

## CHAPTER 4 SOCIETY IN SOCIOPEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 4.1 Introduction

In sociopedagogics this has to do with the connection between educating and society, and thus continually with the question of the educative significance of social sub-phenomena: What is the significance of social phenomena or societal factors for educating youths and children and for their growing up to adulthood? In answer to this sociopedagogical question contemporary society subsequently is placed in sociopedagogical perspective, i.e., there is an investigation of what phenomena in society can influence (promote or impede) educating, in that they can directly or indirectly influence the educator, the educand, the family life, the educative event itself, etc. The educative situation cannot be seen apart from the societal situation and from the development of society. For too long, educating is viewed as a relatively isolated matter of educators and educands. The important fact that an educative situation is almost completely defined by societal influences must not be overlooked.

The situation in which educating must be realized in our society is radically different from that of the “good old times”, especially with respect to the changes and problems of our times, and the brief sketch of an image of society offered here might resemble the dark print that leaves a negative and pessimistic impression. However, it must be kept in mind that here the focus is on problematic, education impeding societal factors. A human being is an open possibility and it still remains possible to adequately educate a child in contemporary society. However, the task of educating has become most difficult and it is necessary that a contemporary educator have knowledge of the wide societal situations and of the education influencing powers that are active in them.

In this connection, Traas<sup>1</sup> explains: In spite of everything in our society, there are many families that function well and most parents and educators readily succeed in educating their children. In contrast to the negative factors in our society there are many

examples of positive factors. With prosperity and social security there are more opportunities for and directedness to better interpersonal relationships, and in particular adequate educative relationships. Also people have more freedom and independence to determine their own patterns of living. Also the possibilities for training, for a vocational and for a creative life have increased. However, many persons experience the problematics of the contemporary educative situation. These problems did not arise haphazardly, and are not primarily or exclusively attributable to mistakes by educators or youths but rather have real societal origins. It is important that parents and youths will be aware of societal factors and as far as possible will attain clarity of the situations in which they find themselves. These changes and influences have a different intensity and meaning for each individual. A clear perspective on the societal factors that define one's own life situation enable a person to manipulate and extricate himself from unfavorable influences and to benefit optimally from the positive possibilities this society offers.

With respect to education influencing societal factors, there is a distinction between structural and dynamic characteristics of society.

#### **4.2 Structural characteristics of society**

Once again here there is agreement with Gurvitch's layer-theory of societal structure that was described in the previous chapter and that for us serves as an appropriate model for illustrating the complex nature of society. It will be remembered that Gurvitch distinguished among the following four layers:

Layer 1: the economic-technical

Layer 2: social organization

Layer 3: norms

Layer 4: values.

Daily an adult person fully or almost fully lives through society and culture—a *life-in-multiplicity*.

- He works – modern economic-technical life

- He is a member of social organizations (family, party, vocation, etc.). He shares rights and obligations with others.
- He lives in accordance with particular patterns, rules, laws, duties and by following the norms of his milieu.
- He strives for clean thoughts, he enjoys art, he has acquired his own life- and world-view. He acts in accord with self-determined values.

Equilibrium is not possible. A person's own nature (limitations) and milieu circumstances give rise to relationships of tension among the part structures, to a disproportionate participation in the four sectors (e.g., one-sidedness). Person and society are very closely involved with each other. The four layers of societal life are the societal and spiritual-moral foundations of human existence.<sup>2</sup>

In each life sector the social relationships in which a person participates differs and there is another social pattern to be followed. His *life-in-multiplicity* essentially is *living-together-in-multiplicity* and implies that for him it is more complicated and complex for him to determine his own place in society. Through this complexity a person no longer knows his own social position and that of others and this gives rise to *uncertainty in communicating* as well as to a *continually more difficult evolving communication* between persons in general. This problem also manifests itself in educative communication; i.e., there is a strong possibility that the educative relationship is one in which those involved experience insecurity and thus find it increasingly more difficult to communicate with each other; i.e., that the idea of *social lability* clearly holds true for the educative relationship.<sup>3</sup>

In a human society there are institutes, institutions, organs and organizations created to rule human living and working together and all of this has made society extremely complicated. For an individual this means a decided separation of the different life functions and social groupings; e.g., he is a member of a particular social grouping for the sake of its dwelling function, of another social group for its work function, religious function, social service function, etc.

This *life-in-multiplicity* (multiple social groupings) contrasts with the *life-in-simplicity* that, e.g., a person in centuries past had lived in the smaller, more isolated agricultural communities where with respect to all life functions (dwelling, working, recreation, religious, etc.) he belonged only to one social group, i.e., the (extended) family.

From a modern person it is expected that he participate in many larger and smaller groupings and thus in a variety of interpersonal relationships – a “divided life” that results in divided responsibilities; he is a spouse, mayor, parent, employee, member of a church, member of one or more organizations, member of a sports club, co-traveler, newspaper reader, radio listener, television watcher, he has friends, acquaintances, family (far and near), professional associates, compatriots, party associates, colleagues; there are students, pupils, readers, listeners; a modern person’s contacts are in direct discussions, also in a letter, the telephone, a telegram; in the church, at gatherings and lecture halls, in school, on the train, bus, on the road; with adversaries and allies; at a table, at a festival, in hotels and at home. There also is influence from the “hidden persuaders” who reach individuals via the mass media.<sup>4</sup>

More than ever people are missing an integrated vision of life and world. The social aspect of the phenomenon of educating is now more important than ever: A “new” person has arisen – a “new” child, a “new” youth and a “new” adult who often is inadequately prepared for life in a technological society, also because of the inescapable life-in-multiplicity.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, in this regard is an informative statement by the famous Netherland psychiatrist-philosopher, J. H. van den Berg:<sup>6</sup>

In the midst of chaos among persons an individual asks of his own place in life. In our time of chaotic human relations, no one knows his place any longer. A modern person finds it difficult to assume and maintain a clear place among people. He does not know where he stands; he no longer knows how he must associate with others. Because (adequate) associating with others is possible only if you know where you stand, you accept to stand there in reality where you find yourself in accord with your possibilities.

It cannot be otherwise then that this complex life-in-multiplicity and correlated social lability wreak havoc on the area of inter-human communication in general and specifically with respect to educative communication in particular—thus it is a societal attunement that can work strongly to impede educating.

### 4.3 Dynamic characteristics of society

In terms of Gresse's<sup>7</sup> pronouncements, this author will state clearly that *human society* is not a fixed “something” that is absolute. Society is persons in mutual relationships and thus in communication with each other. As persons' dispositions, opinions and life- and world-views change, society also will change.

Passing from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a move from a traditional-static to a dynamic, extremely mobile society. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century layer 1 and 2 have changed greatly, but layer 3 and 4 have not. This has given rise to large-scale problems, also and especially regarding educating and teaching. In importance, human activity has lagged behind the non-human. The power of technique has increased. There is a striving for a control by employers and consumers, a striving for economic democracy similar to a striving for political democracy. The society of our time is characterized by the following dynamic characteristics that, as societal factors, co-determine the current educative situation.

#### 4.3.1 Industrialization and urbanization

If a few main factors that have given rise to the contemporary situation of bad conditions in society must be eliminated, then the Industrial Revolution and the two World Wars can be mentioned. The events of increased urbanization and greater population mobility began by which a dense social had arisen in cities, as well as new types of persons with a new lifestyle and new norms. As can be expected, this urbanizing has given rise to a number of social problems.

