

# Philosophy, Children, and the Schools

## *Preface*

The school is in danger because there is not a general and a fundamental goal for the work which the school must do in educating the generations of the future — in educating children of today. Perhaps it is not new that the work of the school can be criticized — but it might be new that the basic goals of the school must be renewed in order that they can serve the legitimate claims of the future. We know that the future will give a world different from the one we know today, not only technologically but also philosophically.

That is the reason why the school must not cause disunion in children's minds. On the contrary, the education of the school must present the world and the environments of the child as a whole. An average schoolday is for many children a rush from one subject to another — one lesson in English, one in geography, and one in history. Each subject has its own borders, but if all the subjects are not gathered in a whole, "holes" of knowledge will occur for most of the children. The intellectual perspective disappears or will never occur — which means that the goals of the different subjects are neglected. Considering that the child in herself starts her school bearing an intellectual and philosophical unity, everybody must be able to see that this is crazy.

There are two subjects in the school, which are able to unify the chaotic world of the school students: lessons in the mother tongue combined with philosophy and lessons in philosophical topics. When children in the school are educated in their own language it is very much important that these lessons are also used with the goal of gathering specific intellectual topics obtained in other subjects. These lessons must gather the different parts of knowledge learned by the students partly in the other school subjects and partly learned in their homes, in daily life, and by reading or seeing TV. The goal is to obtain connection and relation between all matters, to obtain perspective in the educational process, and to obtain motivation for learning more. Grammar, syntax, and memorizing are less important matters compared with insight into philosophical and cognitive concepts of Life.

Language is partly the tool for learning, the tool for thinking, the tool for communication, and the tool for expressing one's own feelings and understandings. Thus, language is the most important matter concerning development of the intellectual entity of man, and it is crucial for man's understanding of the future world.

Philosophy is THE discipline. Being the science of thinking, philosophy expresses all theories from ancient Greece until today — i.e. all human thoughts throughout 30 centuries. Every thought, ancient or modern, every theory, ancient or modern, can be reflected in children's minds today. Being the science which reflects man's struggle to understand himself and his environments, philosophy creates perspective in life in all dimensions. Thus philosophy is able to provide the school and its different subjects, but especially the mother tongue-lessons, with great values, and these

values are able to provide students' minds and thinking with tools for comprehending, understanding, and intellectual thinking.

Growing up during childhood, the child runs through different phases of philosophical problems as shown in the history of philosophy. It is possible for even a young child to tackle rather difficult philosophical problems — she tries to make them realize what the problem is and thereafter she tries to make them give examples from their daily life and from their own experience. First the entity — then the parts.

If one of your students has been picked on by others during the break, it should be talked about in the following lesson. You try together with the rest of the class to solve the problem socially. Thereafter — perhaps many days later — you may try to discuss the philosophical consequence of the problem. In the talk with the class you make your way from "picking on others" through "tolerance" into the philosophical consequence of the problem. In the talk with the class you make your way from "picking on others" through "tolerance" into the philosophical problem "justice". You are now "in the entity" and from that point you start a philosophical, ethical, and metaphysical discussion about the concept "justice". The task of the teacher is to try to make the students voice their opinion of "justice" — not giving examples, but conceiving the real philosophical topic: what is justice? So you try to expand the children's cognition of the problem, and you "force" the children to voice what they have never voiced before. Thus you develop nuances to the words and concepts they already know. Their language is deepened and their level of cognition is expanded.

This book takes up different concepts and shows the way the teacher might handle these topics pedagogically with children aged from 13 to 16. The method has been used in many schools in Denmark and has worked out well. It is important, however, to emphasize that the teacher must not follow the instructions literally — you have to find your own way through the topic and through the lesson — you have to listen to the children's answers and build up the lesson on your own inquiry and the students answers. The goal is to obtain deeper cognition — and this goal will not be achieved, if you "too early" tell the children how to tackle the problem, or if you too early give "the solution" or your own opinion. The problem might be understood in any other ways that you have even thought about, and you have to remember that your opinion is not the only one in the world. The lesson is built upon your inquiry and the children's answers and definitions. The teacher is able to start a thinking-process by using the method of inquiry, but there are certain rules which must be observed:

- 1) A structure in the lesson agreed by teacher and students.
- 2) Different students are "chairmen" during the semester in order that all children have the opportunity to try this difficult work and to handle this severe responsibility.
- 3) The social intercourse in the classroom must be characterized by openness and acceptance.

- 4) There must be a willingness to enlighten different subjects and topics from all angles.
- 5) The students' argumentation must be trained.
- 6) The students must be led to an understanding of superior philosophical concepts which are behind the topic talked about.
- 7) The teacher must see himself as "a catalyst" for opinions and views pronounced by the students.

It is therefore very important that the teacher leads the discussion into a superior level — not in order to educate professional philosophers, but in order to make the discussion objective, i.e., to discourage prejudices and to ensure that the children develop. It is a methodology and a teacher's attitude towards philosophical problems which serves as a model for this sort of lesson. The teacher must be willing to grasp the philosophical concepts that are revealed in the remarks of the children.

The following text deals with different concepts which can be a part of the philosophical discussions in the classroom. Besides, the text brings instructions for the teacher in how to handle the talk about the following concepts: justice, conscience, guilt, fear, wickedness, powerlessness, liberty, violence, language. For each topic the text shows the way that might be followed by the teacher — and many possible questions are given to start with for the teacher. The goal is that the children get nearer to cognition of this specific philosophical concept, which will deepen the child's understanding and his language. The better the language, the better the thinking.

