

CHAPTER II

THE MUTUAL IMPLICATION OF THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE EVENT AND THE UNDER ACTUALIZATION OF A CHILD BECOMING ADULT

1. THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE EVENT

1.1 Educative distress

In the previous chapter, it is noted that a child's becoming adult does not occur automatically, and that it also can be inadequately actualized. Ter Horst¹ says "Sometimes educating runs solidly aground, and then there arises a confusing situation within which it is asked What must we do?"* Those involved experience their educative situatedness as limited, meaningless, and threatening; indeed, it has become a *distressful* educative situation.

Nel² believes that there is *educative distress* where the condition of educating is bad, and the educative activity is inadequate in that its meaning is not fulfilled, i.e., *the child does not live in a close association with his/her educator who is directed to adulthood*. According to Lubbers,³ a child is delivered to distress, since he/she does not feel secure with his/her parents, and they cannot free him/her from his/her helplessness. Langeveld⁴ stresses that there is something amiss with the communication, which leads to a child's becoming adult being harmed, especially because his/her lived experience and behaviors become unreadable to his/her parents.⁵ Kwakkel-Scheffer⁶ says something occurs in the child's life by which his/her relation with his/her parents is directly or indirectly disturbed; his/her future perspective becomes obscured.

The powerlessness of the parents to now help their child, and the powerlessness of the child to ask his/her parents for this help, according to Lubbers,⁷ mostly is founded in a defective association between them which, as such, can lead to educative distress.⁸ The situation of educative stress gives rise to unfavorable emotional

* [Soms loop de opvoeding massief vast en dan ontstaat er een verlegendheid situatie waarin de vraag wordt gesteld: Wat moeten we doen?]

lived experiencing by the child, e.g., excessive and needless feelings of anxiety, loneliness, insecurity, helplessness, and uncertainty, and there is a “serious obstruction in the course of the educating”.^{9*} It is now obvious that the distressful educative situation, and the under actualization of the psychic life go hand-in-hand and, as such, constitutes a *problematic educative event*.

Where there is an under actualization of the psychic life, there also immediately is a restraint in becoming adult because of inadequate exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating, and objectifying,¹⁰ and is one of the factors in the problematic educative situation of a child *restrained in becoming*.

Such a child’s becoming adult, indeed, is *obstructed*¹¹; it is *retarded*¹², and does not occur at the pace it ought to; it progresses *more slowly* than it ought to, and there is a *gap* between the level of becoming adult which the child has attained and the level he/she ought to have reached in accordance with his/her personal potentialities. Briefly, there is a difference between what the child, as a *person*, *is* and what he/she *ought to be*. Just because he/she is *not now* the person he/she ought to be, he/she finds him/herself in a problematic educative situation.

Since, in chapter five, there is further reflection on the matter of a restrained becoming adult as such, the following is only a brief indication of some possible origins underlying a problematic educative event.

1.2 The origin of the problematic event of educating

Viewed against the background of the dialogic character of an educative event, it is necessary that the mutual communication between educator and child continually thrive. Any impediment of this dialogue implies that the adequate realization of the fundamental pedagogical structures is in jeopardy.

* [ernstige belemmeringe vie die verloop van die opvoeding]

Either one [or both] of the two parties, i.e., the adult and the child, can participate in a halfhearted, unwilling way, which results in the improper realization of the pedagogical relationship, sequence, aim, and activities.¹³ It is of essential importance that a child *patriciate hi/herself* and, *with* the adult involved with him/her in the educative event. If this does not happen, from the child there is inadequate signifying, effort, norming, venturing, hope, design, fulfilling a future, respecting, self-understanding, and acquiring freedom to responsibility.¹⁴

Beets¹⁵ says, “When a fellow person does not create the ‘space’ within which *development can find a place*, the infant dies an early death.”*

Several writers refer to the various errors in educating which can give rise to a disturbed communication between educator and child such as affective neglect, rejection of the child, pampering, and overprotecting.¹⁶ There also is reference to the family makeup, the health of the parents, social provisions, city planning, commerce, and industry.¹⁷