Industrial development meant that masses of people streamed to the cities to work such that the rural areas became less populated and

large cities had arisen within which life was characterized as noisy, a fast tempo, impersonal, tense, routine, cooped up, competitive (“rat race”), etc. A *scale of growth* had occurred by which everything is larger, better, more extensive where everything is ruled in mass. Buildings, business undertakings (e.g., hypermarkets), business centers, recreation centers, shops, expressways, breweries, terminals, airports, apartment complexes, etc. were built on a larger scale.

The manufacturing industry had developed into mass production systems in which human work is replaced by machines—mechanized part-work where an individual only is a small rat in a large machine. In the process of mass production the employer is disinterested in involvement in boring routine work and for him the meaningfulness, responsibility, fruits and pride of working have largely diminished (and here one thinks of the educative implications, i.e., that a parent is a poor example of the sense of work and can present a negative attunement to the child). The entire society begins to show the signs of having been industrialized and bureaucratically organized—an industrialized-bureaucratic society has arisen that is characterized by impersonal and business-like red tape and formal routines with little contact between employer and employee, producer and consumer, provider and user of services, etc.

“Interpersonal communication is reduced to a minimum and a spirit of lack of communication prevails. Even in universities, schools and other preparatory institutions there often is little contact between students and authorities, and when there is a need for such communication, it must occur via so many different persons that its intimacy is decreased or the communication aimed for even becomes discouraged. A *spirit of lack of communication* that prevails in an industrialized society arises in educating as a *spirit of lack of pedagogical communication*. Interpersonal communication becomes increasingly supplanted by mass communication media,” according to Kirstein.<sup>8</sup>

Masses of people have accumulated in cities such that the provision of food, services, recreation, education, etc. occurred on an organized basis—a bureaucracy that often limits individual freedom.

The world of work and with it the entire society had become quickly complicated and specialized and changed. The individual is involved in a multiplicity of functional interpersonal relationships that do not attain the level of a more personal I-you relationship. This multiplicity of relationships indeed provides the opportunity for broader personal development but equally creates the problem of the loneliness of persons in an anonymous mass.

Adult and child thus live a life-in-multiplicity that diminishes the field of societal life between educator and educand. Indeed, a child in the city enjoys the benefits of greater opportunities and facilities for the development of his personal potentialities and for going out to social reality but finds himself in a situation of crumbling family bonds and a weakened family unity within which family members live past each other and the opportunity for an adequate family life and educative communication are attenuated.

Where previously the family had formed the cornerstone of society because it:

- was the primary group within which there was intimate living together.
- was an example of a life-in-simplicity within which the members as family knew each other very well.
- was a societal form within which intense interpersonal contact had occurred, and
- where the opportunity was established for adequate pedagogical communication between parent and child;

the contemporary urbanized family has changed into:

- a group of people who live past each other and who have fleeting contact with each other;
- a societal form within which only one sector of a life-in-simplicity is lived so that interpersonal contact has become drastically reduced in quality;
- impoverished communication between parent and child.<sup>9</sup>

Among the most characteristic features of an urbanized pattern of living, mentioned most of all is its *anonymity* (namelessness) and

*mobility*. This means that the city-dweller can shirk his social responsibility by becoming a member of the anonymous masses and by hiding behind their impersonality and non-accountability. Members of the crowd communicate inadequately with each other because each encounters too many other people in too short a time and never learn to really know them. As a result of businesslike encounters the members of the crowd remain closed to each other.

“Especially a child who has to adapt to a heterogeneous cultural system in system in a particular residential area and thus is confronted with divergent norms (or polyvalent norms) and multiple forms of living (or pluralisms) quickly realizes that a fellow person can keep himself closed to you and will not always manifest himself.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus a city-dweller has a wide range of contacts and is inclined to remain closed to his fellow persons. In city living a child readily acquires this inaccessible and closed style of communicating and in doing so inadequately realizes his communicative potentialities and also learns to shirk his social responsibilities by hiding behind anonymous crowds.

In the crowd of the city a person is a nameless switchboard operator with functional and contractual contacts that are cold-businesslike instead of warm-human. Compare also the role of the telephone and switchboard in the many businesslike service relationships he finds himself in.

Because of the possibilities for quick displacement and quick communication, expressways with cloverleaf roundabouts, increased opportunities for work and dwelling, etc. modern persons have come into motion in unknown ways and thus also have become keyboard persons (Cox). They no longer experience the certainty and security of a known and permanent place of residence and of work and no longer have the opportunity to allow their interpersonal relationships (social mobility) to deepen. The modern mass person in the city remains alienated and nameless, and has a deficient experience of belongingness (we-ness) and will not allocate himself to fellow persons or become involved with them on a *personal* level (social apathy).

In this urbanized situation the traditional frameworks (church, family, neighborhood, town, nation) that previously were held firmly and by which norms, values and certainty were provided have lost their significance. Everyone has enough for himself and everyone is dependent on himself. Society continually is more elusive and impersonal, although the appearance of the opposite is awakened by the mass media.<sup>11</sup>

Pistorius<sup>12</sup> shows that for a child and his educating, urban existence includes positive and negative factors. Positive: comprehensive vocational possibilities, a more nuanced personal unfolding, etc. Negative: diminished space and privacy, boredom, loss of contact, neuroticizing, loss of fellowship, secularizing the world—this means that dependence on the supernatural is diminished in the midst of the man-made, the calculated and the assured; modern persons no longer know prayer, gratitude, wondering, fantasy, sense, nature and a belief in God; his person- and world-image has become impoverished and shallow. “Thus, also and increased generation of educators who themselves can no longer surmise the depths of being human and awaken the knowledge of this in the following generation.”

From this it ought to be clear that educating to society in the context of the contemporary urbanized society no longer means that child and youth must be able to link up with an unchanged and fixed framework.

#### **4.3.2 Natural science and technological developments**

The technological society has increased noticeably the possibilities for a person’s self-realization but also creates a number of social and pedagogical questions.

Science and technique have a decidedly strong influence on the image that our society shows now and in the future. Nine out of ten scholars in the experimental sciences that the world has ever produced are still living. The acceleration in scientific and technological development, however, also has radically changed a person’s societal, religious and life view. Scientific knowledge,

technique and prosperity (income) mean *power* for a person, and a “Brave New World” has arisen within which a person attains his own goals by his own guile and has no need for God or fellow persons. Human contact is supplanted by technology (automations, electronics and mass media) and a nonhuman technological society has arisen.

Technique has multiplied haphazard encounters of persons and cultures and among other things this has led to the rise of loneliness in people, to neglecting human relationships, made a fellow person a frequently occurring “stranger” and created for many individuals an extremely complicated world. A higher level of life had become possible, precisely in a person’s social way of existing, but that also is very difficult to realize: church, state, family, school, organizations, groupings, etc. have their own aims, forms and means and this leads to social-societal uncertainty and disorientation. Infantilizing, massifying, making superficial, sensation-craving, materialism, sexualizing, deprivation of spiritual freedom and privacy, mass manipulation, etc. are threats that are inherent in a technical world. Technical development has enmeshed persons in unbelievably accelerating, intensifying and multiplying contacts (Gielen<sup>13</sup>).