The text includes two short stories that are "work-shop-texts". They include philosophical problems in a form which sometimes can be a good way to motivate children to discuss these matters.

### *Questioning*

In education, we use questions to test the knowledge of students. Questions are used to check their knowledge and to improve this knowledge. Consider how many questions you use in the space of a year. The largest part of the dialogue you have with children is based upon questions.

There is nothing wrong in that this is a good way to improve knowledge and to test for it. But in the case of philosophical education, questions have another nature. Questions to which the teacher knows the answer ("Is Washington situated north or south of Chicago?" or "What is the present tense of the verb "To hide"?) are not philosophical, and there is no need to discuss, say, the distance between London and Copenhagen. There is one and only one answer to that sort of question.

When we work with philosophy there are no definitive answers. The teacher asks questions about matters that he cannot even answer himself, and he has quite another intention with these questions. Philosophical questions intend to touch difficult mental, intellectual, and moral matters — the teacher tries to make the children think independently — and she tries to make the students give answers (or new questions) derived from their own think-

ing. This is a way to increase the students' cognition. There are no definitive answers, and the teacher is searching as much as his students. If we have the question "What is identity?", we shall not try to find examples, but a definition — a linguistic explanation of this concept. It might be as difficult for the teacher as for his students — that is the reason why the teacher asks — that is why he listens to the students' answers — that is why he corrects the students cautiously, if their answers are wrong. It is a better way to ask again and make the whole class search towards a better explanation and definition. The process is very simple — you put new questions to the students' questions — in this way students and teacher are searching together towards cognition, experience, and understanding. The philosophical questions are put so openly, that there are no limits to the searched answers. So it would certainly be a mistake, if the teacher finally explains to the students what philosophers have said and written about identity; in this way he would stop all independent thinking in the students, and they might never think about the problem anymore.

It is therefore a sort of, "a technique of questioning", a little like that of Socrates. He said that you are wise when you understand that you do not know anything.

There are many advantages for the students and for the teacher as well. The students will continue their thinking and will, in this way, be strengthened linguistically and intellectually. One day they shall find their own point of view, because they have a philosophical tool for their thinking.

A sixth grade student formulated the following about identity: "It is like a little point inside me — a point that cannot be touched by others. Whatever happens to me, nobody can get behind the shell which is around this point. This point is my identity."

And here is a small text written by a fifth grade student:

### *Nature Shows No Justice*

I think Nature is unjust, because it takes it out of existence the weak ones. The weak people have not a single chance. On the other side, it is right what nature is doing.

Nature is like a human being, with a strong will a heavy mind. No human being can decide for Nature. Nature decides, but sometimes it is unjust — for instance in Ethiopia, where it does not make rain. It looks as if Nature does not receive help, when we have been too tough to it. Sometimes, say when we have ruined a jungle, it will not make new trees grow.

Nature is often unjust, but logical.

Many teachers find it difficult to teach in a philosophical way, because there are no limits for the answers we help the students to find. But we must remember, that we want independence and cognition in every single student. We must understand that questions are the key to this sort of education.

The following topics have one thing in common: a list of questions that the teacher can use in the lessons. It is not my intention, that she follow the list slavishly. The dialogue with the students has to be spontaneous and real. She may

start anywhere she wants, simultaneously listening carefully to the students' answers, and remembering that inquiry means to encircle and define a problem. When we do that together with the students the result will be excellent.

*The methodical line in philosophy for children*

- Ask the linguistically weak students first.
- Be sure that weak students get a chance to formulate their arguments.
- Make the students reformulate their arguments.
- Write the different arguments and proposals on the blackboard.
- Sum things up with the class.
- Search for the superior concepts in the arguments.
- Make the students find new examples.
- Search for a definition of the concept.
- Make the students give further examples.
- Search for a better and more pertinent definition.

During the procedure:

- 1) Praise the students' answers and arguments even if they include some mistakes. They can be corrected later during the procedure.
- 2) Try to "jump" from concrete examples to abstract statements.
- 3) Encourage all statements and answers. Let the students know that there is something valuable about the very attempt to answer.

**REMEMBER:** Inquiry is encircling and defining the problem.

*Justice*

Justice is a deep philosophical problem, which has engaged philosophers for thousands of years. It belongs to metaphysics and to ethics, and the concept is difficult to define precisely. There is a very good reason to take up the subject with the students. Even if the concept is difficult to define and explain, it plays an important role for all human life. Justice has typically been interpreted theologically, and the students might, in their discussions, argue from this point of view. The rule must be, that we shall not disturb their thinking in the beginning of the procedure, but let them "talk out". Theological statements are important and are part of the children's world. We must discuss these statements in the classroom, if they are pointed out. We must avoid giving "finished solutions". The subject will certainly motivate the students. Everybody has a meaning and must be heard.

*What is justice?*

- Ask all students — the weakest students first.
- Send the question on to the next students.
- Try to avoid examples, but search for an explanation of what justice is.
- Which of the explanations do you think are nearest to the concept?

Ask every student to give an explanation of justice. Discuss these examples.

Compare the examples and try to find a connection.

Try again with the definition:

What is justice?

Can we come closer?

Ask every student to write an example of justice on a piece of paper.

Gather the papers, mix them and make every student take one of the papers — let him read it and try to give an explanation of the example.

