

**AN UNLIKELY VENTURE:
From educational psychology to psychopedagogics
and more**

George D. Yonge
Emeritus Professor of Education
University of California (Davis)

ABSTRACT

This paper begins with a brief historical sketch of how, in 1974 my thinking moved from a natural science approach to the study of educational psychologically to the phenomenological approach pursued at the University of Pretoria. I found what I was looking for—a competent and comprehensive phenomenology of educating in all of its part-perspectives, including fundamental pedagogics. While studying and teaching these contents, in 1980 I was shocked to read scathing criticisms and characterizations of fundamental pedagogics claiming that Pretoria pedagogics was designed to provide an academic justification of apartheid education in that it was said to be little more than an expression of the racist, authoritarian policies of Christian Nationalism. If these claims were accurate, this would mean I was involved in an unlikely venture in as much as I have anti-apartheid and non-racist sentiments such that this asserted purpose of fundamental pedagogics, in particular, and pedagogics, in general, would be in conflict with my own values and philosophy of life. Fortunately, my first-hand experiences with the phenomenological endeavors at Pretoria do not support these claims. This gives rise to the question “how is it possible that the critics of fundamental pedagogics and I both are equally convinced of the accuracy of our understandings of fundamental pedagogics and what has given rise to this discrepancy?”

The main thrust of this paper addresses this question. Since an investigator’s method will influence strongly what legitimately can or cannot be expressed about a particular phenomenon, the first consideration is the phenomenological method followed at Pretoria. Phenomenology is a method designed to disclose the essences or universal structures of a phenomenon. Its first step is called the

phenomenological reduction, epoche, bracketing. This step gets us closer to the phenomenon itself by temporarily holding in abeyance the essence-blinding influences of whatever kind (e.g., assumptions, theories, ideologies [explicitly the Christian Nationalism of apartheid South Africa], philosophies of life, etc.). A consequence of this bracketing is that an investigator's access to and dialogue with a phenomenon will not be disrupted or distorted by what is being bracketed. Within this bracketing, the eidetic reduction or method of free variation is performed as a way of disclosing and highlighting what seem to be essences. These essences are universal and thus do not imply or require a particular ideology, etc. Otherwise they wouldn't be universal. Now a hermeneutic method is used to illuminate and clarify the meaning of each essence (what function does it serve). Finally, the dialectic (triadic) method is used to determine the coherences of the essences (how do they serve as mutual conditions for each other to occur). The practice of fundamental pedagogics (and pedagogics in general) occurs ONLY while bracketing is engaged. This means that fundamental pedagogics only can address the essences and structures of educating but NOT its contents (e.g., a particular religious commitment or political view that have been held in abeyance by bracketing).

Pretoria calls the activity within brackets a science of or a theory of educating. And this gives rise to distinguishing the pre-scientific, the scientific and the post-scientific where bracketing is absent from the pre-and post-scientific attitudes and ideologies, etc. rightly play a critical role in the concrete act of educating. Even though fundamental pedagogics is not in a position and doesn't aim to select particular ideologies that are necessary for the act of educating, in revealing and describing these universals of this activity, these essences, as preconditions for establishing an adult-child educative relationship provide guidelines for a practitioner (parent, teacher) to establish and sustain such a relationship and these essences also can be used as criteria for evaluating the pedagogical quality of an activity as well as whether applying an ideology in a particular way distorts the essences of that relationship. That is, these essences make possible a purely pedagogical perspective on the reality of educating in contrast to a psychological perspective, for example.

In the literature critical of fundamental pedagogics almost always there is a conflation of the scientific and the post-scientific with the consequence that pedagogics is criticized for justifying apartheid education when in fact it is in no position to do so and doesn't aim to. Pedagogics also is criticized for not including political discourse in its description of essences. Examples of these criticisms are presented and evaluated pedagogically.

Thus, it seems that almost all criticism of the pedagogical studies at Pretoria can be attributed to a conflation of a scientific activity and a post-scientific one, of form and content, etc. Hence, not keeping track of the scientific and the post-scientific facilitates these conflations.

A possible answer to my beginning question of why there is this "discrepancy" is that I limit my evaluation of pedagogical findings to what was obtained while bracketing was engaged (the scientific/phenomenological) while most critics focus on the post-scientific issue of prescribing to practice where much of what was bracketed now must be used to nuance the meanings of the essences within a particular practice. That is, I limit myself to the essences disclosed and described when bracketing is engaged and most critics are focused on how these essences are used post-scientifically. Possibly the "discrepancy" between our appraisals of fundamental pedagogics arises because we are approaching the reality of educating from different points of view, i.e., with different questions and interests.