Ter Horst¹⁸ distinguishes six categories which can lead to a change in the educative situatedness of a child and then mentions the following as possible origins: anti-authoritative educating, poverty, licentiousness, inadequate housing, deprivation, when parents are absent, if the child must stay a long time in the hospital, demands are too high or too low, hunger, inconsistent behaviors, indoctrination, lack of love, physical handicaps and other personal defects, hypertension, war, underestimation, absence of order, overprotection, authoritarian educating, asking too much, illness, permissiveness, desire to achieve, insufficient challenges, expectations which are too high or too low, spoiling, and any form of neglect.

According to Ter Horst,¹⁹ the parents reveal the existence of the problem in the form of dejection, severity, cantankerousness, rage, overprotection, isolation, neglect, rejection, abandonment, consequences of death, etc.

* [Daar waar de medemens niet ter zijde, niet de ‘ruimte’ schept, waarbinnen de *ontwikkelings plaats kan vinden*, sterft de zuigeling een vroege dood]

Since there also is passing reference to the physically and intellectually handicapped child, there is a need for greater clarity about their pedagogical situatedness.

2. THE HANDICAPPED CHILD AS EDUCATIVELY SITUATED

First, there must be a clear distinction between a child for whom there is an *educative defect* and a child in *educative distress* because he/she is involved in a problematic educative event.

Vliegenthart²⁰ says the world of a person acquires form through his/her free taking a position towards the data by which he/she designs a unique world for him/herself through his/her personal history, to which educating and training belong, and through the potentialities which his/her organic and psychic ground structure offers.

Where there are “deficiencies” in a child him/herself, there is a handicapped child.²¹ Thus, from the beginning, or later on there is one or another constraint or deficiency present in a child’s life.

Children’s handicaps can be diverse, e.g., constitutional, or innate (endogenous), or also acquired (exogenous). Nel²² distinguishes physical-endogenous and physical exogenous, as well as psychic-endogenous and psychic-exogenous factors. With physical endogenous factors, a child is born with one or another bodily defect, or deficiency such as distorted legs, clubbed feet, weakly developed limbs (such as a weakly developed hand), poor vision and hearing, epilepsy, etc.

With respect to physical exogenous factors, one thinks of brain damage leading to a paralyzed leg, the results of an accident or illness such as polio, encephalitis, meningitis, etc.

As far as psychic-endogenous factors are concerned, limited personal potentialities can be mentioned such as mentally handicapped, severely retarded, etc. and with respect to psychic-exogenous factors one thinks of serious traumas or the severe neglect of children.

Irrespective of its basis of endogenous or exogenous factors, for a physically handicapped child, there is always mention of *aggravating* circumstances regarding his/her educating. Possibly such a child does not have at his/her disposal the necessary ordering means of understanding, of emotional attunement, etc. which distinguish him/her as *different from* the non-handicapped.

However, a handicapped child continually is confronted with the *task* of optimally actualizing his/her *potentialities*, and of reaching his/her *attainable* level of adulthood. As with a non-handicapped child, he/she then is involved in an educative situation with the aim of supporting him/her to that form of being adult he/she is capable of, given his/her personal potentialities.

It is the case that a blind child, e.g., cannot give his/her adulthood the same form as does a critic of paintings, but the form of adulthood of a blind child is still an acceptable form, and with respect to certain of its constituent, even greater heights may be attained than in the case of the sighted. He/she, thus, is confronted with the human task of continually actualizing his/her psychic life as a totality-in-function such that he/she will reach the level of adulthood attainable-for-him/her.