Discuss.

Make one student read her example and ask her for an analogous example.

What do you think? (question to all students)

Why?

Let us take up the subject world-wide:

What do you think is the biggest injustice in the world?

What is in your opinion the greatest justice?

What could be the greatest justice?

Why? What are your reasons?

Has justice anything to do with our emotions?

With reason?

Is justice logical?

If you were able to create the greatest justice — what would you create?

Why? Ask all students — the weakest first.

Let us try the definition again:

What is justice?

Make the students try to write down a definition, or let them sit together and talk it over.

Have you read books in which you found the topic justice?

Tell the class about them!

Have you seen films or videos about this topic?

Tell us about them!

Do you think that war is an injustice?

Why?

Is peace an injustice or a justice?

Why? To whom or what?

Is justice the concept which distinguishes war from peace?

Why? Give examples!

Can love be an injustice?

How? Why?

Can love be a justice?

How? Why?

What is the connection between justice and good fellowship?

Promises?

Nature?

Music?

Books?

Videos?

Etc.

It happens very often that the teacher in this sort of education puts questions that he/she cannot answer him/herself. This is not a reason not to do it! On the contrary: to ask is to begin to formulate a problem. Teacher and students search in common to clarify the relationship to justice.

Can you tell about situations in people's life in which justice plays an important role?

Discuss!

Are there situations in people's life in which justice is unimportant?

Discuss!

Is justice important for you?

How? Why?

Could you tell me things, which small children see as an injustice?

Make every student answer and write their examples on the blackboard.

What do you see as an injustice?

Write on the blackboard and compare!

What do you think adults would see as an absolute injustice?

And as an absolute justice?

Why?

What do you mean?

Can you give me some examples from this school?

Discuss!

Are there differences in people's views on justice?

Why?

Is it a question of their work?

Their knowledge?

Their environments?

Their heredity?

Is there a connection between our knowledge and our views on justice?

Why? Why not?

What is the connection between these two topics?

Is the clever man more fair than the stupid man?

Or the other way round?

Or is there no connection here?

Why? How? Explain!

What is justice?

Can we come closer to the concept?

Does an absolute justice exist?

For all people?

Why? Why not?

Does justice play a role in our relation to Nature?

How?

Does justice play a role in our relation to each other?

How?

Is there a connection between justice and love?

Why? Why not?

Could we gain new points of views on pollution, if we looked upon pollution in the light of justice?

How?

Make the students find discussing of justice in newspapers, comics, magazines. Discuss the matters in the next lessons.

How do people react when they meet injustice?

When they meet justice?

Why?

How would you react in these situations?

Why?

Can justice be "deepened"?

Why? Why not?

What will happen to justice for you if you are treated with injustice for a long time?

Try to view the concept in many different ways. Every little discussion about these matters deepens the cognition of the concept justice: there is a justice — I meet it sometimes — I reject it — I am happy to meet it — I love it or I hate it — etc.

Does justice exist in our own mind?

How can I know?

Are you born with justice?

If you answer yes: Why?

If you answer no: where does it come from?

Is there only justice, because there is injustice?

Why?

We have asked many difficult questions. But the students will try to answer them, search — and they will gain greater understanding about deep, philosophical problems and topics, and their language will be better.

This sort of education — this method — will give the students a tool, which will profit them for the rest of their lives.

### *Conscience*

Freud looked upon conscience as the controlling part of the human mind (the "superego" controlling the action of the "ego"). Conscience involves saying yes or no to impulses from the "Id" — in this way conscience is of great pedagogical interest: conscience develops through childhood. Therefore childhood has a large influence on this part of the human mind.

But you can also look upon conscience as a philosophical concept. Thus we go deeper into the mind and behind daily life. Conscience is a concept which must be cleared for the students — they must gain insight in conscience in themselves and in other people — they must be able to see conscience in human actions and in human attitudes.

There is a connection between conscience and ethics. But there are so many branches in ethical philosophy that the result is that there are no final answers on anything. The question is whether ethics is based on emotions or on logics. Can you give ethical statements based on logic? Is there a connection between logics and ethics and knowledge — can you give ethical statements based on emotions only, or can you only base ethical statements on knowledge? It is a question, whether ethical valuations can be apprehended, or whether they "only" are reciprocal emotional interactions. Is ethics based on cultural values, or is any single human being independent of the cultural environments, so that he independently creates his own ethics? These thoughts must be clarified for the students — we must try to make our students realize different thought about these concepts. The intention is not to teach in the different tendencies, fields, and movements — this is not what the teacher is teaching in. On the contrary: we must question to make the students discover the problem in order to give them a tool

for their own thinking — this is the goal for our philosophical teaching.

Our starting point might be a concrete situation, which can be of great help in our mutual searching for the topic conscience. Our example could be abortion. This issue has been discussed for several years, but nevertheless the topic is far from being clear to many people.

It would be a good idea to find a short-story in which abortion is part of the topic. It would also be a good idea to find articles in newspapers and magazines with the same topic. It all depends on the maturity of the class. The most important thing is the set of questions we use in order to encircle the concept conscience.

How do legislators determine when it is allowable to make an abortion?

What are their “groundings”?

Have they anything to do with medical knowledge?

How?

Have they anything to do with emotions?

Have a vote in the class:

Are you against abortion or not?

Count the votes and discuss the result.

Make students discuss the subject and make the rest of the class write down the statements they hear in this discussion.