The consequence of critics and defenders talking past each other has been costly. The phenomenological efforts at Pretoria have been vilified and ostracized for political more than academic reasons to an extent that generations of possible contributors to its line of thinking have been thwarted completely. I suggest that the Pretoria findings be studied first-hand with an open mind and then decide if these results are or are not a treasure trove of insights into the reality of educating a child.

KEY CONCEPTS: educating, upbringing, psychopedagogics, fundamental pedagogics, pedagogics as a science, phenomenological method, phenomenological reduction (bracketing), pre-scientific, scientific and post-scientific perspectives, Langeveld's pedagogy, essences/categories, apartheid education, authoritarian teaching, Christian National education, science of vs science for, theory of vs theory for

The venture

At the University of California (Berkeley), my undergraduate major was in the psychology of the mid 1950's, and at the graduate level it was in the educational psychology of the early 1960's. As a consequence of these studies, my only perspective on "education", uncritically accepted as primarily meaning teaching-learning in school, was a psychological one. At that time I had a gnawing uneasiness about the relevance of much of what I was learning. For example, the definition of learning as a change in behavior rang shallow; e.g., classical and operant conditioning do not describe what a learner does, but what is done to him/her to change his/her behavior.

A few assumptions (beliefs) that I ended up with were that educational psychology is psychology applied to education, reinforced by the fact that essentially the content of my educational psychology curriculum mostly was a reiteration of what I had learned in psychology and also by the fact that about half of the courses I took as a graduate student were offered by the psychology department. I also held the questionable view that **any positive** experience (including teaching and/or learning) was "educational" whether it resulted from formal teaching, informal parenting or from adults, children, games, toys, etc. The criteria for what was "positive" were based on achievement tests and other mostly tacit/unstated criteria. More than a decade later I would realize that these views actually obscure the study of the phenomenon of educating—mostly because they conflate educating and the totality of positive forming.

In 1961, just as I was completing my graduate studies, I accidentally encountered the European notion of phenomenology as a philosophical method, in general, and (Dutch) phenomenological psychology, in particular, and began reading what little I could find in English that made sense to me at the time. Two books that caught and kept my interest were W. Luijpen's *Existential Phenomenology* and, a little later Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. My interest in gestalt psychology gave me a point of entry into Merleau-Ponty's thought since he used a lot of their work to illustrate and develop some of his philosophical ideas. My quandary began coming to a head when I realized that these readings and others provided a perspective on being human that appeared to be truer to life than the insights (mostly implicit) I had assimilated from studying psychology and educational psychology and which led me to question the validity of many of their interpretations and findings.

In 1964 when I began teaching educational psychology my intellectual quandary immediately became even more intensified. I was obligated to teach traditional contents of educational psychology that I now "felt" to be of questionable relevance to a prospective teacher and I readily questioned them; my dilemma was that I had no positive alternative—an unsatisfactory state for my students and myself.

My strategy was gradually to introduce reading assignments from the literature of phenomenology and humanistic psychology with the hope of integrating these streams of thought but this led to little more than a hodgepodge of eclectic ideas that could not be directly applied to the school situation. I persisted with this frustrating approach for about a decade only because I didn't know what else to do and because humanistic and phenomenological views of being human (being a child) rang truer to life and thus were more palatable than the natural science view of persons underlying most of traditional educational psychology.

In 1974 I read a review of B. F. Nel's *Fundamental Orientation in Psychological Pedagogics* (published in Afrikaans in April 1968 and translated into English September 1973) in the *Journal of*

Phenomenological Psychology and ordered the book from South Africa. This was my first introduction to the phenomenological study of educating/upbringing being pursued by the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. It completely turned my understanding of “education” as well as educational psychology upside down and introduced me to Langeveld’s principles of child becoming adult and his (philosophical) anthropology of a child. Also Nel’s book introduced me to a developing pedagogics as a phenomenological study of upbringing/educating at Pretoria of which psychological pedagogics (later psychopedagogics) is an integral part. Also, it became clear that this psychology emerged from within the adult-child educative relationship itself and thus is a “situational psychology” arising from and embedded in the phenomenon of bringing a child up and was not an “applied psychology”. Nel’s references were predominately to Dutch phenomenologists and my studies of phenomenology sharply attuned me to these ideas in as much as the phenomenology I learned for the most part was a Dutch explication of it (i.e., Luijpen, Buytendijk, Kockelmans, Kwant, Strasser, etc.). From then on, I prescribed Nel’s book in my Introduction to Educational Psychology course that gradually morphed into my Introduction to Psychopedagogics.

