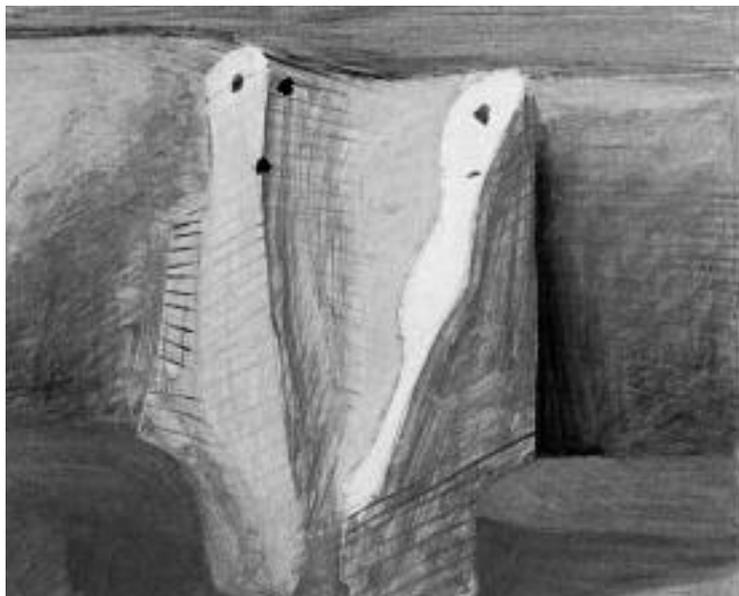


■ SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

Retreat and Colloquium on Questions of Spiritual Research

The Power of Evil – the Strength of the ‘I’

On March 3-4, 2006 a colloquium of the School collegium, the executive council of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany and its Research Advisory Group took place at the Goetheanum. The colloquium was preceded by a retreat of the Advisory Group. Both the retreat and the colloquium brought aspects of concrete collaboration within the context of the School.



A point of attachment for evil: the relationship of the human ‘I’ to itself (Karl Ballmer: ‘Composition’, 1934, Hamburg Art Gallery)

One of the focal points of the Research Advisory Group’s retreat was around the question of the human being’s task with nature. It became clear that, developmentally, nature has until now been the basis of development for the human being, but that today natural outer and inner development – bodily and soul processes – are increasingly dependent on the development of the ‘I’. Thus questions such as the following gain importance: Does the human being manage to inwardly connect individual experience with nature, without losing himself to nature or over-forming it? What are the methods that make spiritual perception of hidden forces in nature possible, so that the border of corporeality can be ‘shifted’ in both directions – inwardly and outwardly – by the I?

Understanding Threshold Phenomena

Anthroposophical research wants to set itself the difficult task of developing experiences and perceptions, to begin with, but then of also making them understandable, and of adequately presenting research results. A distinction is to be made between threshold phenomena that originate in an unconscious and undirected crossing of the threshold, and

spiritual knowledge. It belongs to the signature of our time that it is often only with great difficulty that strong esoteric yearning can make a connection to a spiritual scientific research impulse – also within the anthroposophical movement. In light of this situation it seems sensible to develop outlines for adequate research projects and to support people who are willing and able to work on questions that come about in this way.

Effects of the Forces of Evil

In the colloquium that followed – a continuation of work begun in March 2005 – the central question was that of identifying the forces of evil that have worked in the 20th century and are at work today in continuously changing forms. From the point of view of a spiritual-scientifically formed capacity of discernment, and in connection with the Apocalypse of St. John, presentations by Rudolf Steiner and current observations of the participants, four effects of evil were characterized and discussed:

- forces that allow what is unreal to appear as reality;
- life forms that turn against the developmental capacity of the I;

- ways of thinking and experiencing that prevent any kind of transformation in substances and in human relationships;
- forces that create chaos in a previously lawful and ordered natural and cosmic event.

These forces find a point of attachment particularly where the human I seeks a relation to itself, to others in a community, to a larger community and, finally, to humanity. They come to expression at these contact surfaces between the I and that which extends beyond it, in habits, automatisms and ideologies that prevent a living exchange between I and world. Thus the transformative power of the I is withheld from the world, as is that of the world withheld from the I. This gives rise to a favorable climate for inner as well as outer totalitarianisms to arise, which work subtly and often unrecognized. Motifs that are individually developed, felt and willed and that come to expression in societal contexts here meet their greatest challenges and significance.

Concept and Being

A further point of attachment could be described in the growing separation of concept and being. Concept and thought seem to attain being less and less often, and being is increasingly felt to be lacking a concept or idea. The current tendency indicates the over-forming of being by means of systems and abstract models that rob being of any reality. The contrast between advancing dehumanization and creative activity of the I could be debated with regard to the dangers to childhood and youth which come earlier and earlier as well as more radically. This would open up a broad field for the practice of spiritual-scientific understanding of the human being, pedagogy and therapy.

Collaboration between the School collegium at the Goetheanum, the executive council of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany and the Research Advisory Group will continue at a further gathering in September 2006. Wolf-Ulrich Klünker, Paul Mackay, Mechtild Oltmann, Bodo v. Plato and Hartwig Schiller are the coordinators. This work may possibly lead to a conference for members of the School of Spiritual Science in March 2007 in Germany. |
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