Take out the most important statements and write them on the blackboard.

If the discussion has been motivating for most of the students you might try the following:

Make an “upside-down” discussion with the same two students, so that they now try to make the opposite statements.

Did you now hear new statements in this new discussion? Why? Why not?

We will try to get closer to the philosophical concept:

How do we commit ourselves to a position on this topic?

Is there anything in our mind which helps form our attitude to that position?

Make everybody give an answer — the weakest students first.

Do you use your emotions, when you find your attitude? Or reasoning?

Do we find our attitudes on other topics and subjects in the same way?

Write on the blackboard.

Let us imagine that some students mention the medical responsibility about criteria for death.

How does the doctor discover his attitude?

Logic?

Reasoning?

Knowledge?

Emotions?

Or?

How do legislators find their criteria for a potential change of the criteria for death?

Do they use knowledge? Emotions? Logic? Or?

You may have a new vote about the criteria for death.

Make the students give statements for their attitudes.

Discuss!

How did you find your attitudes?

Can you tell me about people who must find attitudes to very serious matters?

Write on the blackboard.

Is there anything mutual in the situations mentioned?

Try to find the topic responsibility.

What is responsibility?

Is there anything in our minds which helps us to take responsibility?

What?

Let every student have a try, and help them to find the concept conscience.

What is conscience?

Who can give a definition?

Could you give examples of matters that give us a bad conscience?

Write on the blackboard.

Could you give examples of matters that give us a good conscience?

Write on the blackboard.

What is conscience?

Can we come closer to the topic?

Are we born with conscience?

Why? Why not?

Is conscience a question of our environments?

Why? How?

Has conscience anything to do with emotions?

With reasoning?

With knowledge?

Can you mention situations in which your conscience plays an important role?

Write on the blackboard.

Could you mention situations in this school in which the teacher’s conscience is important?

Do you use your knowledge when your conscience is decisions in determining what you do?

Or your emotions?

Or your ability of reasoning?

Try to explain.

How do we react when we have a bad conscience?

Are these reactions reasonable?

What can make people unscrupulous (without conscience)?

What can make us scrupulous (with conscience)?

Did you use your conscience when you found your attitude to abortion?

How? Explain!

Has conscience anything to do with your work in the school?

How? Explain!

We try the definition again:

What is conscience?

Can you mention parts of life in which conscience plays an important role?

Make every student answer and write on the blackboard.

In which of these examples will conscience be troublesome or cause troubles?

Can you mention subjects in which it would be difficult for you to find an attitude?  
Why would it be difficult?  
Talk about this matter — in cases in which we do not have any experience, we might come up against difficulties.  
Why do we have difficulties here?  
Have a discussion: Is knowledge important?  
Can we make statements on topics without experience?  
Has conscience anything to do with our dreams?  
How? Explain!  
Has conscience anything to do with our behavior?  
How? Explain!  
Has there been a situation for you today in which your conscience played a role?  
How?  
Could you mention examples on school situations, in which conscience is important?  
Discuss!  
Have you recently read anything in the papers which has anything to do with conscience?  
Have you ever read novels or short-stories in which conscience played an important role?  
Tell us about this!  
Has conscience anything to do with responsibility?  
How?  
Are you able to mention sectors in which people feel responsible?  
Discuss!  
Has the education in the school anything to do with responsibility or conscience?  
How?  
How would you arrange education in order that it would be able to develop the students' conscience?  
Discuss!

If the students are mature the teacher can tell about the field of ethics and eventually try to marshal rules for moral life and ethical thinking.

Can we devise moral rules?  
Will they be sufficient for all people?  
Do we believe that our own (unwritten) rules for morality also are THE rules for all people?  
Discuss!

We can try to give five moral rules which are valid for all people. Write on the blackboard all the rules the students suggest. Out of these you can try to find the five most basic rules. (It is still important that the teacher listens to the suggestions from the students before suggesting anything herself!)

Are these five rules we have found now basic for all people?  
In all situations?  
Why? Why not?  
Have these rules anything to do with the concept conscience?  
Does knowledge play a role for them all?  
Reasoning?  
Emotions?  
Etc.

Make some students prepare a lecture for the next lessons and discuss their "dealing with conscience". The teacher

must remember that she does not bring her solutions to the problem discussed. The students have to discover that they are able to think independently, and to discover the different aspects of the concept conscience. Thinking is a sort of experience, too. Philosophy for Children has the goal of making students think independently, and the suggested inquiry may be of great help. It has been used in many Danish schools with a great result.

Guilt  
Fear  
Wickedness  
Powerlessness

The following short-story deals with these four topics. The text may be copied and used in your classroom. The text can be dealt with literally, socially, psychologically — but you must remember, that understandings in these ways will be deeper, if you simultaneously talk about the philosophical concepts that are behind them. So the teacher must try to make the students find and recognize these four topics through inquiry, before she has a literary talk in the classroom. The philosophical concepts are deeper than the literary, social, and psychological topics in regard to cognition and intellectual development.

