

# THE PRECONDITIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PEDAGOGIC AS A SCIENCE\*

C. K. Oberholzer  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Pretoria

In the first sentence of the present contribution, a correction must be made to the title. The knowing reader is aware of where in the formulation the error is to be found, namely, in the pedagogic as a science. The term “pedagogic” always refers to the results of scientific investigation of a particular area of research so that the addition “as a science” is completely superfluous. Thus, the expression “pedagogic as a science” is a tautology, a pleonasm just as, e.g., is “audible noise”, “bulldog hound”, “unwed bachelor”, etc. And yet the title is purposefully formulated in this way to impress upon the reader that this paper has to do with a particular science and its practice. It deals with the scientific practice called pedagogics, nothing more or less. When one is involved with this topic there are particular preconditions that have to be satisfied and demands that have to be obeyed. If they are not satisfied or obeyed, the results can amount to anything; but, in any case, a science is not what is being practiced.

An additional observation is that the term “pedagogic” generally is preferred over its equivalent “education”. This preference is not an expression of arbitrariness or of fad and fancy. The term “education” and its variants such as “educationist” and “educative” enjoy an understandable and reasonable use-preference with Dutch [and English—G.D.Y.] speakers. At the same time it is irrefutably the case that these terms can be extremely confusing and misleading, and they decidedly can give rise to faulty idiom usage for purposes of practicing science. Thus it often happens that even after

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someone's educational qualifications are questioned or that he has important academic grounding outside of the pedagogic or education he can be deemed qualified as an educator. However, the strangest of all is that when someone is capable of some physical achievement he summarily is in good repute in areas of which he has little or no knowledge. Even someone who can cross the expanses of ice at the South Pole or climb to the top of the Himalayas without breaking neck and legs readily is known as an "educator".

The basis for this confusing and misleading idiom use must be attributed to the ignorance of the language forming and language using community. The common vernacular as a communication medium with which the activities of the life world are discussed and directed seldom gives much account of correct word usage by making careful distinctions. This is understandable since we human beings simply do not live out of our scientific practice. No person lives scientifically or directs his life out of his scientific insights. The life of which we are a part and participate in is a pre- and post-scientific attunement and approach. It is rooted in its pathically oriented undercurrent and is characterized by its avowed dialogic flavor as one of encountering and becoming encountered. The just mentioned life world is and remains the realm of the original evidences that are obvious, accepted and display certainties difficult to argue against. These are emotional matters as convictions of a warm heart that are acquired with the fulfillment of our wishes and expectations, including experiences of our failures and disappointments. This life world is phenomenally rich in contents that continually change and that can follow each other in such sharp contrast. Whatever else the case may now be this life world, as the realm of the original evidences, is a human world. It is a human reality that arises as a human world; it is an unfolding of our being human as a being-in-the-world. The emphasis is on this being-IN by which acknowledgment is given to the fact that being human is not merely a static being over-against factuality but is a dynamic-existential, being-directed, openness. A person does not rest in himself but stands in and acts out of being: he is a being (of being), thereby human being (of being). His being conscious is a consciousness of being as a being conscious of human reality. One of the essential features of human being is an involvement in being

as a concerned directedness to being because of his anchoredness in it. If this were not so, he would have no world as a life world and a dialogue could not be carried on between him and the reality in which he stands. To express the above slightly differently, a person is Dasein, a being (of being) but as Dasein he is a being who already is elsewhere; he is a going out [to reality], a going to meet, an encounter-becoming possibility. He is a concern for reality by which human reality arises. Human reality is human. It is nothing more and nothing less. Related to this is the following fundamental anthropological thesis: who says person means a self- and world-designing being; a person establishes and resides in his world that in the very least means that finality is attainable. The being that a person is arrives in a world where there are already others and also who must be and consequently it is a world with an expressly inviting and appealing character. This means that the world is not ready-made or complete for him in which he would merely be its recipient. That would be a disavowal and denial of his essence. From the moment of birth he is an originator of what he is, of what there is. Thus he is a world-establishing and world-residing being. If it can be made possible for him to positively establish a world and prosperously reside in it, it should be done. The fact is that whoever talks of a person means a world-involved and world-concerned being, and whoever talks of world means a human world, thus a world saturated with humanness; at the same time he also is a person who inquires about the world and who needs a meaningful, meaning offering world. The human world is the world of a subject; it is a subject-world and as such it is subjective-solitary as well solidary. The world I establish and reside in by virtue of my onticity, the joys I experience and the pain I endure are individual-personal; it is my world and mine alone. At the same time, the life I live is not encapsulated; it is a life with and by others, things and God. Human being-in-the-world is not an oppositional matter but a co-existence or being-with; human withdrawal is primordially completed by coming forward to meet; a person is an encountering and becoming encountered being. The human world in the form of the life world always is inter-subjective; it is the common having-part-by-taking-part in what surrounds us. Human being speaks through the separate human beings from the being in which humans are anchored. His directedness to and caring for the beings

of being only are possible because primordially he is able to grasp being.