As a situational psychology, psychopedagogics is a disclosure of the essentials of child learning and becoming **within** an educative relationship, e.g., Sonnkus (1968)), and it could not stand alone without drifting into a psychology of learning and development because it needed fundamental pedagogical (context/situation), e.g., Landman et al. (1975/2011), didactic pedagogical (teaching) e.g., Van der Stoep & Louw (1979/2005), sociopedagogical, e.g., Pretorius (1979/2017) and orthopedagogical, e.g., Van Niekerk (1979/2001) among other descriptions of the one unitary phenomenon of guiding a child to adulthood. Hence, in my course I prescribed readings in all of these part-perspectives and more. Early on I prescribed W. H. O. Schmidt’s (1973) book, *Child Development: The human, cultural and educational context*, and later I added a book on parenting by Schulman & Mekler (1985), *Bringing up a moral child*, while some fellow educational psychologists wondered what these readings had to do with applying psychological principles to education.

In August-September 1980, I was invited to be a guest lecturer at the University of Pretoria where I had the opportunity to interact and talk with members of the Faculty of Education who were enthusiastically and impressively carrying out phenomenological studies of educating (what they called pedagogics) as a multi-faceted but integrated, unified activity. For a student's first hand account of this academic climate during the 1970's, see the preamble to Kruger & Yonge (2008).

Pedagogics, in general, and psychopedagogics, in particular, seemed to be precisely what I had been yearning for and that might eliminate my quandary. I was so impressed and excited by their achievements that, in order to make more of their literature in pedagogics available to myself and to my students, in the mid 1980's I began translating some of their books, articles, dissertations, etc but with a vigilant, if not skeptical eye for any indication of the promotion or justification of a so-called "apartheid education"= black education. I found no indication of this in the materials I read and translated. Indeed, **as a non-religious, Liberal Democrat (USA), anti-segregation (USA), anti-apartheid (RSA) individual**, I would not have been able to accept these writings if I didn't experience that their disclosed essences are valid descriptions of the phenomenon of educating in its totality. This means they are descriptive of the universal, unchanging **structures/forms** of educating and not of its particular and varying **contents** that are governed by a particular philosophy of life, ideology and/or particularized aim—the very things bracketed during a phenomenological analysis (See below). Even so, there is a small but influential literature that characterizes the findings of the Pretoria faculty, and in particular those of fundamental pedagogics (FP), as providing a justification of or for the policy of apartheid education (Beard & Morrow, 1981). In as much as I have challenged the validity of this pro-apartheid education characterization (e.g., Yonge, 1990; 1991; 2008), below I will try to clarify precisely **what** it is I am defending and **why**.

In teaching these perspectives on education for approximately two decades, I remained impressed by the mutual coherence of their descriptions, and the more I translated the more I could see that the

contributions of the Faculty of Education at Pretoria were unique and worthy of being translated into English which also would place these findings in a less hostile context than that of post-apartheid South African academics and politics. Along this line, I developed a website to make my translations of the findings of the Pretoria School easily accessible to interested readers **and to critics**.

My English translations of more than 100 pedagogical studies of educating from different part-perspectives and their findings are accessible on line at <http://www.georgeyonge.net>: An example of a fundamental pedagogical study is Landman, et al. (1975/2011), especially chapters one and two; a tabulation of fundamental pedagogical categories, structures, relationships, and criteria appears as Appendix A in Gerber (1972/2009); a study of the psychic life of a child-in-education (psychopedagogical perspective) and the resulting categories is that by Crous (1984/1997); the categories disclosed by a didactic pedagogical (i.e., an educative teaching) perspective on the phenomenon of educating appear specifically in chapter 3 of Van der Stoep and Louw (1979/2005). Examples of how the different part-perspectives function as an integrated unity, and where theory and practice merge, is in designing and presenting a lesson (Basson, et al., 1985/1994; Van der Stoep et al. 1973/1999) and in the practice of orthopedagogics, including pedotherapy (i.e., educational therapy in contrast to psychotherapy), are Crous (1979/1997) and Van Niekerk (1979/2001).

With no claim of completeness, below are some highlights of the phenomenological method that was followed by the entire Faculty at Education at Pretoria:

Phenomenology, as a method designed to disclose the essences of a phenomenon, begins with a step in thinking that tries to eliminate or minimize the essence-blinding influences of assumptions, theories, ideologies [explicitly the Christian Nationalism (CN) of apartheid South Africa], philosophies of life, etc. that can hide and distort how a phenomenon “speaks to” or discloses itself to the investigator. This attempted control of these influences is to bracket or temporarily hold in abeyance as many of them as is feasible. This is called the **phenomenological reduction** and it is

