to the child.

The most important didactic means that the teacher has at his disposal most certainly is language. There is no aspect of reality that cannot be presented to the child through language. For the teacher language not only reflects his relationship to reality but also especially discloses his disposition towards his pupils. It is no small or easy task to verbalize a particular aspect of reality. When the teacher wants to make the classroom a place for encounter, in his preparation and actions he must continually give careful and close attention to the way he is going to verbalize the contents he is going to present. It is with such actions that the teacher often guarantees an encounter between himself and the child.

Every other didactic means strives to present or represent reality anew for the child. For this reason, the above pronouncements about language are valid for each form of observational material that the teacher implements in the lesson situation. When the

classroom has become a life world it can also be the place for an encounter. Thus, it is understandable that the encounter with the teacher really is a precondition for realizing the assumption that the didactic event should affect the child in his deepest inner being and allow for him to change.

The encounter cannot be planned purposefully and with certainty and, therefore, it requires of the teacher particular knowledge about the life form of his pupils. In this respect, the teacher must be aware that there is no facet of child life that is not relevant to an encounter arising. His religious experiences, his social relationships, his play, his language, his fantasies, his intellectual abilities, his affective (emotional) experiences, the totality of his possessed experiences, etc. are all factors that must be taken into account if the teacher wants to establish a classroom atmosphere that also can be a field prepared for the encounter.

Where the child actualizes the encounter through the learning situation from his side, the teacher must realize that the child enters this situation of encounter as a person. The child does not experience the encounter through separate aspects of his being a person; encounter in the classroom also is a matter of a person-in-motion and in this respect it involves the totality of his being human. The teacher's thorough knowledge of each child's way of participating in the learning situation is of particular significance and for this reason it is a precondition for the encounter in the learning situation. Where the didactic event creates opportunities for the encounter it most certainly also must be a help-providing situation. When the teacher provides help to the child he comes close to him, not only with respect to his intellectual command of the contents but also especially regarding the child's innermost relationship and attitude with respect to learning as a task of life and to the contents as life contents.

Moments of the teacher providing help to the child in the didactic situation are the purest moments by which the "I" of the teacher and the "you" of the child merge into a "we" in the situation. When the "I" and the "you" merge into an "us" this means that the teacher and child have found a common point of departure to explore and master a certain aspect or aspects of the situation. Moments of

providing help in the didactic situation are often the purest moments of encounter between teacher and child.

In light of this brief explication of the encounter between adult and child in the teaching situation, which ultimately establishes the pedagogic possibilities and character of the school, it is important to indicate something of the school's task in the child's constitution of a personal life world.

## **8. THE SCHOOL'S TASK IN A CHILD'S CONSTITUTION OF A PERSONAL LIFE WORLD**

A child spends about twelve years of his life in school. However, the importance of the school is not that it is an important part of his life history. It is true that the period that the school influences the child's becoming adult is of particular significance because it coincides with his formative years. It also is the case that these years are a sensitive period in his life. It is a period in which he proceeds to a greater rational and intellectual mastery of reality. In addition it is a time in his life when he becomes conscious of his own being a person, of himself as a person, as a human being, as a man or a woman. Also it is in this period that he strongly questions the valid and acceptable aspects of the world and life because as a person he comes increasingly under the appeal of valid and accepted norm structures as proper ways of living.

What is more, the school is an aspect of his life world where things continually happen. This does not distinguish the school from other aspects of his life world. Indeed, there is no terrain that he enters as a person where there is not a continual sequence of events. In contrast to other events in the child's life world, those occurring in the school have a particular character. Above it was mentioned that the school is a place where the future is created. In this respect, the school is not only a place where things happen, but it is a place where adults (teachers) allow things to happen. The events or activities in the school are planned, purposive, systematic matters and the child's activities are directed and controlled externally (by the teacher).

The playful casualness that is characteristic of so many aspects of a child's out of school activities are not identifiable with the school as a teaching-educating institution. The school activities can possibly be accurately described by asserting that they allow the child to appropriate something that is so far-reaching in nature that it radically influences and changes his entire perspective on reality. The school allows things to occur in systematic and purposeful ways and in this respect it contributes to allowing the child to distance himself from his naïve, pre-rational and even diffuse perspective on reality.

To be a teacher means to confront children with particular aspects of reality in a successive series of particular situations with the aim that the children will eventually master the contents themselves. For this reason, the teacher continually places them before particular aspects of reality and in clear and undisputable ways pairs these aspects that he offers with particular tasks for the children to carry out. The design and provision of help in carrying out these tasks is an essential and integral part of teaching. At the same time, the school-going child continually and with an orderly succession of situations is placed under the appeal of these tasks. Accepting and carrying out these tasks is evidence to the teacher that the child answers the appeal directed to him in particular ways. Consequently, judging and evaluating the child's achievement in order to bring this to a close really is a judging of the way he has come to an ordering and mastery of particular aspects of reality.

This course of action in the school situation is perhaps understandable in the sense that the teacher is continually involved in representing reality to the child such that his orderly mastering of it can progress. In this way teacher and child jointly formalize particular aspects of the human cultural world in general but also particular aspects of it.

In its curriculum the school does not offer the entirety of reality to the child but selects from it the most important and necessary aspects that he must master on his way to adulthood. The formalizing that flows from this helps the child divest himself of the naïve perspective on matters because the school forces him to understandingly and appreciatively assimilate these aspects into his

way of living. Thus, the school makes a particular contribution to the child's education. In this way the school completes the education of the child that is begun in the home. In the most literal sense of the word, the school is an extension of the family because the orienting and socializing as well as formative aspects of educating are always directly included in the school aims. These three facets do not constitute the totality of the school's influence on the child's form of living. The fact is that the school must realize all of the didactic categories in its activities in order that the quality of the child's mastery of reality can be determined in terms of didactic criteria (See Chapter 3).

In linking up with the previous sections, it must finally be indicated that the school must implement the principles of the didactical-pedagogical (as explicated in the beginning of this chapter) in its activities in order to be able to have any pedagogical significance in the life of the child. Apart from the pedagogic demands that are placed on the school as imperatives, the school must thoroughly take into account the societal order within which the teaching must progress meaningfully, as well as the prevailing spirit of the time that illuminates the youths' situatedness—that which the school must interpret for the child as a future life world must at least be faithful to reality. It is only if the school answers positively to these tasks that it can have pedagogical significance and also in this respect can guarantee the child's experience of a normative reality.

The analysis of the school situation emphasizes the fact that the school anticipates the future for the child, that it is an intermediate world or reality for the child on his way to adulthood, that the purposeful teaching in the school should never have a haphazard character and that the school really completes the didactic and pedagogic activities that had begun in the home. It is in light of these aspects, as the background against which the school's pedagogical significance is found, that the school must realize the encounter between child and adult because the child identifies himself with the appeal of reality via the person of the adult (teacher)—the child really identifies himself with the way in which the adult relates himself to the appeal that in the adult's activities is observable to the child. This implies that the school must realize

didactic categories in its activities that, in their criterial evaluation, must corroborate the quality of the learning achievement.

This chapter is not meant to present a final or complete pedagogical explication of the school. Rather its purpose is to orient the reader to understand the pedagogical significance or meaning of the school so that he will be in a position to evaluate didactically-pedagogically pronouncements about the school. This means that the teacher must also be in a position, among other things, to be able to evaluate the organization and administration of the school. To further orient the reader on this matter, the problem of teaching strategies is attended to in the following chapter.