It is observed that the human world as a life world is characterized by its kaleidoscopic diversity. One of the events that unfolds out of this life world is educating. It is a function-in-primordial givenness and thus something everyone who is a person was, still is or is going to be intensely concerned with. From this function details come to light that belong to the indisputable certainties of human existence. There is such a thing as educating: it is an integral and integrated part of human reality. As such it attests to the human in a person and also to human reality as being-in-the-world. Educating is an inseparable and distinguishable event in the human world. It actualizes itself as an event among persons and as such it forms an inseparable part of a human life world; this does not mean that it is a continuous activity. What will only be expressed here is the fact that it must be considered as one of the ground structures as structures-in-function. It has its own structural characteristics, its own ways of arising and its own course. Indeed, what is so meaningful is that it is a universal inter-human event with anthropological necessity. More simply stated, a person allows himself to be known as a being who educates, is educated, is allocated to educating and lends himself to it. With this it also is acknowledged that educating, as an inter-human event, is a human way of being present. It says something of a person's humanness.

The present contribution does not deal with an analysis of the structure and method of the educative event but with a reflection, as a critical fathoming, on educating in its pre-scientific structure, thus in its original, universally necessary occurrence under and among persons. Expressed otherwise it has to do with an inquiry into the original life realities unique to persons. With this a dimension of the life world, as the realm of original evidences, becomes subject to critical inquiry. As soon as this occurs the work of scientific thinking begins; in the present case that of the scientific practice of pedagogics. Now as emphatically and as consistently as possible there is talk of the scientific practice of pedagogics. One also can call this activity the practice of the science of educating as the decisive, critical justification of the preconditions that are understood by this science in its attempt to penetrate a universal

inter-human event. For this a few additional observations presently are made. At this stage, first only this: the writer gives consistent preference to the term “pedagogic” and this is not just to use a word of Greek origin as an expression of child learning/teaching. The term “pedagogic” emphasizes a relationship and indeed a dialogical relationship between a not-yet adult and an already adult, or more precisely between one who is becoming adult and an adult becoming. The emphasis falls on a relation-in-function as the unfolding of a primordial pathic relatedness to being. This expresses the fact that the mentioned relation-in-function is no artificiality, non-essentiality or adjunct but the unfolding of a primordial-structure-in-function. Everyone knows that the Greek “paidagogia” literally means leading a child. In the latter the activity-relatedness between two persons already is implied. Now it is indeed the Latin “agere” that emphasizes activity from the child’s side. The latter must find an opportunity to act for himself. Essentially the term “pedagogical” also refers to that type of interpersonal event where a call of distress is answered by an appeal, but not an answer as a reaction or as a preservation of homeostasis, but an answer as an appeal to himself venture with the future in the presence of someone who can offer security.

Now when one proceeds to practice the science of pedagogics the investigator will try to provide a comprehending and understandable explication of a particular inter-human event as it arises in the life world. Thus, it involves reflecting on a particular mode of the practical nature of persons, thus a particular way of inter-human being that unfolds in activity-as-changing-for-the-better. It is this expressed practical character in co-human involvement that is known as a pedagogic event and that offers itself for theoretical penetration and explication. Such a penetrating explication rightly can be called scientific work. It is unnecessary to add that the pedagogic event in its inter-subjective structure does not constitute the only reciprocal occurrence in human existence. The pedagogic represents only a slice of the anthropological totality. It embodies a dimension of human reality and by penetrating this dimension the investigator acquires a perspective on the anthropological in its anchoredness in being. The pedagogic is, just as is psychology, psychiatry, medicine, nursing, etc., a human science. The practice of pedagogics as a science offers a perspective

on the anthropic and indeed one of a distinctive nature. The perspective is on the pedagogic reality as a human event. A pedagogic perspective must never detach the anthropic from its reality-ground. When this happens the person is not only without reality but also it is not a human reality with which the pedagogic then is engaged.