sustained throughout a phenomenological study of an experience of something. This allows for a closer, clearer view of and access to the phenomenon itself; that is, it allows the phenomenon to describe and explain itself to us as it would if it could without our presumptions and life commitments, etc. intruding, skewing and even interrupting our dialoging with the phenomenon. This step gets us closer to the phenomenon by trying to neutralize biases of whatever kind for the entire duration of the investigation. (Even though a **complete** phenomenological reduction is not possible, this does not invalidate its value). Within this phenomenological reduction (bracketing), the **eidetic reduction** is performed. Also called the method of free variation, this is a way of disclosing and highlighting what seem to be essences. The **hermeneutic method** then is used to disclose and clarify the meaning (what function does it serve) of each of the essences. Then, by means of the **dialectic (triadic) method**, the inter-relationships (coherences) among the essences and structures are disclosed (e.g., how do they serve as mutual conditions for each other to occur). All of these steps are taken while a phenomenological reduction is operative and thus the resulting essences/categories will transcend any particular occurrence of the phenomenon and thus can claim universality. This is similar to **seeing through** many examples of triangles to the universal essence of “triangularity” which does not prescribe a particular characteristic even though “triangularity” must be particularized by size, type, color, etc. to be a concrete experience; that is, **any** particular content is a possible nuance of an essence provided its actualization does not distort or destroy it.

My understanding of and defense of fundamental pedagogics (and pedagogics as a unity)[#]

The following considerations are offered with some of the criticisms of FP in mind. I first present my understanding of the nature of FP and then, in this light I comment on a more recent critique by Suransky-Dekker (1998) along with some less politicized comments by Hoadley (2018).

[#] To prevent repetitiveness, when I refer to fundamental pedagogics in the remainder of this paper, I also mean pedagogics as a unitary whole of which fundamental pedagogics is a basic part.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's there was a spate of papers critical of FP while virtually ignoring an evaluation of pedagogics, in general, and its inseparable part-perspectives (i.e., fundamental pedagogics is but one part-perspective of a more comprehensive unity that should be critiques as a totality). I characterize many of these early papers as sometimes mean-spirited and denigrating. Even so, these efforts were successful in aborting the entire pedagogical project of the faculty of education at the University of Pretoria in post-apartheid South Africa as well as in claiming that the whole endeavor of fundamental pedagogics was to provide an academic justification for apartheid education (black schooling).

To critique something effectively, one should be clear and consistent about what is being evaluated. And certainly it is not appropriate to criticize a line of thinking for not including or considering something it had no intention of including, but, as will be noted, many of the criticism of FP are of this latter nature.

An extremely important distinction for understanding the nature of the Pretoria results as well as for delimiting what I defend as valid essence-descriptions of the reality of educating a child, are an **educational** (pre-scientific/contextualized), a **pedagogical** (scientific/de-contextualized) and a **pedagogic** (post-scientific/re-contextualized) perspective on this reality. Very briefly, an educational situation is almost exclusively **pre-reflective practice**; a pedagogical situation is almost entirely **reflective "theorizing"** about that pre-reflective practice; and a pedagogic situation is where **"theory"** (disclosing and describing the essences that arise from and are inherent to this practice) **and practice** both are salient—that is, it is where theoretical reflection informs and changes pre-reflective practice to **reflective practice**. Here both theory and practice are salient and reciprocal and thus theory can inform practice and practice can inform theory.

My interest in the phenomenological results of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria from the late 1960's to the early 1990's is limited **exclusively** to a pedagogical situation where ideologies, assumptions, etc. (and specifically a CN philosophy of life) are bracketed. Importantly, this means that the purpose of FP,

as disclosing the essences (preconditions) of that event, is not to prescribe particular **contents** for the concrete practice of educating. What it does prescribe to a practitioner is the universal preconditions that have to be met for his/her activity to qualify as “educative”. That is, pedagogics is directed exclusively to specifying the **form** of his/her educative actions but prescribes nothing regarding **what** he chooses as **contents**. In this context it only is form that is disclosed by pedagogics as a whole. In contrast to this universality, contents vary from one concrete act of educating to another and their choice and justification are derived from one’s philosophy of life, some ideology, etc., that is, from everything the phenomenological method is designed to bracket and temporarily hold in abeyance; specific contents are not to be found within the form itself. In addition, since educating always is for the benefit of a child, any content that violates the nature/welfare of a child [philosophical anthropology of a child] could distort or even destroy the form and thus not meet the conditions for an event to be an example of educating.

Beginning in 1930 and for approximately two decades, at the University of Pretoria educating was studied following an Anglo-American approach that they found to be extremely inadequate. (See Faculty of Education (1980/2000)). By pursuing the groundbreaking thinking and example of Langeveld (Utrecht) (1968) who studied educating phenomenologically by starting with the phenomenon itself and not as viewed philosophically, psychologically, etc. gradually they were able to break out of their unsatisfactory approach. Since about 1970, the phenomenological study of the phenomenon educating was characteristic of all departments of the Faculty of Education and since then pedagogics has gelled into a unitary whole of interlaced perspectives on this reality. This unity reflects the reality that in a concrete practice of educating there are inherent psychological, teaching, and other moments within an adult-child educative relationship (disclosed and described by psychopedagogics, didactic pedagogics and fundamental pedagogics, respectively).