### *Millo*

The first morning light penetrated the curtains of the windows. The first sounds of life could be heard in the distance — a world was awakening once again.  
Half asleep Eva put her arm round Millo. She was still dozing, feeling Millo's body as a blush on her face. Did they really sleep the whole night? It was incredible.  
She was still feeling Millo caressing her, as if his softness still lived in her. She wished this moment to continue — for long — for ever.  
But Millo woke up — maybe awakened by the thoughts. He removed her arm.  
"Morning, Millo," she whispered affectionately.  
He mumbled something and got up in the bed.  
"No, stay where you are!"  
"Why?"  
"Because it's lovely. You must stay here for ever."  
"And your parents?"  
"You know they won't come until tomorrow."  
"Sure, but anyway."  
"It's just an excuse of yours." There was a stroke of defiance in her amorous voice. She started caressing his body, searching the deepest joy and delight.  
"I'm busy today," he said.  
"It's just an excuse."  
"Okay, if you say so."  
"Do you prepare the breakfast," she asked.  
"Okay."  
"But without putting your clothes on!"  
"So you want me to fool around in a strange apartment without clothes!"  
"To make me happy."  
"Nonsense." He got up and put his clothes on. "But you may stay where you are so that I can enjoy your beauty!"

"This is not fair!"

"It's your apartment — so it'll work."

"God bless me how victorian you are!"

He went to the kitchen and put the kettle on. "Much more than you can imagine. I hate to be looked at naked."

"It did work yesterday evening."

"That was something else."

"Exactly, you could gain something." She laughed. "You're a goat. What's the name of the girl you spent the other night with?"

"I don't know her."

"You're a liar!"

"You don't know her."

"I see." She got up and went into the kitchen, while he was pouring up the coffee. She stood behind him, her hands finding their way under his shirt.

"Stop it — I don't like it now."

"You're decency itself, eh?"

"Exactly. But you wouldn't believe it."

They sat down at the small table in the kitchen without saying anything. For a short moment she enjoyed looking at his young, supple body; then she discovered that he was weeping.

"You are crying!"

He closed his eyes and lit a cigarette.

"When did you start smoking?"

He did not answer.

"You are strange. We have known each other for several months, but suddenly there's something in you that makes me scared."

"I'm scared, too."

She got up, put on her clothes and sat down on his knees.

"You? Scared?"

He nodded. "I'm afraid of you."

"Oh, shut up!"

"That's the way it is. But I'm most scared of my own person. But I'll tell you something — I know, what I want. I know how my future must be. Damn it — the world will wonder — they'll see things, they didn't expect. I'll no longer yield to my own compulsive ideas. They will go — they will get out of my head — forced out of my head — I must forget them."

"What a lot! I don't grasp one single word of it!"

"I know. That's what disturbs me. I spend a night with you — "

"It's not the first one."

"No, I know. But inside I am so scared of it, that I could throw up."

"Why? You were so sweet and lovely."

"Only to strangle my own fear."

"I'm beginning to understand." She got up and took some of the dishes. Then she lit a cigarette and sat down beside Millo.

"What do you understand," he said.

"It's your Dad. He's a devil — I've always thought about him as a devil."

"You're on the wrong track. I love him — but my Mom."

"When did they leave each other?"

"Eleven years ago."

"Then it doesn't mean anything anymore."

"More and more. I hate her, my bloody Mom. She had other men, and my Dad didn't know anything about it. He thought everything was all right."

"Don't tell me you remember this. You were only five."

"I know it was like that."

"Okay — maybe it was."

"I hate my Mom — more than you know."

"Kiss me!"

He took her hands and put his head on her shoulder, weeping.

"And what about your Mom's girl?"

"From where do you know her?"

"I won't tell you."

"Tell me."

"From this night."

"What?"

"Yeah, you were speaking in your sleep. You talked and talked about Cille."

He blushed. "What did I say?"

"Nothing special."

"Tell me!"

"Don't you know, that when people are speaking in their sleep, they mix it all up, so you can't figure out what they are really saying?"

He nodded. "But — "

"Okay — you raved something about loving her and wanting her all for your own. You screamed: I'm only waiting for you."

He took another cigarette. "Eva — don't you see — that's what is wrong — she's ten — this is immoral — it is — "

"It wasn't. But I don't want to sit in your room telling all my problems."

They did not say anything for a while. Millo stared straight in front of himself, until the cigarette burnt his fingers. Eva brushed his clothes for ashes, kissed him on his cheek and said, "I wish I could help you!"

"You can't."

"If we spend all nights together — you do love me, don't you?"

He did not answer.

"Tell me!"

"You simply don't say that stuff. I don't even know what it means. I know what sex is — but I guess it's something else."

"For me it's the same thing."

He nodded. "I'm ashamed. A girl of ten years — this is madness. But I'll find my revenge some day — I'll show all of them, that I am something. I'll make big money — I want power — power over everyone. Maybe you do get an advantage from being a kid of divorced people. Maybe it's the only way you learn to see the world as it really is."

"Nonsense."

"You don't know this stuff. All kids should be allowed to grow up in homes that are smashed — they should be allowed to see the seamy side of life. I think that would be the only way to kill the dishonesty of all adults."

"I know what you mean: But it must be wrong."

"Why?"

"Because — cause — well, there have to be people who feel

well and comfortable — that's the only way a background for life."

"It's not enough. It's false."

"Tell me — this Cille — do you ever speak to her?"

"Once a month."

"And you do love her — really love?"

"I dream about her day and night — see her as grown up — dreaming about making love to her — playing with her beautiful hair. I know it's wrong — but she is in my mind all day."

"When you are with me, too?"

"Yeah."

"I should be angry with you," she said, "But I think I love you even more now."

"You can't tell love from mercy. You pity me. I could throw up. I don't want that bloody mercy of yours." He got up, took his sweater. "You are going too far now. You must not touch me — damn it — I want my own life."