That a deficiency can substantially limit the *freedom* of a child is obvious, and that it necessarily will *retard* him/her in his/her becoming adult, and this impediment can be serious²⁴ all cannot be denied. A child's lifeworld expansion does not occur haphazardly but must be established and broadened by him/her in his/her pedagogic situatedness. This occurs as a freely taken position by a child toward life contents. Where now deficiencies exist, a child's *freedom to go to this content is curtailed* because of excluded potentialities. However, it must be stressed that a retarded child, despite freedom-limiting moments, is still a possibility of becoming adult, and he/she also is free to establish relationships, and to choose how he/she will live with his/her defects and limitations, since he/she is not compelled to choose a specific way of living.²⁵

One who is retarded might reach adulthood later than the non-retarded, and the pedagogically attainable level might be lower

because of the exclusion of potentialities, but this does not mean the norm-image of adulthood cannot be lived by a retarded child. Then, in educating there is a particular *retardation* indicated, by which a child, in his/her “approach to adulthood, by its nature, does not unfold as completely as one would hope possible”,* according to Kwakkel-Scheffer.²⁶

Thus, at most, there is a retarded educating of such a child because he/she is *impeded* in his/her becoming adult, since his/her being handicapped might lead to experiencing difficulties in the self-realization of his/her personal being involved in his/her world, according to Nel.²⁷ Strem²⁸ refers to an *impeding*²⁹, a hindering of progress. The defect or deficiency impedes³⁰, i.e., *hinders* or *hampers* the child’s becoming adult.

When a child’s becoming adult is *impeded* or *hindered*, this does not mean that his/her becoming adult progresses more *slowly*³¹ than it *ought* to. The fact that he/she might remain dependent on help from the educators longer than non-handicapped children, and that he/she might possibly reach adulthood relatively later³² than the non-handicapped, does not merely place him/her in a problematic educative situation. That a retarded child’s becoming adult can still occur adequately, under aggravating circumstances, is also demonstrable in the lifeworld of persons and, as long as the child, however seriously handicapped, optimally actualizes his/her given potentialities for becoming, in the sense that his/her pedagogically attained level corresponds with his/her pedagogically attainable level, there is mention of adequately becoming adult, and it is a mistake to refer to such a child as if he/she finds him/herself in a problematic educative event.

However, many authors precisely emphasize a child’s handicap as what constitutes a problematic educative situation.³³ Thus, for Nel,³⁴ orthopedagogics has to do with reflecting on an adult faced with a child in unusual circumstances, and then he says: “*The unusual circumstance* is a child who is restrained, with the consequence that educating and teaching him differ from that of a normal child.”³⁵

* [nadering tot volwassenheid dit wat bij zijn aard past zich niet zo volledig ontplooid als mogelijk zou zijn geweest]

Even so, it is not denied that a handicap, as such, often is the beginning of a problematic situation which has arisen. Since the blindness, weak sightedness, intellectual retardation, etc. usually contribute to the fact that a child cannot optimally actualize the potentialities which he/she does possess and, thus, such obstacles contribute to things other than becoming adult, there is mention of educative braking because, then they contribute indirectly to the becoming adult of that child progressing *slower* than it *ought* to.

Any deficiency, then, also immediately heightens a child's possibilities of adjusting or being attuned to his/her pedagogical situatedness. For example, a weak-sighted child is continually unconsciously involved in struggling against his/her total physical handicap, while experiencing his/her eyes alone does not enter the foreground.³⁶ He/she is limited in his/her exploration of the world, and his/her freedom to adequately design his/her own world is hindered by his/her limited optical perception. He/she is limited in how he/she will explore his/her world.³⁷ However, he/she is not *hindered* in exploring his/her world in accordance with his/her potentialities. However, he/she easily develops a high degree of uncertainty, and he/she also readily experiences his/her handicap as limiting, in which case these experiences of limitation and uncertainty restrain and block the optimal actualization of his/her psychic life, and he/she then finds him/herself in a problematic situation of educating.

Consequently, a child must first experience his/her handicap as a deficiency before it acquires the character of educative distress,³⁸ and there cannot be generalizations, not even about what sort of handicap. Also, each handicapped child is a unique person in his/her unique pedagogical situatedness and there is never mention of a **typical** deaf, blind, hard-of-hearing, mentally handicapped, or epileptic child. The only common characteristic is the fact that, because of their *being handicapped*, these children appear "different" from non-handicapped.