Pedagogics is a science* of educating that necessarily includes these three perspective and others. To criticize the findings of only or mainly FP, as has been done in the literature, can lead to a distorted understanding of the whole of pedagogics as a phenomenology of educating (See, e.g., Beard & Morrow, 1981; Reagan, 1990; Suransky-Dekker, 1998).

In studying educating phenomenologically, Langeveld (Utrecht) as well as Oberholzer, 1954 and later Landman et al., 1975/2011) limited their “theoretical” (i.e., phenomenological) study of the reality of educating exclusively to what they could disclose while they engaged both the phenomenological reduction (bracketing) and the eidetic reduction (method of free variation). By bracketing (temporarily holding in abeyance) any religious, political and other orientations that might obscure or distort the phenomenon and hence the essences disclosed, the results of both the Utrecht and Pretoria analyses will be devoid of any religious, political or other commitments; however, **after** the bracketing is disengaged particular contents must be imported from a lifeworld permeated by all that was bracketed. These contents enliven the essences (universal forms) such that they can be implemented in a concrete practice.

Unfortunately, in the literature critical of pedagogics almost always there is an ambiguous use of the term “theory” by which theory OF (as a scientific matter) is conflated with theory FOR, as a prescription for practice. Some examples of this conflation are presented below. In my understanding, Langeveld’s phenomenological study of educating as well as the Pretoria endeavor both are “theories OF” educating where the purpose is to bracket political and other issues in order to reveal the essences of educating itself. Thus, as a human **necessity**, educating/upbringing can and **must** occur in an extremely wide variety of political and religious situations; even so, a practitioner’s “educative” actions can be dysfunctional if they do not more or less meet the preconditions that are described in and “prescribed” by the essences of educating as a special adult-child relationship. These preconditions, as guidelines for an educator’s ways of acting,

* In this paper “science” or “scientific” almost always means “phenomenology” or “phenomenological”. This does not imply that the phenomenological method is the only method for practicing science.

are the only explicit “norms” to be found within and inherent to an educative relationship—and explicated by at least fundamental-, psycho- and didactic-pedagogical perspectives. These “norms” are relevant to providing parents with guidance and support in child parenting, and especially in a pedotherapeutic situation (See Van Niekerk 1982; Crous (1979/1997)). They also provide criteria for evaluating the pedagogical acceptability of a concrete pedagogic situation and even for evaluating the pedagogical acceptability of a particular doctrine for educating such as pragmatism; with respect to the latter, see De Vries, 1985).

Anyone who studies the same phenomenon within the phenomenological reduction ought to disclose or see similar (if not identical) or at least compatible categories. Hence, their language of describing them should be extremely similar even while their practical interpretations may vary greatly. Such is the case when one compares the results at Utrecht and Pretoria. Indeed, Pretoria has not blindly accepted Langeveld’s categories (e.g., trust, understanding, authority, association, encounter, etc.) but in fact has gone beyond him in elaborating on these categories by revealing essences of each, disclosing additional categories, and describing their mutual coherences. This is possible because the Utrecht and Pretoria categories are on the same level of discourse.

As noted, the bracketing must be disengaged before the categories can be implemented. Then they must be enlivened or particularized to a unique situation and necessarily this results in each category being nuanced or interpreted in terms of a particular ideology, belief, assumption, etc. That is, **universal** essences, when particularized will show a **variety** of nuances in meaning—within the limits set by any essence. Hence, it is not surprising if the nuanced meaning of these essences differ between Holland and South Africa.

Many criticisms of FP stem from a misunderstanding and/or rejection of the phenomenological reduction. This rejection invites a conflation of the scientific and the post-scientific or even an almost complete bypass of any phenomenological descriptions as especially is the case in the United States.

A related and more vehement line of criticism first was motivated by the presumed political and religious underpinnings of FP. More recently, Suransky-Dekker (1998) claims to show that in the mid 1950's Langeveld's phenomenological theoretical pedagogy was "transferred" to South Africa primarily by the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria as an attempt to develop the study of education as an independent science. She then argued that since schooling in South Africa was a clear expression of Christian (Calvinist) National Education (CNE) that affirmed apartheid, this strong affinity with CNE influenced the interpretation of fundamental pedagogical thought in the direction of justifying and perpetuating an authoritarian, apartheid education.

As evidence that FP was designed to justify and perpetuate apartheid schooling (explicitly black schooling during apartheid), Suransky-Dekker (1998), Reagan (1991) and others point to the authoritarian nature of black schooling that is characterized as emphasizing an authoritarian teacher-student relationship as well as rote, meaningless learning. As a phenomenology of educating, FP does not prescribe or justify any particular practice because these are post-scientific matters.

