

CHAPTER II

THE MUTUAL IMPLICATION OF THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE EVENT AND THE UNDER-ACTUALIZATION OF CHILDLIKE BECOMING ADULT

1. THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE EVENT

1.1 Educative distress

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

Nel² believes that there is mention of *educative distress* where the condition of educating in itself is bad and the educative activity is inadequate in that its meaning is not fulfilled, namely *the child does not live in a close association with his educator who is directed to adulthood*. According to Lubbers³ the child is delivered to distress since he does not feel secure with his parents and they cannot free him from his helplessness. Langeveld⁴ stresses that there is something amiss with the communication that leads to the child's becoming adult being harmed, especially because his lived-experiences and behaviors become unreadable to his parents.⁵ Kwakkel-Scheffer⁶ says something occurs in the child's life by which his relation with his parents directly or indirectly is disturbed; his future perspective becomes obscured.

The powerlessness of the parents to now help their child and the powerlessness of the child to ask his parents for this help, according to Lubbers,⁷ mostly is founded in a defective association between them that, as such, can lead to educative distress.⁸ The situation of educative stress gives rise to particular unfavorable emotional lived-experiencing by the child, e.g., excessive and needless feelings of

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

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

Where there is an under-actualization of the psychic life, there also immediately is mention of a restraint in becoming adult on the basis of inadequate exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating and objectifying¹⁰ and is one of the factors in the problematic educative situation of a child *restrained in becoming*.

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

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

1.2 The origin of the problematic event of educating

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

Either one [or both] of the two parties, i.e., the adult and the child, can participate in a halfhearted, unwilling way that results in the improper realization of the pedagogical relationship, sequence aim

* [ernstige belemmeringe vie die verloop van die opvoeding]

and activities.¹³ It is of essential importance that the child *particiate himself* and *with* the adult involved with him in the educative event. If this does not happen, from the child there is inadequate signifying, effort, norming, venturing, hope, design, fulfilling a future, respecting, self-understanding and acquiring freedom to responsibility.¹⁴

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

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

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

According to Ter Horst¹⁹ the parents reveal the existence of the problem in the form of dejection, severity, cantankerousness, rage, overprotection, isolation, neglect, rejection, abandonment, consequences of death, etc.

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

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

2. THE HANDICAPPED CHILD AS EDUCATIVELY SITUATED

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

Vliegthart²⁰ says the world of a person acquires form through his free taking a position towards the data by which he designs a unique world for himself through his personal history, to which educating and training belong, and through the potentialities that his organic and psychic ground structure offers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One who is retarded might reach adulthood later than the non-retarded and the pedagogically attainable level might be lower because of the exclusion of particular potentialities but this

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

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

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

However, a number of authors emphasize precisely the child’s handicap as what constitutes a problematic educative situation.³³ Thus, for Nel³⁴ orthopedagogics has to do with reflecting on an adult faced with a child in unusual circumstances and then he says: “*The unusual circumstance* is a child who is restrained with the consequence that educating and teaching him differ from that of a normal child.”³⁵

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

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

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

Consequently, a child must first experience his handicap as a deficiency before it acquires the character of educative distress³⁸ and there cannot be generalizations, not even about what sort of handicap. Also, each handicapped child is a unique person in his unique pedagogical situatedness and there is never mention of a typical deaf, blind, hard-of-hearing, mentally handicapped or epileptic child. The only common characteristic is the fact that because of their *being handicapped* these children appear "different" from non-handicapped.

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

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

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

3. THE HANDICAPPED CHILD IN A PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE EVENT

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

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

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

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

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

A handicapped child readily experiences that others view him as “inferior”.⁴⁶ Then he becomes sensitive to the “hidden, concealed negative feelings of being different” which he experiences as “depreciating”.⁴⁷ He experiences a primitive anxiety regarding what is *different* and *deviant* that is carried back to his anxiety about confronting general human defects—and thus his own, according to Pretorius.⁴⁸ The essence of this experienced *being inferior* is a self-devaluation⁴⁹ and this touches the entire matter of establishing his world. The feeling of inferiority has an undertone of shame and being-offended; uncertainty arises from this feeling,⁵⁰ and the child then feels himself to not be free. Lubbers⁵¹ says the child experiences “himself as not free, as unable to change while he wants and needs to change; he is unable to assume certain aspects of his

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

Then a handicapped child easily develops and experiences impotence on the basis of which he always has his guard up and prefers to pull himself back from establishing relations with life contents.

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

Sonnekus⁵³ says the handicapped is involved in a mixed up, confusing and also ambiguous relationship with himself, in particular with his own body and a handicapped body and as center from which he must constitute his spatial orientation.

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

Lubbers⁵⁶ indicates that the inability to communicate with particular areas of the world because the “I” has not assimilated his experiences of those areas leads to an essential lack of freedom by

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

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

which the “I” becomes locked outside of itself and outside of the other and can only maintain itself in “imitative” actions. By doing as another does the “I” outwardly joins in but not internally. Only if the “I” has *made* his experiences his own will the “I” have access to the closed areas. The unassimilated that must be assimilated can bring a person to a passivity in which he loses himself. If what is unassimilated is also anxiety provoking then in addition to this loss there is destruction because particular experiences are ignored systematically and then are possibly entirely banned from his world.

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

From the above it seems that the handicapped child is involved in a problematic educative situation if there is any evidence that he signifies his being different unfavorably because then he is not able to actualize his psychic life favorably and *now* “considering his personal attunement he is in a state related to serious restraints” (for adequately) “pursuing the course of educating”.^{58*}

Thus, there must be a distinction between the handicapped child who is *restrained in his becoming* and the handicapped child who is *becoming adequately* since the latter adequately actualizes his psychic life in his educative situation and because his level of becoming adult corresponds with what it ought to be [in light of his given potentialities].

With respect to the handicapped child, his being in a problematic educative situation is only noticeable in his total going out to the world and establishing relationships. His *body* does not allow him to be qualified as *restrained in becoming*; his *bodiliness* makes

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

himself knowable as a *person* through it in terms of his behaviors in life situations.

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

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

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

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

When a handicapped child finds himself in a problematic educative situation then the adults who are primarily responsible for his upbringing primarily are culpable because they have allowed that his potentialities not be optimally actualized as a result of their inadequate support.

Since educators often do not know how to act and often feel uncertain about educating a handicapped child, on the one hand, and because these children themselves so readily underactualize their becoming adult, on the other hand, it is necessary that "special help" be provided from the beginning. This "special help" is aimed at averting possible restraints in becoming. Against this background

it also is clear why Vliegenthart⁶⁰ so strongly emphasizes the deviant moments in the psychic and organic structure of the child.

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

In this connection, Ter Horst⁶⁵, e.g., says that “ ... lonely, nervous, isolated, insecure children can often poorly assimilate confusing events and that means they need orthopedagogic help to manage the problem”.***

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

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

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

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

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