Viewed in its essence, the actualization of his/her psychic life-in-educating of a handicapped child is not different from a non-handicapped child. However, because of his/her experience, and lived experienced deficiencies, as freedom-limiting moments, he/she

shows a different relief regarding his/her experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing, and behaving, as they come to realization in his/her carrying on a dialogue, and *then* there is mention of a different relief in the actualization of his/her psychic life and, indeed, a *handicapped* becoming; he/she experiences and lived experiences him/herself as *different*, and his/her lifeworld is *different*, he/she shows a *different* disposition, and gives *different* meanings,³⁹ hence, it is necessary to provide him/her with "special" help in situations where the demands of educating are considered, with their possibilities and limitations, with a view to preventing his/her *handicapped* becoming from touching him/her.

In the following, attention is briefly focused on some possible implications of a restrained-being-in-the-world, with specific reference to it as an underlying beginning to a problematic educative event as such.

3. THE HANDICAPPED CHILD IN A PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE EVENT

It is a fact of experience that the educative relationship between parents and handicapped children, because of different influences, have a greater risk of being disturbed than is the case with non-handicapped children.⁴⁰ In this regard, parents often have problems with sensing and understanding their "different" task, and then educative problems arise which cannot be blamed on the child's handicap as such.

Essentially, educating a handicapped child does not differ from that of a non-handicapped,⁴¹ but often parents experience an impotence regarding accompanying their handicapped child, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, about their child's potentialities for becoming adult. Then, the obvious in the [educative] progression also is very easily lost, and what is "so obvious"⁴² appears to be continually not right. This inadequate educating from the parents makes the educative situatedness of their child problematic because then, indeed, he/she experiences and lived experiences this/her situatedness in terms of defective potentialities of actualizing and identification, defective authoritative guidance, defective trust, loss of security, and a stable affectivity, defective acceptance of

responsibility, etc. Consequently, it is the inadequately realized educative event which gives rise to a handicapped child also being *handicapped in becoming*.

This handicap in becoming of the handicapped child is closely related to his/her *live d experience of being-different*. The *subjective lived experiencing* of his/her being-different also strikes far deeper than the being-different itself. Vliegenthart⁴³ says, for example, that the daily experiential world of these children cannot be that of our common world, and the main difference is that it has a personal accent. This being-different of their world is an inescapable facticity.

A handicapped child also continually takes a momentary position with respect to his/her pedagogic situatedness and, thus, momentarily lived experiences a slice of the educative event and, indeed, as an accompanied norm-image of adulthood. Gradually, he/she then designs a “different” world for him/herself because he/she also is free to choose how he/she will give meaning.⁴⁴ Vliegenthart⁴⁵ believes that, without a doubt, one might say that there are all kinds of ways you can see the world from a negative view of almost everything at one extreme because of distressful experiences and, at the other, a trusting expectation, as a characteristic of giving meaning because of positive signifying.

A handicapped child readily experiences that others view him/her as “inferior”.⁴⁶ Then, he/she becomes sensitive to the “hidden, concealed negative feelings of being different”, which he/she experiences as “depreciating”.⁴⁷ He/she experiences a primitive anxiety regarding what is *different* and *deviant*, which is carried back to his/her anxiety about confronting general human defects—and, thus, his/her own, according to Pretorius.⁴⁸ The essence of this experienced *being inferior* is a self-devaluation,⁴⁹ and this touches the entire matter of establishing his/her world. The feeling of inferiority has an undertone of shame and being-offended; uncertainty arises from this feeling;⁵⁰ and the child then feels him/herself to not be free. Lubbers⁵¹ says the child experiences “himself as not free, as unable to change while he wants and needs to change; he is unable to assume certain aspects of his life, he is

afraid of confrontation, and pulls back while he is not in a position to escape the confrontation.”*

Then, a handicapped child easily develops and experiences impotence by which he/she always has his/her guard up and prefers to pull him/herself back from establishing relations with life contents.