If black schooling under apartheid is viewed in terms of pedagogical essences, FP (e.g., Landman et al., 1975/2011) can identify where the student-teacher **educative** relationship is being actualized inadequately if at all; psychopedagogical categories (e.g., Crous, 1984/1997) likely will show that the quality of affective, cognitive and normative guidance are lacking; and didactic pedagogics, of direct relevance to schooling, might show that inadequate schooling is being implemented but little or no **educative** schooling (See Van der Stoep & Louw, 1979/2005). An authoritarian teacher-student relationship and rote, meaningless learning are unacceptable as judged by the pedagogical categories revealed by fundamental pedagogics and all of the part-perspectives and, thus, it is not possible that these categories can be used to justify apartheid education or any particular practice. No doubt teaching and learning occurred but not necessarily educative teaching and formative learning.

There seems to have been a **complete disconnect** between the findings of Pretoria and black education under apartheid. Apartheid education was set up and implemented long before pedagogical thinking gelled in the 1970's. It was not designed by or justified by pedagogical findings at Pretoria. Even so, FP is characterized as promoting an authoritarian form of schooling. Indeed, the adult-child relationship categories of trust, understanding and authority are mutually entwined and as a whole result in sympathetic, authoritative guidance (that has nothing to do with power and control) in contrast to an authoritarian relationship that does not put the interest of a child first (See Landman et al., 1975/2011). However, I do agree with Beard & Morrow (1981, Suransky-Dekker (1998) and others who have pointed out that there are a few infelicitous instances of describing a category that I consider to be inappropriate to the reality of educating and not consistent with other disclosed categories. For example, "being true to decisions regardless of their consequences", "unconditional acceptance of norms and a philosophy of life". Most certainly commitment to choices, values and beliefs are essential but a docile acceptance of instead of a willing obedience to them is not. When I taught these ideas, they called for editing and I found the best expression for describing responsible, open-minded commitment to be as follows: "being committed to but not enslaved by ..." (W.H.O. Schmidt, 1973, p. 21).

I believe Suransky-Dekker's (1998) claim that there is an antagonism between Langeveld's theoretical pedagogy and Pretoria's FP is false. For example, it seems to me that if the categories of each were expressed, say in English, and compared they would be indistinguishable. In fact, as already noted, in many cases the analyses of Pretoria are an elaboration of many of the essences disclosed by Langeveld.

In Suransky-Dekker's (1998) important study, fundamental pedagogics is viewed in a different light than the earlier, more political criticisms of the early and late 1980's; hence, now there is a more intensive and detailed consideration of her characterizations of FP.

A closer look at Suransky-Dekker's characterizations of FP

The early critiques of FP were steeped in political rhetoric that often had an angry tone. Seldom was there a criticism directed to the findings of FP with the exception of pedagogical authority that often was mischaracterized as meaning an authoritarian instead of authoritative adult-child relationship.

Hoadley's (2018, p. 57) brief summary of these early criticisms of FP follows:

It was argued that it was inaccessible and mystifying (Reagan, 1990); not amenable to rational challenges and critical scrutiny ((Parker, 1981; Morrow, 1981); and inarticulate, conceptually confused and contradictory (Morrow, 1981; Enslin, 1988). The most prominent critique, however, was political, the objection to the presentation of FP as a 'science', 'a theoretical discourse from which the political has been exorcised' (Enslin, 1990, p. 86). ... Enslin critiqued the notion of bracketing or epoche: 'By excluding the political as a legitimate dimension of theoretical discourse, fundamental pedagogics offers neither a language of critique nor a language of possibility' (1990, p. 78).

This concern of Enslin's that the political is excluded from the findings (essences) of FP is precisely what the Pretoria faculty was trying to accomplish and, in fact, is evidence that bracketing was successful. The political is a legitimate dimension of educational discourse but this is a post-scientific matter. Unfortunately such unfounded criticisms still prevail.

Suransky-Dekker's (1998) study provides a very useful perspective on FP by viewing it as the result of transferring Langeveld's theoretical pedagogy to South Africa where it was reinterpreted and shaped to fit into apartheid education. Even though this claim is questionable and will be considered, it allows us to use Langeveld's pedagogy as a yardstick for critically comparing FP to his theory. This will allow us to see clearly that the two "theories" essentially are the same even though it can be expected that the essences common to them will take on slightly different nuances in meaning

without distorting or destroying them in accordance with one's ideologies, beliefs, etc.

Suransky-Dekker's (1998, p. 11) claims:

[s]ince fundamental pedagogics can be traced to the work of ... Langeveld, there appears to be a puzzling contradiction between the meaning Langeveld's theory took on in Holland (framed in a liberal and humanistic context) and South African fundamental pedagogics (framed in a racist apartheid education context).

and a few pages later she refers to chapter five of her study in which she claims to have established that

(i) fundamental pedagogics was not a South African invention, but that nonetheless (ii) Langeveld's theory was used to legitimize it as it took on different political, philosophical and educational meaning in the South African context, and that (iii) the increasingly divergent context of ethnic-nationalist imperatives in South Africa led fundamental pedagogics to assume a meaning much at odds with its Dutch roots (p. 18).