The pedagogic reality offers a perspective on the anthropological in its multidimensionality. It is a perspective, nothing more or less. There always is the danger of absolutizing this perspective as if the pedagogic were the only real reality. Such a perspective then becomes perspectivistic and nihilistic. These are the most dangerous cancers in the practice of any of the human sciences. The only way to counteract this perspectivism, dimensionalism and nihilism, grounded in the technique and methodology of reducing and absolutizing, is to penetrate to the essences of human reality in its anchoredness in being. Human being in its diverse dimensionalities must in its onticity be ontologically accounted for. Thus philosophical anthropology, as philosophical knowledge of human being, only will be accountable when it is practiced as an ontology of being human. Now, just as is any other particular human science, the pedagogic also is an ontology of human being, but since such sciences illuminate dimensions [of being human], they are dimensional or regional ontologies. Consequently, the pedagogical also can claim to be scientific only when it is practiced as a regional ontology. This does not at all mean that the pedagogic is “ontologized” or that ontology in its anthropological dimensions, in the case of pedagogics, is “pedagogicized”. The pedagogic remains an anthropological science, nothing more and nothing less. The emphasis is on human reality as the pedagogic arises in a particular inter-human relatedness against reality as a background.

These days so readily there is talk of an anthropological pedagogics and that in the construction of pedagogics as a system of critical-accountable knowledge anthropological work needs to be done. The former is and remains a tautology since all pedagogics is anthropologically oriented. The latter refers to a method (methodological technique) that is advocated in contrast to a scientific-naturalistic-objectivistic approach. It remains inconceivable how anthropological work can be done in the practice

of human sciences. A naturalistic pedagogics just as such a psychology, psychiatry, medicine, etc. remains anthropologically directed. The error of this anthropological directedness lies in a rampant objectivism as scientism by which the pedagogic and thus also other dimensions of human reality are deprived of their authentic humanness and groundedness in human reality. In other words, the pedagogic is not viewed and considered in its essentiality. One is confronted with a distorted and twisted image of a person and with this also of the pedagogic as an exclusively inter-human event. To reflect on the pedagogic reality in its primordial purity means to fulfill a particular demand, namely, to work phenomenologically. Only in such a methodological way can this part of the occurrence of human reality known as pedagogics be viewed and reflected on in its purity. These days there is mention of a broad front of the practice of a phenomenologically oriented science of pedagogics. This can imply nothing more than that a particular way human reality unfolds itself, namely the pedagogic, is disclosed in its primordial structuredness and essences. Also the phenomenologically oriented pedagogue is in search of the essential, the real, the eidetic, the essential laws, the universals, the necessary and generally valid, the ever visible as the perennial. Briefly, he searches for the *paedagogica perennis* and he searches for it against the background of human reality itself. Heidegger certainly has convinced us that phenomenology only is meaningful as ontology while ontology, thus also an ontology of being human as that regional ontology known as the pedagogic, only is possible as phenomenology. Thus, a phenomenologically oriented pedagogics is fundamental pedagogics; it applies itself to that dimension of human reality out of which the pedagogic arises in its primordial structuredness. It penetrates to the essence of this dimension. Such a penetration means disclosing that primordial structure out of which this particular and indeed universal anthropological relatedness-in-function appears. The critical question that generally enjoys priority is what is the real nature of this mentioned event, how is it carried out, from where does it arise and to what does it point? This is a fundamental question asked by human being about its own being.

When there is a move to practicing pedagogics as a science and from which the pedagogic as a critical-accountable system of knowledge

arises it is a primary requirement that pedagogic thinking indeed will be pedagogic. To this it must be directly added that when someone thinks pedagogically he does not engage himself in a different kind of understanding than when, e.g., he engages in psychological, sociological, biological, theological, etc. thinking. It is the same understanding that is entered, it is bound to the same principles of thinking and subject to the same limitations. The difference is that he reflects on another dimension of being with a different structuredness and method in terms of distinctive categories that have ontological status. Thus, the point of departure lies in that dimension of the human life reality where the pedagogic figures. Hence, when the pedagogic is not in the line of sight of the distinctive and ground seeking thinking it is not pedagogical thinking and the result also is not pedagogical. And when the pedagogician, as a scientific theorizer, reflects on a dimension of human life reality, as already said, he will penetrate to the essence of this reality. The same also is valid, *mutatis mutandis*, for the construction of a child anthropology. Whoever involves himself with child anthropological thinking must turn to child reality as a mode of human reality. This is not to suggest that a child anthropology already is pedagogics or the reverse. Indeed, if such were the case even a child psychology could claim to be pedagogics or at least an educational psychology. The child anthropologist as well as the child psychologist can very easily be guilty of a *metabasis eis allo genos* by making a leap from child anthropology and child psychology to the pedagogic. Such an eventual leap is totally inadmissible from a methodological point of view. It is unquestionable that a complete child anthropology, as an ontology of the child, will incorporate the pedagogic in its reflections since it definitely also will view the child in his dependency on and commitment to an adult. When the latter, and *par excellence* an adult-with-motherliness, acquires a place in the life of a child the dependency on and commitment to education is seen. However, this commitment still does not elevate the child anthropology to the pedagogic. For the construction of the pedagogic, the pedagogic or educative reality must be gone to in order to try to penetrate this universal inter-human reality. The pedagogic reality is a co-existential one; it is dialogic-dialectic, an inter-human event of withdrawing as well as entering and an encounter-becoming event.