On the other hand, the non-handicapped also help “prescribe stereotypic roles to the handicapped: he must be helpless, which is expected. Thus, the handicapped can respond by now always relying on help to see their surroundings as ‘present’, to spare them from their difficult situations; ... He can feel that he is worthless”, according to Vliegenhart.^{52*}

Sonnekus⁵³ says the handicapped is involved in a mixed up, confusing, and ambiguous relationship with him/herself, particularly with his/her own body, and a handicapped body, as center from which he/she must constitute his/her spatial orientation.

Because a handicapped child is very sensitive to his/her defect, and is usually more pathically/affectively than gnostically/cognitively directed, and often is strongly tied to the vital, he/she is flooded in and by his/her affect, according to Nel,⁵⁴ and he/she withdraws him/herself from the world. He/she acquires an inadequate grasp of the contents of life. This results in his/her communication being limited, and his/her venturing attitude being diminished even further, and he/she experiences his/her going out to the world as an inability to live in the world, which is a world-for-others.⁵⁵ The things in the world acquire a *different* meaning for him/her and, specifically, so does his/her relationship with fellow persons.

* [zich pas als onvrij, als hij onmachtig is, bepaalde kaanten van zijn leven te assumeren; zich angstig voor confrontatie ermee terugtrekt, terwijl hij toch niet in staat is, aan de confrontatie te ontkomen]

* [stereotiepe rollen aan gehandicapten voor te schrijven: zij moeten hulploos zijn, dat wordt verwacht. Daarop kan de gehandicapte antwoorden door nu ook altijd op hulp te rekenen, de omgeving te zien als ‘aanwezig’ om je moeilijke situatie te sparen; ... Hij kan zich waardeloos gaan voelen]

Lubbers⁵⁶ indicates that the inability to communicate with some areas of the world because the “I” has not assimilated his/her experiences of those areas, leads to an essential lack of freedom by which the “I” becomes locked outside itself and outside the other, and can only maintain itself in “imitative” actions. By doing as another does, the “I” outwardly joins in, but not internally. Only if the “I” has *made* his/her experiences his/her own, will the “I” have access to the closed areas. The unassimilated, which must be assimilated, can bring a person to a passivity in which he/she loses him/herself. If what is unassimilated is also anxiety provoking then, in addition to this loss, there is destruction because specific experiences are ignored systematically, and then are possibly entirely banned from his/her world.

When there is mention that a child signifies his/her being different unfavorably, there is a problematic educative situation because then the handicapped child is not able to actualize his/her psychic life adequately. Thus, it is these handicapped children who are not supported to a favorable bodily experiencing, and acceptance of their own personal potentialities, in relation to the limitations and possibilities of [their] “objective” reality, and whose *will to become*⁵⁷ is limited, just as a non-handicapped child whose will to become also can be limited for one or another reason.

From the above, the handicapped child is involved in a problematic educative situation if there is any evidence that he/she signifies his/her being different unfavorably because, then he/she is not able to actualize his/her psychic life favorably, and *now* “considering his personal attunement. he is in a state related to serious restraints” (for adequately) “pursuing the course of educating”.^{58*} Thus, there must be a distinction between the handicapped child who is *restrained in his/her becoming*, and the handicapped child who is *becoming adequately*, since the latter adequately actualizes his/her psychic life in his/her educative situation, and because his/her level of becoming adult corresponds with what it ought to be [in the light of his/her given potentialities].

* [gezien hun perzoonlijke gesteldheid, in een toestand verkeeren die ernstige belemmeringen] (vir die toereikende) “verloop der opvoeding met zich brengt]

With respect to the handicapped child, his/her being in a problematic educative situation is only noticeable in his/her total going out to the world, and establishing relationships. His/her *body* does not allow him/her to be qualified as *restrained in becoming*; his/her *bodiliness* makes him/herself knowable as a *person* through it, in terms of his/her behaviors in life situations.