In the above quotations the word "theory" is interpreted by Suransky-Dekker to mean prescriptions for practice when in fact it means a disclosure and description of the essential structures of or preconditions for the act of bringing a child up to adulthood, i.e., it is a scientific matter and is not concerned with a post-scientific particularization of these essences in terms of some or another doctrine, hierarchy of values, cultural/political context, etc. Consequently, the disclosed essences in Langeveld's theoretical pedagogy and in FP have the same meaning—they disclose and describe the essences of one and the same phenomenon of educating a child and there is no "puzzling contradiction" or "being at odds with its Dutch origins". This meaning of "theory" as a science presupposes a phenomenological bracketing, e.g., of a liberal and humanistic, a racist apartheid education frame or any other. It is in these [post-scientific] frames that a "surprising contradiction" might arise but not within the phenomenological descriptions of Langeveld and FP. Also, for these reasons, there was no need for FP

to use Langeveld's theory to legitimize itself [as a post-scientific prescription of policies of any kind]; this latter is not what fundamental pedagogics is or claims to be. Indeed, this type of confusion is at the core of almost all criticisms of FP. It is difficult to see how Suransky-Dekker's narrative regarding the "distortion" of Langeveld's pedagogy by FP would be possible without conflating the scientific and the post-scientific.

... [T]he problem with Langeveld's theory for the South African context at that time is that—if adopted unconditionally—it would have signified a departure from religious doctrine in favor of an essentially atheist and phenomenology based theory of education. Langeveld had suggested that instead of looking to religion for guidance in a scientific study of what does (but also what *should*) happen when children are raised, we should acknowledge the existence of a pedagogical reality which can be scientifically captured in pedagogy as an autonomous and practical science. This pedagogic reality contained a set of norms which preceded any moral or religious norms with which parents could identify. Hence, it was a field of interest which was related to social and human sciences, but was indeed also seen as an autonomous field with objectives and assumptions which -were distinctly pedagogical (Suransky-Dekker, 1998, p. 170).

Both Langeveld's theory and FP are concerned with disclosing the essential structures of educating and not with whether their findings conform to or deviate from any particular doctrine because any matter of doctrine precisely is one of many things being bracketed.

But what did the Pretoria faculty of education actually "copy" from Langeveld? Mostly it was his suggestion that the phenomenon of education could and should be studied by having its point of departure in this reality itself instead of in other perspectives such as a psychological or ideological perspective in as much as this autonomous educative reality precedes any particular theory or ideology.

Langeveld's idea of pedagogic autonomy offered a solution to [post world war Dutch] ... parents who looked for non-religious moral guidelines when raising their children. His research directed their search to distinct pedagogic norms that could replace the guidelines that had been offered by religious doctrines. At the same time, those parents who felt comfortable with religion ... could also now rest assured in the knowledge that their actions could be sanctioned not only by their religion but also in a 'neutral' and 'scientific' way (Suransky-Dekker, 1998, pp. 170-171).

And:

Whereas Langeveld's pedagogy affirmed different religious and ideological diversity in a society that had rejected totalitarianism in favour of social democracy ..., fundamental pedagogics affirmed apartheid in a society which was politically dominated by those who had adopted totalitarianism framed in a CNE mode (p. 184).

Hence:

The arrival of Langeveld's theory in South Africa ... came at a very opportune time. The timing was perfect, as it presented Afrikaners with the opportunity to develop educational thinking in such a way that their long-cherished ideal of CNE could be implemented. What was needed was an academic justification for CN, especially in the field of teacher education, as teachers now needed to be groomed in a new CNE mode (p. 169).

It is extremely unfortunate that this questionable narrative of the "timeliness" of the transfer of Langeveld's pedagogy from Holland to South Africa in order to justify academically the policies of CNE under apartheid has become indelibly etched on the history of Landgeveld's pedagogy by Bos' (2011, p. 343) quotation of the above account by Suransky-Dekker.

Fundamental pedgogics (as is Langeveld's theoretical pedagogy) is limited to an essence analysis of (i.e, or preconditions for) an

educative situation to occur anywhere at any time irrespective of the particular ideological, religious or other commitments of an educator and consequently neither Langeveld's pedagogy nor FP can affirm any particular religious, political or other post-scientific matter. After all, if educating as upbringing is a phenomenon that occurs universally among human beings, then any particular ideology cannot be an essence or precondition, but the fact that there must be *some* ideology directing it is essential. For this reason it can be said that pedagogical norms (i.e., essences) are necessary but not sufficient for educating to occur, and vice versa.