The primordial being-relatedness between a child who calls and an adult who appeals cannot be lost sight of for one moment.

The pedagogic thinker aims to learn to know the pedagogic reality and to comprehendingly explicate it as it is primordially and by no means as it ought to be [by some ideology or presupposition]. This view gives rise to a misunderstanding for non-phenomenologically oriented “pedagogic” thinkers and for the phenomenologically ill-disposed this is a stumbling block. Misunderstanding and taking exception are rooted in the fact that the evidence found in the life world and that in its pre-scientific nature serves as guiding principles and criteria for life choices is elevated to science as a critically accountable system of knowledge that claims to be generally valid and necessary. Now it is immediately clear that there are no data of pedagogic reality that are elevated to being necessary and generally valid but rather they are critically-unaccountable, particular ideologies accepted and endorsed such that in the framework of their group support and direct the reality of human life. Group interest and group bias, prejudice and prejudgment must determine the results of scientific research. It is not the pedagogic reality that is seen but how it ought to be. And it ought to be what the ideology will have it be. This is no scientific practice of pedagogics that is practiced here but apologetics and propaganda. Now the fundamental fact must be thickly underlined that the pedagogic event is in its co-existentiality saturated with axiological-ideological-ethical moments. This means that the pedagogic event in its primordial appearance carries value preferences and is saturated with values. The one who reflects on this reality radically restrains himself from saying what axiological-ideological reality ought to be. The pedagogic scientist reflects on the present value preference and thus also ideology free of values. The scientific practice of pedagogics is a value free endeavor. The pedagogic itself is not a value free science but it is free of evaluative moments as functions of approval and disapproval. Who will not or cannot make these fundamental distinctions never can claim that he is involved in the authentic scientific practice of pedagogics. For the practice of a human or cultural science it is absolutely essential that the critical reflection as a comprehensible explication of the dimensions of the unfolding of human reality, be a value free reflection on this reality in its inseparable involvement with values

held in a hierarchy of value preferences, i.e., with no blending of one's own value preferences in their contrasting framework. If this does not happen he will not see these dimensions of reality as they are but as he eagerly would have them be. In our actual existence with its pre- as well as post-scientific approaches we will gladly see particular values flourish that serve ourselves and especially those with whom we are bound by chords of responsibility and that place us in our inter-human involvement under the compelling demand of unconditional obedience to the authority of these values with their implied norms. Practice and theory about a matter for realization in a prospectively established practice however are something totally different from an unprejudiced, disinterested critical view of a way the universal human reality unfolds.

No pedagogics that claims to be scientific—and pedagogics will be scientific or it will discontinue being pedagogics—can say what hierarchy of value preferences in its ideological motivation for striving and thriving ought to be held in a prospective educative structure. The life world as the realm of the original evidences in its unreflective and critically non-accountable design knows what must occur; science does not and cannot know. The only thing pedagogics can say and about which it indeed must express itself is if the pedagogic event in its unfolding of inter-human reality, even under ideological pressure, is pedagogically-ontologically accountable, approvable and permissible. To determine this, the pedagogic thinker turns to the foundation of the reality of the pedagogic event and contrasts it with its ontically anchored pedagogic criteria. Thus, these criteria must not be ideologically but ontologically founded. The practice of pedagogic science also must face the question of criteria. And as has just been said these criteria must have ontological status. This sets a high and severe demand. The danger against which the scientific practice of pedagogics, and also the founding and design of pedagogic criteria, must be alert to is to not ideologically justify or gloss over the pedagogic reality but to give an ontological account of it. Such glossing over might be fine but what is fine need not be scientifically accountable. The practice of science is something totally different from apologetics and propaganda.