According to Gielen<sup>14</sup> criteria for judging fellow persons and other matters have changed greatly in a technical world: productivity, success, effectiveness, (material) benefit, achievement, power and sensation are highly assessed: intelligence above the intellect, the interesting above the valuable; the new above the genuine; the present and future above the past; the appearance. Are atomic weapons allowable? And artificial insemination? Mercy killings? Hypnosis? Painless birth? Contraception against pregnancy? Sex change? Prolonging life? Do we stand before the end of the world or before a new future for humanity? What is evil? What is wrong? Is a good disposition enough? Must a person shoulder the consequences of his deeds? Youths seek answers to these questions that require a fundamental renovation of required educative norms and related to this a rethinking of what is fundamental. What is the meaning of human life? And of labor? What rules of conduct should guide human conduct? How can our human life prosper?

How do we as educators approach the actual and burning questions of our time?

Our modern technical society thus can be viewed as a triumph and a tragedy. With the triumph of spectacular natural scientific and technological achievements comes the tragedy that people do not really know their God, fellow persons and themselves.

Thus, the technical society has created a legion of life-, social- and educational-questions; the latter especially with respect to educating to society in a technical culture as well as educating in the midst of societal influences to which he is so strongly subjected (educating in a technical society).

#### 4.3.3 Economic development and prosperity

Economic development and prosperity are direct results of the scientific-technological-industrial revolution that especially raged at an unprecedented tempo during the past few decades. Mass production, mass consumption, a materialism and free time are phenomena related to economic development and prosperity. This prosperity touches the totality of humanity—it characterizes his lifestyle and influences his life- and world-views (Zahn). It often happens that, in the midst of prosperity or educating his child, a parent shows neglect or realizes an inadequate permissive educative attitude.

Prosperity means the ascension of a person into a meaningful culture. In striving for prosperity a person is so involved in honestly and dishonestly amassing earthly possessions that he *loses contact* with his fellow persons as well as with himself. This larger passion for possession gives rise to an undeniable social competition and awareness of status. From this springs the demand for more *and better educating* for a child as a status symbol as well as a response to the greater demand for this from society, according to Gresse.<sup>15</sup>

The way in which prosperity influences educating a child and youth is described as follows by Kirstein<sup>16</sup>:

“In his acquiring and using his prosperity, a parent no longer has the time to communicate with his child and consequently carries on a tranquil conversation with him about everyday things that occur around him and his child. The parent also will pay any amount to any institution or person for the ‘education’ of his child as long as long as he is not yet saddled by it. Then the child feels *disowned* and *in the way of* his parents’ daily social or business matters. For the parents, educating their child also demands that they establish a good rapport with him at home. Because they try to shirk their pedagogical responsibility by placing it on the shoulders of someone else, their communication with their child is *attenuated* and *pedagogical communication* between them becomes *inadequate*.”

“Prosperity allow material values to be emphasized heavily in society at the expense of social and spiritual values. Conscience often is replaced by the pursuit of material things. ‘Business for the sake of business’ often is offered as an excuse for dishonesty. The child, and especially the critical puber, views the adult in this situation as *hypocritical* and accuses him of applying *double standards*. Some youths such as Hippies *distance* themselves from the symbols of prosperity by having a neglectful appearance. With this neglectful, slovenly appearance they symbolize their *protest* against all of the alleged dishonesties and misjudgments of parental behavior,” according to Kirstein.<sup>17</sup>

In the midst of prosperity a person is attuned to the individualism of possession and power and less so to the social or the pedagogical. Prosperity and especially the competition in its acquisition create a distance between people. That is, a person continually must choose between Being and Having (Marcel)—between the two most extreme possibilities of being possessable for another and the possessor (not possessable). A person becomes increasingly a *function* (useful person) for fellow persons and the possibility of a genuinely personal co-existence becomes attenuated. There is a chilling in the inner life, a forsaking of social relationships and a strengthened competitive relationship; a situation within which it becomes more difficult to come into contact with fellow persons: this leads to loneliness. The inclination also is to view youths in terms of their economic benefits and productivity. However, they must rather be

educated to being serviceable and available to fellow persons than to an excessive disposition for possessing.<sup>18</sup>

The danger of a prosperous society is that with respect to a child material values can be overemphasized at the cost of “spiritual” and social values, and also that with the child and youth, a consumer mentality can arise where the emphasis falls on possessing and enjoying and youths progress to irresponsible ways with money and possessions. This attitude also can influence the social: interpersonal become useable, consumable, dispensable, expendable, negotiable. An educand can learn only to strive for a highly material(ist) standard and material security at the cost of an adequate social life.

#### **4.3.4 Population explosion**

Modern society is characterized by an enormous population explosion that can be ascribed especially to the contributions of medical science and techniques. Birth, child and epidemic deaths have lessened noticeably while in general people have a longer life expectancy.

The following statistics are meaningful: The world population doubled from the time of Christ to 1650 (i.e., in 1650 years), between 1650 and 1850 (in 200 years) it doubled again; to 1930 (in 80 years) it doubled once more; it doubled again in the next 35 years, etc.<sup>19</sup>

This also created larger cities. In 1820 only two cities in the entire world had a population of more than one million residents; in 1900 there were 10 such cities; in 1950 there were 75, and according to expectation in 1985 there will be 270 cities with more than one million residents. In 1950 there were 2 cities with more than 10 million residents; in 1970 there were 4; in 1985 there will be 17 such cities.

A South African physician<sup>20</sup> explains that South Africa’s greatest problem is not race relationships but the population explosion. Our country can never become more progressive unless births decrease. Money will be lacking for providing the facilities directed to

children such as adequate health services and educational facilities—as the speed of growth continues unhindered. With the current growth there will be 21 million children in South Africa in the year 2000, In 1970- there were only 10 million. If each resident of the country maintains an adequate standard of living and receives an education and if there is sufficient working and living opportunities, race relationships will be much easier to deal with.

An excessive population increase thus raises a number of social and pedagogical questions. It is much easier to provide the population with food, housing, recreational facilities, etc. and to provide the child population with medical services, education, etc. The educator is presented with an additional difficult task of educating a child to society in an overcrowded world.

#### 4.3.5 Contact inflation

By his living-in-multiplicity and the modern means of communication at his disposal, the modern city dweller experiences an enormous broadening of interpersonal contacts. Daily he comes into contact with many people but doesn't have the time and opportunity to have a genuine personal communication and a personally warm, human encounter with them. Because of his "passage through society" a person's contact remains fleeting, succinct, superficial and impersonal and this contributes to an experience of a (social) coldness and distance of modern persons with a related socially and communicative defects and deviancies that result in disturbed and deficient contacts such as neuroses, socioses and communicoses. People communicate with each other in reserved, isolated and distanced ways such that contact inflation really means that the quantity of interpersonal contact increases while its quality decreases. Many places in society are characterized both by crowdedness and loneliness: lodgings, cafes, sporting events, entertainment venues, large schools and campuses, crowded streets and shops and tragically, churches.

Also where educating and educative communicating must be realized in the midst of a busy family and school life, this phenomenon [of contact inflation] presents itself such that there is an *inflation of pedagogical contact*.