The *deviation* or *disturbance*, thus, is not in the given potentialities of the child's psychic life but, indeed, in there *under* actualization. This also holds for "*being-deviant*",⁵⁹ as a deviation in a child's *course of becoming adult*, to which Vliegenthart refers.

That a child's personal potentialities (handicaps, deficiencies) might easily contribute to adjusting his/her pedagogical situatedness. and restraint in becoming is true but, indeed, only when this has occurred, is there mention of under actualizing of his/her psychic life by a child and, thus, of his/her becoming adult, and only then does it become a task for orthopedagogic accompaniment.

For example, when a blind child's blindness labilizes him/her emotionally to such an extent that he/she cannot adequately actualize other given potentialities, only then does he/she find him/herself in a problematic educative situation.

No handicap, however serious, makes a child an inferior being, or makes his/her pedagogical situatedness problematic. With his/her "limited" given potentialities, he/she *must* become adult to the extent that he/she can, given his/her potentialities. As soon as he/she is not in accord [with his/her potentialities], there is mention of restraint in his/her becoming adult and, thus, of a problematic educative situation.

When a handicapped child finds him/herself in a problematic educative situation, then the adults who are primarily responsible for his/her upbringing are mostly culpable because they have allowed that his/her potentialities not be optimally actualized, because of their inadequate support.

Since educators often do not know how to act, and often feel uncertain about educating a handicapped child, on the one hand,

and because these children themselves so readily under actualize their becoming adult, on the other hand, it is necessary that “special help” be provided from the beginning. This “special help” is aimed at averting possible restraints in becoming. Against this background, it also is clear why Vliegenthart⁶⁰ so strongly emphasizes the deviant moments in the psychic and organic structure of the child.

This also determines how an orthopedagogue not only will interfere with actual restraints in becoming, but also with avoiding possible restraints. Because he/she also knows what restraints in become are, in their broadest content, he/she is the appropriate authority to offer this “special help” to the handicapped child. He/she must help the handicapped to “attain the attainable”.⁶¹ With reference to this task of an orthopedagogue, Moor⁶² says “we want to help the child such that his life finds the fulfillment that is possible for him.”* Also, Dumont⁶³ plainly states that the aim of educating the deviant, handicapped child in orthopedagogics, and in ordinary pedagogics, fundamentally remain the same. He⁶⁴ says “The difference between pedagogics and orthopedagogics is in the difference in means of educating under which is included the educative attitude of the orthopedagogue, as an important means. But this difference in educative means is not such that the means used orthopedagogically would not be appropriate in an ordinary pedagogic situation.”** When any child’s becoming adult, however, is inadequately realized only one time, and the pedagogically attained is not in accordance with the attainable, then special methods must be used to *eliminate the problem*.

In this connection, Ter Horst⁶⁵, e.g., says that “... lonely, nervous, isolated, insecure children can often poorly assimilate confusing

* [Wir wollen dem Kinde dazu verhelfen, dass sein Leben diejenige Erfülling finde, die ihm möglich ist”]

**[Het verschil tussen pedgogie(k) en orthopedagogiek ligt in het verschil in opvoedingsmiddelen waaronder ook de opvoedingshouding van de orthopedagoog als belangrijke middle inbegrepen is. Maar dit verschil in opvoedingsmiddelen is weer niet zodanig dat binnen de orthopedagogiek middelen gehanteerd worden die in de gewone pedagogiek niet zouden voorkomen]

events, and which means they need orthopedagogic help to manage the problem”.***

Attempts to “correct” such problems also are shown in the experiential world of people, and is a matter which is attended to in the following chapter.

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*** [“ ... eenzaame, nerveuze in zichzelf opgesolten, zich onveilig voelend kinderen kunnen dergelijke verwarrende gebeurtenissen vaak slecht verwerken in dit betekent dater orthopedagogische hulp nodig is om met het probleem klaar to komen”]

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