"You are crazy — you'll never get your own life — loving babies — this is insane!"

Millo took a pillow and threw it in her face. "That's just about enough — you bastard. You live here with your false confidence believing that you understand everything. You can go to hell!"

He slammed the door behind him and ran weeping down the stairs out into the cold air in the street. The snow beat in his eyes, and he ran down the street to his mother's apartment, which was only a few blocks away there.

He wanted to see his mother and Cille for the last time. After that he decided to spend all his time educating himself. He would work to get power and position, in order that everyone could see, that he was the whole world, and that he was able to start a big business. He would let the business expand abroad — he would beat all competitors and he would be known all over the world.

A last visit — and no more.

He was standing in the stairway reading his mother's name. Then he rushed upstairs. He knew that her husband was at work now — he could visit them now, even if they did not expect him today.

He rang the bell — three times as usual — he heard steps from inside — and saw the door open and Cille stand there just in front of him.

"Hey, Millo. How lovely!" She jumped up to him and kissed him. "I'm all alone, Mom is downtown. I'm so happy you came — then I'm not scared anymore."

"Are you afraid of being alone?" He put her down.

"You know I am. Come on!" She took his hand and shut the door. Milo felt the warmth from her small hand, looking into the eyes that made him crazy. He felt that Cille was his and had the feeling of real love — a love which was unadulterated and untouched — a love which he had met nowhere but in Cille.

"Come on," she said, awakening him from his dreams. "I'll make the coffee. I can do it. Sure!"

"No no — don't do it!" Yes — do it — make the coffee. He enjoyed being waited on by this small girl because he felt that she liked him.

Cille put on the kettle and put two cups on a tray. "It's gonna be fine, isn't it?"

"Of course. When does your Mom come?"

"She's your Mom, too."

"Not as much as yours."

"You don't like Mom, do you? Why not?"

"It isn't true."

"Who do you like best — Mom or me?"

"What a question!"

"Tell me!"

"Why?"

"I want to know!" She turned round, smiling at him. He felt that she could twist him round her little finger, if she wanted to. He was completely lost — a small girl of ten! What was wrong with him? It was abnormal — it was unhealthy!

"Okay — if you won't, I will. You like me. I feel it. And of all people in the world, you're the best for me — and then Mom and Dad."

"Don't say things like that!"

"Come on — let's drink the coffee. I don't like coffee, but when you're here, it doesn't matter." They sat down on her bed in her little room. Cille poured up the coffee — like an adult, he thought — but he couldn't drink — he just stared at Cille's small beautiful face and her black hair. He ran his fingers through her hair.

"You like me, when you do things like that, eh?"

He nodded.

"Much?"

"Yes."

"So why don't you kiss me?"

He shivered. "Because you're too small. You're only ten."

"What does it matter! When it is you, it's okay — but the boys from the class — no, never in my whole life!"

Millo stared at her mouth with the shining teeth, feeling he was choking. He loved this little girl and enjoyed feeling love — but simultaneously he knew that he was going mad.

"Mom is coming," Cille said. "I can hear her in the stairway."

"That's good," he said, while Cille smiled roguishly at him. She behaved like an adult, and he felt that she was penetrating him into his deepest feelings.

"Now, give me that kiss, before Mom is here," she commanded.

"No Cille — later."

"Then I'll take it myself." She kissed him warmly and heartily. Millo felt the guilt burning in himself — and he was hoping, that this was the very last time. He would not go here anymore — not until Cille has grown up — then they could change the whole world together to remove all guilt and nastiness.

"Oh, you're making yourselves comfortable," mother said.

"Hey," Millo said stupidly. "I passed by and wanted to see you."

"I do think Cille is happy about that," mother said. "She talks about you all the time."

"We took some coffee, Mom — I cooked it myself," Cille said.

"I want a bath now — I'm going to Lene's birthday party this afternoon, so you can talk with Mom," she continued.



"I haven't got much time," Mother said. "I'm leaving again. Come on with me to the kitchen, Millo — if you have something to tell me."

Something to tell her? Cille went into the bathroom, and he stayed dreaming about how she would look when she grew up. He felt this awful guilt grow inside.

"Come on, Millo," mother shouted from the kitchen. "I'm busy." Millo got up and dragged himself towards the kitchen. Then he slowly opened the door and decided to say good-bye, when his mother interrupted him, "Why do you come here, when I'm not at home!"

"I just happened to."

"Shut up — Cille is only ten."

"What are you talking about?"

"You are speaking to your Mom!"

"I don't care. What are you accusing me of?"

"I know damned well that Cille is a beautiful girl. Millo — be reasonable!"

"I hate you," he screamed, seizing a knife from the table. Mother was putting something into the freezer, when he caught her from behind and put the knife just in front of her face. "If there were a hell it would be the place for you!" Then he threw the knife and rushed out of the kitchen, tore the front door open and rushed down the stairs. "I hate you," he yelled so that it could be heard all over the town.

He stopped under a tree trying to get his breath again. Then the window in the house was opened and he heard Cille cry, "I love you, Millo. I'm the only one who loves you. Remember!"

Then he ran — down the street — away — away from the guilt, although he knew, that it would stay in his mind for the rest of his life.

The rest of his life.

— O —

(This short story may be copied and used in the classroom, if you want it as a basis in the talks about the following four topics)

### Guilt

What is guilt?