True friendship arises less often. Friendship arises only in a life of a few contacts. We recognize an immense crowd of persons but we have scarcely one friend. The dubious friend, who continually withdraws less from us, is the loneliness (J. H. van den Berg).

Although city dwellers live near each other and meet each other, none the less, their interiority becomes increasingly remote from each other. They will encounter and be encountered but continually arrive less at a truly human encounter and an I-you relationship (Couwenberg).

Paired with this, a change to *businesslike* and *instrumental* human relationships occurred. In the organized society an individualistic spiritual disposition prevails and often people often are strange, indifferent and even hostile to each other and associate with each other thusly. Real friendship, that is a strong personal relationship within which people do not search each other based on considerations of importance, but because they feel attracted to each other as persons, is something that continually appears less often. The other is seen only as a means or instrument for the sake of one's own benefit, and the word "friend" has become cheapened.<sup>21</sup>

Our society thus is characterized by a collective egoism and a blindness for social living, for communicating and for solidarity (Traas).

In this way a type of *commercialized person* has unfolded in our time. Viktor Frankl,<sup>22</sup> the famous psychiatrist/philosopher, explains that a modern person, because he does not adequately discover the sense of life, death, suffering, labor and love, he falls victim to a collective neurosis with respect to which the following four symptoms are distinguished:

- (i) *Conditional way of existing*: During World War II, people learned to live from day to day; they still do this today because of the threat of the atomic bomb. They reason: "As long as an atomic bomb can fall, it is irresponsible to bring children into the world."

- (ii) *Fatalistic attunement to life:* Anyone with a conditional disposition toward life means that it is not necessary to actively place one's lot in one's own hands. Someone with a fatalistic disposition believes it is impossible to determine your own fate. Persons of our time have a firm superstition in the power of destiny.
- (iii) *Collective thinking:* This person will not be conspicuous; he will merge into the crowd and disappear. In reality he becomes lost in the crowd. He renounces himself as a free and responsible being.
- (iv) *Fanaticism:* A collectivist-attuned person neglects his own personality. A fanatic neglects the personality of the other, of a person who holds a different view. For him, only his own meaning has significance. In reality, however, he does not have his own meaning. He has the so-called "manifest meaning"; and also he doesn't have this: the meaning has him. With fanaticism a person is politicized rather than the political being humanized. Manifest meanings are communicated in the form of mottos and slogans that can allow a dangerous psychic chain reaction to arise in the crowd.

A child-in-education also leads a life-in-multiplicity and experiences daily contact with many people. The inflation of pedagogical contact, commercializing and instrumentalizing to which he is strongly subjected can be extremely harmful for his being educated, socialized and for his personal becoming.

#### 4.3.6 Massification

Modern persons have become mass-persons. They have undergone a spiritual leveling that has left them to life without plan, aim and responsibility. They have sold their personality and freedom to the masses. Massification is a societal factor that can strongly impede educating such that today there also is mention of "mass-youth" and of the negative meanings connected with this label, e.g., wild youth, derailed youth, skeptical youth, problem youth. The mass-person and mass-youth, e.g., easily allow themselves to follow the permissive and normless ways prescribed by the massmedia.<sup>23</sup> (See also Chapter 6).

#### 4.3.7 Alienation and loneliness

The ultimate social question of our time is of the person in society, i.e., the problem of human relationships, including the question of how an insignificant human creature still is able to live in a huge society.<sup>24</sup>

In our society social isolation, loss of contact and loneliness give rise to the anxiety, unrest, insecurity and despair of modern persons. Loneliness is a characteristic of our time.

The individualistic attunement that prevails in society intrudes itself into the milieu of the modern family such that often alienation occurs there, especially in the marital relationship, in educative relationships and in the mutual relationships among the children. Even family members show an increasing inability to live with each other adequately and to have love for each other.

As far as the problem of alienation in modern society is concerned, some fruitful references are made to the work of S. W. Couwenberg (*De Vereenzaming van de moderne mens* [The alienation of modern man]).

According to Couwenberg<sup>25</sup>, alienation has its origin in:

- A loosening of Western man from traditional spiritual and societal bonds and certainties, a religious and social uprooting by which he is entirely thrown back onto himself and becomes individualistic through and through.
- A spirit of extreme matter-of-factness and utility that is inherent to a rationally organized society that has arisen in place of the decaying organic structure of a society of the Middle Ages.

A person is reduced to a workforce, a robot, a figure without a soul. No longer, even in church, does he find that mutual fellowship, personal attention and inspiring being-with and doing-with as a community of God. Through enormous technical and organizational development persons have landed in the barrage of a

deluge of disconnected influences and stimuli, superficial impressions, fleeting contacts as well as societal demands and obligations. These influences have so strongly captivated humankind that there no longer is time for a calm openness for another's world. There no longer is time in particular for turning to oneself and assimilate internally the deluge of external influences as a meaningful whole; consequently the spirituality of human life also is disrupted.

“As the external contacts increase, in general the more the internal contact between persons shrinks,” according to Couwenberg (in Dutch).

Couwenberg also believes that the event of leveling had reached its highpoint in the neurotic person. This person no longer communicates with his fellow persons and is locked up in himself.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, Couwenberg<sup>27</sup> shows how a modern Western person makes spasmodic attempts to escape (“flight reaction”) the leveling. Thus, e.g., there is an escape into alcohol and other drugs, a fleeing into a neurosis—the most extreme “flight reaction”—into self-destruction (suicide). However, in our time, an important attempt to escape is into the crowd/masses (massification)—the individual escapes from himself by linking up with the leveling event of massification which he undergoes within the impersonal “they” and by which he allow himself to be ruled by the impersonal power of the “they” (public opinions, customs, fashions, advertisements, film, radio, television, etc.). He escapes further into the stupor of excessive activities and noises, and the excesses of radio, cinemas, television, sports, dancing, taverns, vacations, restless touring, by which the inner emptiness only is escaped temporarily. He can't bear the quietness necessary for introspection and real personal development. The human relationships of a mass-person only are semblances of relationships and his conversation is nothing more than an apparent conversation (fleeting contact). Massification, however, only reinforce the loneliness and linking up with leveling leads to a loss of personality that, once again leads to a continuous search for approval, recognition, success and popularity. But this does not mean the elimination of the loneliness. Compare the loneliness of celebrated stars of entertainment.

The enormous superficiality and lack of color and the lack of real content, depth and sense in life to which the event of massification leads, awaken in a mass-person feelings of listlessness, pessimism, boredom and even a distaste for living. He tries to appease his psychic hunger in a mass-existence, but does not succeed. A modern person feels himself with all of his external activities and prosperity in reality an unfortunate creature thirsting for the genuine life that he does not find in his mass-existence. His unloved life leads to being destructive (wars, vandalism, terrorism, etc.) according to Couwenberg.

Our social situation thus is characterized by alienation and loneliness and for an educator it is a difficult task to educate a child and youth to an adequate society within this situation of an inadequate society. That in many cases this fails is evident in the contemporary situation in which modern youth realize the above “flight reaction” such that increasingly the phenomena of alcohol and drug use, suicide, massification, meaninglessness and destructiveness are found with contemporary youth.

#### **4.3.8 Inadequate socialization**

Another factor that works negatively on educating is that a massified, inadequately socialized person lives with us in our modern Western society. Compare the mass-spiritual attunement of personal liberalism, individualism and where a lack of communication prevails in a country such as the U.S.A., where the emphasis is on individual freedom and an individual does not have to take into account fellow persons and the demands of society. Everyone “does his own thing” even if this is at the cost of fellow persons and a collective wellbeing.

Lazy thinking, carelessness and a deficient sense of responsibility, rigidity of character and “general attitude toward life” mean that the social behavior of that individual is far below the desired. There is too little cooperation in a group, too little conformity, readiness to join in and subordinate to any guiding. There is an inadequate ability to establish relationships with others; there are no normative customs for associations of friendship or comradeship; there is a

lack of creative ability to join in, in the ability to work under supervision, in the competence to exercise vocational and civic responsibilities. *All of these facts touch fellow persons.* They are the negative social and societal consequences of inadequate pedagogical care (inadequate educating to society).<sup>28</sup>

Gielen<sup>29</sup> points to the state of *social neglect* that prevails in antisocial, a-social or socially weak families. These families often are “uneducated” and “unrestrained”; also rude, outrageous, slovenly, ill-mannered, cruel, impatient, irritated, aggressive, brutal, rebellious, whimsical, dishonest, disorderly, hostile—characteristics that are harmful for the “social” aspect of educating. The children do without situations of homey living together and general bonding (mealtime, games, telling stories, being read to, printed books, toys). Thus there is pedagogical and spiritual neglect: the child is damaged by a pedagogic milieu without (accountable) norms that leaves him spiritually defenseless. In these a-social and socially labile families live an extensive group of children, youths and adults who show serious deficiencies in their possibility of properly living and working together and that readily can proceed to antisocial behavior.

How can an inadequately socialized educator educate a child and youth to being adequately socialized? Or, how can a child and youth in an unfavorable, problematic pedagogical-social situation (low level of social life) be educated to an adequate living together (to an adequate level of social life)?

#### **4.3.9 Manipulation of consciousness**

There are two ways in which a person can enter a relationship with another, i.e.:

- *an I-it relationship*: a functional-objectified relationship in which the unique reality and identity of the other is denied and he only is viewed as an object in his “value as useful”;
- *an I-you relationship*: communication by which a person himself is enriched, becomes more human.

In daily life in our society the following are examples of the first-mentioned relationship: exploitation and manipulation of the consumer, defrauding the voter, spiritually damaging a person for the sake of efficiency, imposing knowledge, values and norms on an educand that have no sense of meaning for him—an educating without communication that no longer is coaching [dressage]. Thus there prevails a manipulation of consciousness of fellow persons or communication-less persuasive thinking in our society, a disposition to not attribute any individual rights to another but to subjugate or destroy him. In our communication-less power [oriented] society the right of the strongest is the law. Even in the area of international living together the two or three most influential superpowers threaten to engage in a senseless atomic war to destroy each other. People allow themselves to be dominated and to be guided instead of guiding themselves. Interpersonal contact is avoided, is kept formal and is guided by personal interests (“What can the other do for me?”). From this mentality educators can do nothing other than be rigid and authoritarian in associating with their children—an educating without communicating as a result of a society without communication.<sup>30</sup>

Modern man has developed a mentality according to which he allows his thoughts, feelings and activities to be influenced by modern society, especially by means of the use and misuse of mass communication media. A type of modern *person-determined-by-the-other* has arisen who holds fast to norms and values that no longer are maintained in our society and this disturbs communicating with the educand and especially with the youth because normative and moral values are presented to the latter that are not to be maintained.<sup>31</sup>

There are particular factors that contribute to contradictions in norm awareness. A person in modern society traffics in a continual state of confusion and perplexity such that he has less understanding of his own situation and of his own life tasks, among which is educating his children. A maelstrom of contradictions and misleading information, contra-information and lack of clarity leave a person with uncertainty about such important aspects of his daily existence as religion, married life, values and educating.

A modern person does not have a clear perspective on the societal factors that define his life situation and he can't distance himself from manipulations and unwanted influencing and consequently he is not able to benefit optimally from the positive possibilities that life and society offer him.<sup>32</sup>

A spirit of manipulating fellow persons without communicating carries the day in our society where one person strives to manipulate another such that at the cost of the other's situation, his own situation is benefitted and can be maintained for himself as much as possible. This spirit of manipulating without communicating also influences educating. Where an educator will manipulate the feelings and actions of an educand subjected to him so that the educator can create the most favorable situation for himself at the cost of the educand, and where he takes the way of least effort and least sacrifice of his own situation; then he handles the educand not according to the criteria of what is pedagogically correct but rather for him the criteria that hold are what will be easiest and best for him.<sup>33</sup>

The famous American social psychologist David Riesman<sup>34</sup> in his work, *The lonely crowd*, differentiates three types of person in society:

- *a tradition-directed person*: He especially lives in a traditional, preindustrial society and in rural districts. For him norms and values are clear and almost ageless. They are transferred as such to the youth. There is little creativity but a great deal of certainty and security; a tradition determined mentality.
- *a self-directed person* He chooses his own way with the compass of his own conscience and convictions. For him obligation, work, responsibility, independence, individuality and freedom are important concepts. He places high moral demands on himself and his children. For him educating means personality formation (to adult independence where his fate can be taken into his own hands). Obedience, discipline and authority play an important role. This type of person unmistakably is on the decline. The situation now is so complex that decisions only can be taken in deliberation with others. Thus society has become more important in personal

- decision and authority. This also holds for the family. The world quickly changes and parents are uncertain about their own situation and that of their children. This type of person thus is no longer fashionable, but a third type is.
- *an other-directed person:* With this type of person his own conscience and convictions are not in the foreground but rather his relationships with others is. He does not act primarily on the basis of what he has acquired with his education but on the basis of what others expect from him. He relativizes his own education (norms and values) and is linked up with modern society that does not present clear and fixed norms or they continually change. In modern society everyone stands alone. The group is equally as elusive and changing as is its norms and rules. Everyone must himself develop behavior by which he continually is accepted by the group. In this way “the lonely crowd” arises. There is no safety or individuality in the group. In order to be able to maintain himself in this situation he must continually, in subtle ways, be attuned to how he can and must behave in a particular situation—what is expected of him by others and what he can expect from them. He cannot live according to fixed social norms and principles because different rules and norms hold in each group.

Pedagogically this means that the attitude of the parents regarding their children continually is characterized more by uncertainty and dependence instead of by convictions and real authority. The parents notice that in their own relationships with others they become more isolated, to the degree that they hold on tighter to older and trusted principles. They notice that their children carry out the same pent-up striving to be accepted in the group ... and often with more success. Because youths are more supple; old rules are less obvious for them; they feel more comfortable with new norms. Today parents are more attuned with taking their children into account.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.3.10 Mass communication

Here especially the following media are included: television, radio, cinema, newspapers, books, journals, cartoons and comic strips.

The positive potentialities of mass communication media cannot be denied. It can make many contributions to an educand's knowledge enrichment, healthy recreation and pleasure, familiarity with another culture—also to his socialization and social-societal orientation. Where the influence of mass communication media thus can contribute to the realization of “externally”-directed sociopedagogical essences such as socialization and social-societal orientation it can impede the realization of “internally”-directed sociopedagogical essences such as educative communication in which lies the opportunity for real educative influencing. The fact and influence of television serves as a good example of this discussion.