Try to find a definition.

Who can give examples of guilt felt by Man?

Ask all students — the weakest first.

Write on the blackboard and discuss!

What is the cause of Millo's feeling of guilt?

Ask all students.

How does he try to control and fight against his feeling of guilt?

How would you handle this problem?

Have you experienced the feelings of being guilty?

Of what?

How did you try to fight against it?

Must we always fight against it?

Why? Why not?

Are you able to mention things we can feel guilty of?

Discuss!

Is the cause of guilt our emotions?

Or reasoning?

Try to find reasons for your answers!

Can we fight or control our own guilt by means of other emotions?

Can we control guilt by means of reasoning?

How?

Can we control guilt by means of knowledge?

Why? Why not?

How can knowledge help?

Can you give examples?

Could you imagine a sort of knowledge which might be of some help for Millo?

If we look upon guilt as a philosophical topic, it belongs to metaphysics, and is a matter which is difficult to define. But we do have to try to help the students by giving linguistic explanations.

Perhaps many people look upon guilt as a religious topic. This is why we may have some difficulties with it — the religious interpretation is only one out of many reasonable ways of dealing with the topic. Children are, in many countries, growing up in a secularized society and in secularized environments — the topic is thus moving from the religious area into a philosophical one — this means that the feeling of guilt might be repressed because we neglect that the religious interpretation also is a possibility for many people and for many children. We do have to talk these serious things over with the students, and in my opinion it is absolutely necessary to use inquiry, which means that the teacher asks every student for an answer, that she listens carefully to the students' attempts to find these answers, and that she looks upon every single student as an independent human being. There is no final answer to these matters — but there are attitudes which lead to reasoning and statements. The prior condition is, that the teacher is willing to listen seriously to the students before giving an answer herself or before starting to tell about different philosophical ideas and assumptions during the last thousands of years. This is THE method to use — it will result in mature students who have got an intellectual tool for their thinking. We can be quite sure that every student in our classroom knows the topic guilt and that he/she knows the feeling of guilt. *It is the teacher's responsibility to create environments in which these matters can be freely discussed.*

Is there a connection between guilt and responsibility?

How? Explain!

Take your time for this talk — it is really important to encourage each student to say something and to start a discussion about the topic. This talk might be fundamental for the students, because the talk touches the deepest parts of human minds — the topics in the deepest part of mind might be pent-up if the teacher does not show willingness to discuss this matter.

If you feel that you have not lived up to your responsibility, the result might be a feeling of guilt?

How can you fight against this feeling?

Or must you try to fight against it?

Is a feeling of guilt a positive thing?

How?

How do we react when we have a sense of guilt?  
Can you give examples?  
How do we react when it is impossible for us to remove the sense of guilt?  
What does Millo do? Do you think he is clever in doing this?  
What would your advice to him be like?

If the students are mature enough it might be a good idea to tell them about the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard and his experience of the concept guilt which pursued him his while lifetime.

Why do we often cover up with our feeling of guilt?  
Are we cowards?  
Is it to minimize the sense of guilt?  
Give suggestions and make the students to make new suggestions.  
Discuss!

If the teacher, after these lessons, feels that her struggle for understanding and for making the students think independently have not been a success, she can be quite sure that the discussions, the talks, and the suggestions have not been fruitless — she has started a thinking-process in the minds of the students. This is the very goal of philosophy for children.

### *Fear*

It is obvious that fear appears in the short-story, and it would not be difficult for the students to find it and to find the causes for it.

Primarily we will look upon fear as a philosophical topic, remembering the cognition of the philosophical concept is a prior condition for understanding, for example, literary topics, deeper understanding of the persons, social understanding, understanding of oneself and others and so on.

It is peculiar that fear has not been looked upon as a philosophical topic until a hundred years ago. In antiquity it was not considered something philosophical, and in the beginning of our millennium it was not either — in these times fear had something to do with fear for God.

It is different now, but if we only look upon fear as a psychological topic, we are weakening the topic. The weakening of this important topic has the result that fear is repressed in many people — especially our students. There is, in my opinion, only one way out of this dilemma: to view the concept fear as a philosophical concept. Our endeavour must be to try to make the students apprehend fear as a philosophical topic. The philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel said that fear was a necessity.

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard distinguished between dread and fear, meaning that fear is directed against something, while dread is not. His opinion was that belief can be the salvation from dread.

Other philosophers have said that fear is an essential feature in Man — maybe this is correct — nobody knows a person who has not met fear. This means that our students know fear, and that we must help them to understand and comprehend fear.

What is Millo afraid of?

Why is he anxious?  
How does he try to fight against his fear?  
Or does he not try to fight against it?

Do you know the feeling of fear?  
Can you give some examples?  
Ask all students.

Have you tried to fight against your fear?  
How? Why?  
Can you tell the class what can make small children afraid?  
What can make youngsters in your age really afraid?  
What can make adults filled with fear?  
What are the differences between these examples?  
Are there similarities between the examples?  
It is important to find these similarities — it can be of great help to understanding what fear is.

What is fear?  
What are the differences between these examples?  
It is important to find these similarities — it can be of great help to understanding what fear is.  
What is fear?  
Let us try to make a definition.

Has fear anything to do with emotions?  
How?  
Are we born with fear, or does fear grow up in connection with our environments?