“The limited time and attention that family members still have for each other in the midst of a hurried life existence and tempo and especially overfilled programs are possessed by a directedness to mass communication media. For example, it often occurs that members of the family receive via their television set excellent information about everything happening daily in the world, but there is an attenuation of more personal communication on an intimate, human level. Also in the classroom a lesson is so illustrated by a variety of audiovisual aids that real pedagogical communication becomes attenuated. There no longer is adequate pedagogical association between educator and educand,” according to Kirstein<sup>36</sup> (in Afrikaans).

Cinema and television are passive and solitary forms of free time use that decreases communicating with real, living fellow persons.<sup>37</sup>

It is mainly via mass communication media that unfavorable and less favorable societal influences are brought into conflict with favorable educative influences. If it were not for the fact that societal influences are brought into the inner circle of the family members via these media parents, in educating their child or youth, would not have had the need for outside influences to compete so strongly [for attention] and their task would have been considerably easier.

Educator and educand are informed, motivated and encouraged to act in particular ways by unknown persuaders (open meaning) but only as listeners, lookers, or readers and not as participating speakers in mass communication. Mass communication, thus, is a monologue or one-way communication by which opinions, convictions, values, norms, etc. are communicated without dialogue and questioning. It ought to be clear that if an educator does not select and interpret the influencing by the mass media as content for the educand this can influence a child and youth very detrimentally.

Television and motion pictures, e.g., can bring about moral dismantling; they can be a preparatory school for juvenile delinquents; they can convey undesirable norms that are less welcome, divergent and even conflicting and that collide with the norms the educators are trying to present to a child. But because via mass media such an intensity and subtlety of clarifying and/or misleading influencing is possible, an educator easily can lose the contest with mass media”.

Via mass media a wide variety of socially unacceptable behaviors are communicated to an educator and educand: aggressive, senseless, foolish, rebellious, outrageous, terrorism, vandalism, sensationalism, irritating, arrogant, forbidden, inappropriate sexuality, murderous, larcenous, armed looting, abuse of power, etc. In this way this behavior is promoted in the child and youth and the result of this is, e.g., desensitization for violence, undesirable conditioning, sexualizing life, people’s (children’s and youth’s) faith that especially happiness lies in material (advertized) things (the influence of advertisement).

The French sociologist, Jacques Ellul<sup>38</sup> provides commentary about the addiction of modern people to television: television can hold a person firmly, radically direct his life, create new relationships or allow existing relationships to disintegrate. It provides an escape into an artificial paradise or it provides the meaningfulness that is missing from the individual’s life,

Still more appalling is that the apparent family unity that is brought about by television in triuth includes a greater deterioration.

Everyone sits together around the television set but they are unaware of each other. Communication among them is inadequate, but this is durable by creating a directedness to the outside and in doing so friction and the conspicuousness of the deficient contact arise. The cleft between person and fellow person becomes all the more greater: there no longer is face-to-face encounter and no longer dialogue. Not any instrument has ever before contributed so much to a person's isolation than television. The viewer is so caught up with what he sees that he begins to live his life through the characters on the screen in front of him. His sympathy is so intense that later he no longer can distinguish between reality and fancy. As a result of this his interpersonal relationships unravel until eventually they reach a point about which Ellul says [in English]: "Television, because of its power of fascination and its capacity of visual and auditory penetration, is probably the technical instrument which is most destructive of personality and of human relations."

Recent studies<sup>39</sup> in the U.S.A. and United Kingdom have shown what a dangerous influence television exercises on the opinions, values and behaviors of youths. Long-term television viewing gives rise to passivity and a daily bombardment with violence making youths even more violent. The American research shows that children under 5 years average 23 hours of television viewing per week so that when he has completed his high school career he has spent a perplexing 15,000 hours in front of the television set—more hours than he has spent with any other activity (excluding sleep). During this time he has been exposed to 350,000 advertisements and [reports of] 18,000 murders.

A study of 1500 London boys finds that boys (13-16 years) who watch a great deal of violence on television are 50 percent more inclined to serious violence than boys who see less violence of television. They are also more aggressive in play and sport and readily use weak language. This group of boys acknowledges that during a six-month period they were guilty of more than 9,000 acts of violence. They are influenced by programs that show "violence for the sake of violence".

Although television has particular benefits for a child, its influence decisively is overwhelmingly negative:

- Television-enslaved children have a hunger for conversation. Family conversations are replaced by television-“conversations”. The everyday communication between parents and children that is so necessary for adequate personal becoming is replaced.
- Television teaches children to be passive. It creates the illusion that a person was somewhere and has done and seen something, while in reality he has sat at home.
- Television conditions a child want to be able to solve and handle all problems without any personal effort (by actively learning or with respect to real life problems). Everything must be as easy as watching television.
- Television advertisements have an unfavorable influence on the eating habits of children who become enamored with sugary breakfast cereals, candies and chewing gum.
- Misleading television advertisements can distort children’s norms and values regarding morality, society and business practice. Often they cannot distinguish between falsehood and truth. They readily believe that, just as do advertisements, that businesses and other adult institutions are saturated with good will.

A parent has the extremely difficult tasks of supervising and selecting television content for their child by, e.g., exercising strict viewing discipline and by helping interpret the television content through direct involvement with the child’s television viewing—in order to guide the child in his evaluation of what he views on television.

#### **4.3.11 Social lability**

Social lability means that an individual, because he lives-in-multiplicity, doesn’t know his own place and that of fellow persons in society. Therefore, he enters into communication with another with uncertainty and experiences disorientation in society. So also an educator in his relationship to an educand and this leads to uncertainty in educative communication.

Symptoms of the need for a new choice of social position are, e.g.: greater difficulty in establishing comradeship and friendship; the perception of insecurity because penetrate or survey the world; the fear for one's own societal perspective in a prosperous state and competitive society: "anyone" can attain "any" position, but to what extent is one's future in one's own hands? The deluge of data from the cultural, economic, social, political and church life cannot be assimilated without principles of ordering and judging. Too little attention is given to these principles; therefore, a person does not understand well his own "place" and also not that of others, according to Gielen.<sup>40</sup>

#### **4.3.12 Norm crisis**

In a time where norms and values are relativized, minimized and nihilized (e.g., via mass communication media and by living-in-multiplicity), a person no longer knows what right and wrong are and he is in a crisis of norms. There is freedom for all; norms count for less and are likely to change continually. It was non-problematic to bring up a child at a time when the various social groupings were fixed firmly and confidence and a mutual state of equal rights was shown in their normative actions. In acquiring their norms, educator and educand were influenced by various social institutions and groupings so that a fixed, detailed system of norms did not exist for them (societal norm-pluralism). In a complicated society everyone, including youths, is presented, with emphasis and intensity, a variety of sometimes widely diverging, and contradictory norms.<sup>41</sup> Established values and norms are abandoned and there is uncertainty about what is new, an uncertainty about life that also means uncertainty about educating. How can an educator present with decisiveness and confidence direction-giving norms and values to educands if he himself is uncertain about dealing with them, if he finds himself in a situation of norm crisis?

#### **4.3.13 Differences in developmental tempo between educator and educand**

Educative communication often is impeded because the period and societal circumstances within which a parent had grown up differs radically from the hurried dynamic of society within which an educand grows up today. In this way different levels of directedness, interest and development rise between members of the same family that gives rise to a clef that obstructs educative communication.

“The children who outgrow us must notice many elders. They outgrow us not only because often they have followed a better school preparation and therefore with all things considered, before the elders are a closed book, they are carried along by the strong dynamic that our society has over all matters and their thinking is very different and with this they have acquired an entirely different mentality and disposition than their elders did growing up in the society they did”, according to Couwenberg<sup>42</sup> (in Dutch):

The children of today have a much better opportunity to progress more quickly scholastically than their parents could and be able to complete their tertiary preparation at a youthful age. Therefore, a child will also necessarily move on a higher level, and therefore he [the parent] will not meddle with his educating because he doesn't know what this is about and feels uncertain about it. On the contrary, often a child will not pay attention to his parent's admonitions because he sees the parents as being old fashioned about his education (Kirstein<sup>43</sup>).

The educator is inclined to judge from the past but the youth is more flexible and adapts more easily; he judges from the present and future. Often youths are skeptical and rejecting of ideologies, politics, formal youth movements, “big words”, and the strivings of their parents—e.g., their “social climbing” is seen as materialistic and lazy. (In addition, see Chapter 6).

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· Translation needs editing (GDY): “De kinderen zijn ons ontgroeid, moeten vele ouders constateren. En ze zijn hun ontgroeid, niet alleen doordat zij dikwijls een betere schoolopleiding hebben gevolgd en daardoor met allerlei dingen in aanraking zijn gekomen, die door de sterke dynamiek onzer samenleving over allerlei zaken heel anders zijn gaan denken en hieroor een heel andere mentaliteit en instelling hebben gekregen dan de, waarin hun ouders zijn opgegroeid.”

#### 4.3.14 Neuroticizing

Our society is characterized by the societal neuroticizing of modern persons, with the related socios (social diseases) and impoverished mental health. The psychic, social and spiritual existence of persons are seriously touched by this, which can only influence educating unfavorably.

The following factors act to neuroticize persons in our society:

- the vagueness of interpersonal relationships that leads to *loneliness*; loneliness is the first symptom of our contemporary neurosis and the symptom that is inextricably related this psychically is *anxiety* (J. H. van den Berg);
- instability-of human characteristics and activities; modern persons think, feel and behave differently; interpersonal relationships are characterized by instability and disturbed contact—between husband and wife; between adults and youths; mutually between adults and between youths;
- large, fast and frequent changes;
- boredom;
- invisibility of a future for child and adults;
- misdeeds;
- noise;
- excessive advertisements;
- rowdiness; etc.

Neuroticism gives rise to unrest, nervousness, tension, anxiety, spiritual burden and insecurity in the psychic life of modern persons. The adult who has or is inclined to become neurotic can allow his child to become the victim of a neuroticizing education.

#### 4.3.15 Polyvalent pluralism

This complex concept of Du Plessis<sup>44</sup> indicates that society is characterized by *multiple or pluralistic forms of living*, and on the other hand by *divergent or polyvalent forms*. Child and adult participate in multiple forms of living (living-in-multiplicity) in a complicated and differentiated society that sets high demands. Both are influenced by a polyvalent society (via mass media as well as

while going out to social reality) in which a variety of life philosophies and life values exist next to each other and confront each other.

This leads to living an uncertain and complicated existence and also, because of the uncertainty and complexity of choosing pedagogical norms, a difficult educative task.

#### **4.3.16 Planning, organization and specialization**

We live in a highly planned, highly organized and highly specialized society in which people run the danger of being victims of a blind technocratic and anonymous bureaucracy—the “third world of paper”. The currently unfavorable state that reigns also involves planning and organization that are not always in the service of people and communities and that society is planned in terms of organizational, technical and economical criteria instead of social and pedagogical criteria.

High demands are placed on educator (teacher) and educand (pupil) so that the latter through study, training and vocational preparation is equipped to participate productively in an organized and differentiated society. “The danger is not imaginary that human existence increasingly is going to be dominated by politics and economic-technical manipulating that only has efficiency in view and that overlooks the authority of values, beliefs, religion and educating,” according to Gresse.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, a child must be educated to an effective participation in organization and occupation (learn to organize and to work). However, child-living must not become “over organized” and the educand must not be deprived of the opportunity for self initiative and taking the lead.

#### **4.3.17 Elimination of primary groups by large and complex organizations**

Countries, important groups etc. conspire to string together their political, economic and military power and, with this power play, plunges the world community into a chronic state of uncertainty,

tension and threat. For the purpose of promoting self-interest, formally organized superstructures such as NATO, OPEC, etc. were formed.

This has led to intense national and international political and economic tensions, international extortion and threats, the threat of annihilating weapons with the building up of weapon arsenals, etc. such that educator and educand live in an extremely questionable world and prepare for an extremely uncertain future.

#### **4.3.18 Fast change, unpredictability and future shock**

The highly industrialized Western countries have undergone a firestorm of change with an unprecedented effect that is increasing rather than decreasing. The fast and accelerating change overwhelms persons such that they undergo *future shock*. *Future shock* can be described as the crushing tension and alarming and growing awakening disorientation that an individual experiences because of too much change in too short a time. It is a psychological-biological state of disturbance, an “illness from change” that can be described medically and psychiatrically: it is the mis-attunement persons experience because they cannot assimilate the fast change in society. Future shock is the result of the highly accelerating tempo of change and of excessive stimulation in society.

Various authors use the following concepts to describe this fast change in society:

- “a fantastic change in the rate of change”
- “society is busy going crazy”
- “pressure of time”
- “each year counts for ten”
- “escalation of change”
- “overwhelmed by change”
- “roaring current of change”
- “acceleration of change”
- “racing rate of change”
- “radically altered pace of change”

- “as if the future is like an unexpected visitor arrives too early and quickly for us”.

Fast change is a societal force that brings about evanescence, instability and transitoriness and that intensely influences our personal lives (e.g., in an accelerated tempo of living and in the experience of the world around us) so that an individual no longer can function adequately in society and also no longer can communicate adequately with fellow persons - ... “radically affecting the way we relate to other people”.<sup>47</sup>

Where Western society was agricultural for 10,000 years and an industrialized one for three years, now we stand on the brink of being a super-industrial society. Our time is one of the most exciting periods in the history of humanity:

- Accelerated urbanization: In 1850 there were only four cities in the world with a population of more than one million; in 1900 the number had increased to 19; in 1960 there were 141 such cities; the urban population of the world now doubles every eleven years.
- Knowledge explosion: 90% of all scientists who ever lived are now alive; before 1500 approximately 1000 books were printed in Europe each year; in 1950 alone 120,000 books were printed in Europe—what at first took a century in 1950 only took 10 months; in 1960 120,000 books were printed in 7 ½ months; in about 1965 worldwide one thousand were produced *each day*.
- The computer has existed since roughly 1950 and this has accelerated the acquisition of knowledge. The saying that “Knowledge is power” can be changed to “Knowledge means changing”.
- Approximately 70% of the world’s population lives in the past. Approximately 25% lives in the present—they lead a “modern life”. Approximately 3% of the world’s population lives in the future.
- Places where technological and cultural changes have occurred fastest are, e.g., in New York, London and Tokyo. People in these cities “live faster” than those elsewhere. Many people want to flee from the “rat race” (e.g., Hippies). Because of his