Why?  
Can you imagine people without fear?  
Is it important for parents to stop their children from feeling afraid?  
Why? Why not?  
Can we fight against fear through knowledge?  
Do we feel fear in situations in which our knowledge is very small?

Why? Why not?  
Can you mention a situation in which many adults feel afraid — a situation in which the knowledge of adults is very limited? (it might be fear of nuclear-war, pollution, new diseases?)

How can we fight against this sort of fear?  
Must we fight against it?  
What is fear?  
Can we make a better definition?  
Let everybody try.

Ask the students to bring press cuttings or readers' letters in which fear occurs.  
Discuss the texts in the next lesson.  
What would happen if we all pretended that fear did not exist?

Or never spoke about it?  
Or never wrote about it?  
Discuss!

Can you remove your fear by talking about it?  
Why? Why not?  
Is fear a natural feeling?  
Why? Why not?

Where do you suppose that Millo met fear for his first time?  
How would you try to help him, if you knew him?

*Wickedness*

Perhaps wickedness is easier to understand for believers, because it is the cause of everything, and because Man cannot see through God's ways — what seems to be wickedness might be something else.

Much of the Western world is secularized. Religiousness and piety are, more or less, repressed. Wickedness becomes a problem — and if we do not comprehend wickedness as a philosophical concept, it will certainly be repressed: it will become a pent-up cognition in our students. They will interpret wickedness aggressively and resignedly — perhaps even as a prejudice. This is not satisfying if we want our students to treat wickedness cognitively. In our education programme we must be careful to ensure that the students comprehend wickedness as a philosophical concept. Thus the literary topics in the short stories are not sufficient — they must be deepened through philosophy for children.

Can you give examples of wickedness in the story about Millo?

What is wickedness?

Try to work out a definition in the classroom.

What is the opposite of wickedness?

Are the good things good only because of the existence of the wickedness?

Are they really contrary terms?

Have you met wickedness?

Give examples.

What did you do — how did you react?

What can you do when wickedness is coming close to you?

What can make people become wicked?

Is it easier for us to choose wickedness and to prefer wickedness?

Why? Why not?

What is wickedness?

Is there anything which is absolutely evil?

Anything absolutely good?

Can you imagine a world without wickedness?

Is war absolutely evil?

Why? Why not?

Is violence absolutely evil?

Have you seen films or videos which deal with the dispute between goodness and wickedness?

Can we understand the human mind in this light: that there is a constant dispute between these two concepts in our minds? Why? Why not?

If there is such a dispute — how can we be able to choose?

Could it possibly be the conscience, responsibility, ethics etc.?

Is it possible to learn to choose the good things?

Is it possible to learn to distinguish between the good and the evil?

How?

Are there differences between the different countries (cultures)?

Can you give examples?

What is wickedness?

Can we move closer to a definition?

Must we necessarily fight against wickedness by means of wickedness?

By means of goodness?

Reasoning?

Knowledge?

Belief?

Or?

Deepen the discussion and make all students answer. Cognition about these vital problems is very important in a modern society and in the future of every single student.

*Powerlessness*

When power is a philosophical concept, its contrary term powerlessness must be a philosophical term too. You cannot imagine power without powerlessness. We all know the feeling of power — and we know the feeling of powerlessness. Perhaps Life is a balance between these two topics. It is not easy to comprehend the ethics and responsibility without a cognition of the problems of power and powerlessness.

Try to help the students find the powerlessness in the story about Millo.

How are Millo's feelings when he feels his mother's hatred?

Make all students answer — praise the answers, even if the concept powerlessness does not occur.

How does Millo feel when he is together with Cille?

Make all students answer — and praise their answers.

What do we call the feeling we get when we are in a situation we cannot handle?

What do you feel when you are a master of yourself?

Make the students see that it might be power.

What do you call the opposite of power?

What is powerlessness?

Make all students try to answer — listen to their answers — praise them — make the students discuss.

Do you know the feeling of powerlessness?

Can you give us examples?

What do you think about the answers that Roger gave?

Take a serious discussion and do the same with all students.

Can you mention situations in which small children feel powerless?

Children at your age?

Adults?

Old people?

How do we react when we feel powerless?

Discuss the answers and examples.

Is powerlessness a feeling?

Must we try to fight against it?

Is powerlessness a natural thing?

Must we put up with it?

When we teach in this way we put words "on topics", we label, that which the students knew beforehand without knowing the exact word for it. As soon as we know the word, the cognition of the concept is deepened — the language will be more varied and the comprehending of daily life-things will be deepened.

Does Millo do anything to fight against powerlessness?

Why? Why not?

What would your advice be?

Has Millo's mother a feeling of powerlessness?

How would you advise her?

What is powerlessness?

Try to deepen the definition.

Are we born with powerlessness?

Or do we "learn" it?

Have you felt it in this classroom?

How do you handle the feeling of powerlessness?

Is it a help to talk with other people about it?

Why? Why not?

What can make adults feel powerless?

Is knowledge a help against powerlessness?

Reasoning?

How?

Can you imagine another ending of the story about Millo?

Talk it over with the class — find different endings of the story and discuss the statements.

Powerlessness is a problem which is very relevant in our modern technological society. We really have to talk these things over with our students. Otherwise, the feeling of being powerless might be repressed — so even if you feel that your lesson was no success, you can be quite sure that something is happening in the minds and thoughts of your students. Discussing these matters is a sort of work, and you can be sure that it is worthwhile if you seriously feel a responsibility for the future of your students.

*Per Jespersen*