- multiple situations and relationships a person is unsettled and uncertain (also pedagogically).
- Mobility: In one year (March 1967 – March 1968) more than 36 million Americans changed places of residence because of increase in automatization and the new ways of living in a super-industrial society.
  - The difference in experiences from the acceleration in living tempo leads to conflict and misunderstanding between parent and child (disturbed educative communication): “The pace of life (triggers) bitter misunderstanding between parent and child” (in English).<sup>48</sup> The same holds for marital conflict and conflict between cultural groups.
  - Alienation: People will no longer be involved with each other and realize a superficial, fleeting and limited interpersonal contact. Functional contact means that the individual only has interest in the contact with fellow persons to the extent that the other can provide for his needs.
  - The duration of human relationships: This has decreased as the number of an individual’s interpersonal contacts has increased. The “average” city dweller has daily contact with more persons in a week than what a rural dweller of old had in a year or even a lifetime. Toffler<sup>49</sup> (in English) refers to the “... greater number of brief, face-to-face encounters (and) human contacts”.
  - How quickly must it be expected from children to build up and break interpersonal relationships?<sup>50</sup> An “adaptability level” as never before expected of an individual. (In other words a child must learn to deal with a quickly changing and complex social situation—“a system of temporary encounters”).
  - Learning to organize: This is necessary because of the progression in our society from a bureaucratic to an ad hoc-racy (organizational interchanging and changing, condensed organizational situations and the brief existence of organizational forms).
  - Educating is permissive.
  - Overwhelming mass communication: More bombarding of the senses, greater overload of information, greater influencing than ever before; quicker changes in opinions.
  - A generation gap needs only to be three to four years, e.g., between the first and fourth year at a university.

- Revolutions: By which a new society is created, e.g., student revolutions, ghetto revolutions, work revolutions (strikes, revolts), political revolutions, economic revolutions, youth revolutions, sexual revolutions, racial revolutions, computer revolutions, technological revolutions—all signs of a “sick social structure”. We find ourselves in the midst of a super-industrial revolution from which the newness and strangeness of our values, situations and relationships will change radically, also regarding work, recreation and *educating*. Many will never feel “at home” in the super-industrial situation but no turning back to the familiar past is possible. A new opportunity for humankind is created.
- Evanescence, transitoriness and newness mean experiencing unpredictability and uncertainty and also *uncertainty in educating*.
- The following are *pedagogically meaningful results* of the situation: marital conflict, disruption of family life, youth derailment, generation conflict, student rebellion, alienation and loneliness in society. “As the present system cracks and the super-industrial revolution rolls over us, as the armies of juvenile delinquents swell, as hundreds of thousands of youngsters flee their homes, and students rampage at universities in all the techno-societies, we can expect vociferous demands for an end to parental dilettantism” (Toffler<sup>51</sup>, in English).

“Childless marriage, professional parenthood, post-retirement child-rearing, corporate families, communes, geriatric group marriages, homosexual family units, polygamy – these, then, are a few of the family forms and practices with which innovative minorities will experiment in the decades ahead. Not all of us, however, will be willing to participate in such experimentation. What of the majority?” (Toffler<sup>52</sup>, in English).

- Excessive possibilities for choice (“overchoice”) of products and cultural differences (sub-cultures, groups). Social differentiation and social diversity (polyvalence and pluralism) influence the identity formation and feeling of belonging of an individual, and obstruct a stable personal lifestyle with the loss of commitment to each other and a

related identity crisis. This leads to personal disturbances, neuroses, psychic confusion, etc. “When diversity, however, converges with transience and novelty, we rocket the society towards an historical crisis of adaptation. We create an environment so ephemeral, unfamiliar and complex as to threaten millions with adaptive breakdown. This breakdown is future shock” (Toffler<sup>53</sup>, in English).

- The results of this societal attunement are the following: anxiety, confusion, disorientation, tension – also the stress of making decisions (“decision stress”), ill-will, meaningless violence and vandalism, physical illness, depression, apathy (of the masses), withdrawal (intellectual, social, affective), drug use, mysticism, nihilism, astrology, occultism.

The demand is placed on the individual by repeatedly (with conflict and uncertainty) linking up with change and newness and by a *de-socialization* of millions of persons occurring because they are disheartened to throw in the towel regarding tension, uncertainty and excessive possibilities of choice. Masses of people escape into alcohol, television, weekend excursions, the hippy culture, etc. and they show a deficiency in fellow human involvement and commitment. In general, there is disillusionment about life and society also by youth. “Young people forced into prolonged adolescence and deprived of the right to partake in social decision-making will grow more and more unstable until they threaten the overall system” (Toffler<sup>54</sup>, in English).

#### 4.4 Synthesis

The following is a summarizing description of the current attunement of society, of the educator, the educand and educating:

- The world has become problematic;
- society has changed from static to dynamic;
- discontinuity has become the rule and continuity the exception (Karl Jaspers).

Through communication media the world has become *small*.  
Through population explosion the world has become *full*.  
Through atomic weapons the world has become *questionable*

For modern persons, the above mean a *loss in certainty about living and educating*. He must, e.g., *orient* himself anew with respect to human relationships, values, traditions, etc. More than ever, he asks: To where is our path taking us?

Thus: a progression is realized from an aristocratic spiritual structure to a democratic, mass culture behavior by an industrial world of work. *Educating*, justice, morals and faith have threatened to lose their controlling function of people and society. This shift in power is realized at the cost of the deepest layer, the area of values.<sup>55</sup>

Today, more than ever before human existence means to be more uncertain, less stable and more impulsive, to be in doubt of the genuineness and meaningfulness of his own existence. Certainty, firmness and obviousness have declined in human existence.

Youth becomes “adult” earlier and adults continually show themselves to be more un-adult (Gielen).

*The situation has changed*, and it is fatal not to realize this. Therefore, in our thinking about *educating and society* (sociopedagogics) this realization of *change* must be central. *Educating to society* can no longer mean that an educand must be integrated into an unchangeable, fixed situation of living together.

It makes little sense to be involved with educative situations and aims without at the same time striving to bring about a society that is better and more worthwhile for being human. The existing society offers inadequate guarantees for a dignified existence for the greatest part of humanity who live in it. Educating also must be directed to changing society.<sup>56</sup>

To bring about these structural changes in society, Traas<sup>57</sup> presents three guidelines:

- (i) Planning societal and economical development must to a greater degree be governed by social criteria and directed to human wellbeing rather than being based on

- economical and technological criteria, e.g., city planning, industrial policy, educational planning, spatial organization, etc.
- (ii) More attention from the government for matters of wellbeing, educating/teaching and providing help such that educating youth in our society is more realizable. We cannot act as if social life still is occurring in a peaceful, preindustrial period.
  - (iii) Social-scientific research work must be undertaken on a much larger scale than now. This is expensive but a refusal to invest in society in this way means committing a wasteful exploitation of society and the people living in it and this leads sooner or later to an uprooting and annihilation of that which is reached.

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