My final comparison by Suransky-Dekker (1998) is the meaning of "self" in Langeveld's pedagogy and in FP. This is an exceptionally clear example of the conflation of a "scientific" and "post-scientific" perspective:

It becomes clear that whilst the self in fundamental pedagogics looks—at first glance exactly like Langeveld's self and even explicitly claims to refer to an individual self, its contextualisation in Christian National Education policy and apartheid politics effectively made that an impossibility. Instead, fundamental pedagogics implies the existence of an ethnic-nationalist and collective self. This has tremendous consequences for education, as the emphasis shifts from raising an individual and unique child (Langeveld's idea) whose identity is pre-fixed in ethnic-nationalist style (as implied in fundamental pedagogics (p. 201)).

The fundamental ground of the idea of self that appears in FP and in all part-perspectives is an expression of an existential-phenomenological philosophical child anthropology that discloses a child as being-in-the-world who, as intentionality, simultaneously and reciprocally is open for and directed to the world. These two moments of intentionality are seen as related to Langeveld's notion that a child is dependent on and committed to being educated (openness as receiving meaning from) and wanting to be someone him/herself (directedness as giving meaning to). An individual as responsible freedom also permeates the Pretoria pedagogical literature and is especially evident in an orthopedagogical situation,

specifically a pedotherapeutic one, where a concrete, unique individual in a problematic educative situation is in the foreground. On the level of FP (i.e., on a scientific level), the concrete nuances that particularize these anthropological categories are open-ended and remain inert until they are enlivened by a particular philosophy of life, etc. (post-scientific level).

FP is accused of prescribing non-essentials such as an overly authoritarian adult-child relationship or legitimizing apartheid education that really amounts to black schooling under apartheid. Black schooling was instituted before FP took form and what authoritarian government needs a justification or legitimization of anything? These policies reflect ideological prescriptions that FP was not capable of offering and clearly was not its aim. What is more, even if it wanted to, it couldn't justify black schooling at the time of apartheid simple because that schooling would be deemed pedagogically inadequate; that is, it would not meet the demands of the pedagogic norms (essences) that are preconditions and guidelines for establishing and sustaining a pedagogical adult-child relationship and that also can serve as criteria for evaluating the pedagogical quality and permissibility of any particular instance of "educating". They also can be used to pedagogically evaluate a particular doctrine of educating such as pragmatism, communism and the like (See De Vries (1985, chapters 8 & 9).

Hoadely (2018) takes a curriculum perspective on FP and political characterizations are less in the foreground. Also, instead of referring to a so-called apartheid education in general, her focus is more directly on black schooling at the time of apartheid.

With respect to the authoritarian teacher-student relation and the prevalence of rote learning and meaningless class participation, she notes the following:

Often this is attributed to the dominant philosophies underpinning apartheid education—Christian National Education (CNE) ... and the philosophy of 'fundamental pedagogics'. ... Looking at the small number of empirical studies, I suggest the dominant classroom practices can be

explained in relation to structural, material and cognitive resources and restraints facing black schools at the time which rendered policy programmes ineffective (Hoadley, (p. 56).

Hoadley's suggestion that the authoritarian and rote learning aspects of black education under apartheid were determined mostly by governmental political decisions seems to be more compelling than a variety of mostly assumed characteristics of FP. Indeed, from the beginning of the surge of criticisms, it was stated by Beard, Enslin & Morrow (1981, p. 21) "[t]his paper cannot be said to have shown that Pedagogics has an influence on educational policymaking and practice in this country" and as Hoadley (2018, p. 60) says its influence probably was negligible. And yet the source of anger sometimes expressed seems to stem from the assumption that FP is an underlying reason for and justification of black schooling at that time.

I suggest that there should be a study of "educative" schooling as it occurred in white Afrikaans speaking schools which also were governed by CNE but definitely were influenced by pedagogical categories/structures in as much as the faculty at Pretoria were committed to and had more resources for designing the schooling experience of their children such that it would be pedagogically permissible as evaluated by their disclosed essences of educating. It would not be unreasonable to consider these schools as laboratory schools for the faculty post-scientifically (i.e., without bracketing their ideologies) to particularize their universal descriptions and prepare teachers accordingly. Without defending this unequal distribution of resources, the point of such a study would be to see, e.g., whether teacher-student relationships could be characterized as involving sympathetic authoritative guidance rather than an authoritarian one and if learning was meaningful and formative rather than mostly rote memorization because these are but two of many qualities demanded by the phenomenon of education itself for an activity to be qualified as educative.

Hoadley (2018, p. 59) says:

If one sets aside the dominant political critique ... it is possible to interpret FP in a different way. ... Eliminating the political

from the process of scientific consideration may arguably make subsequent reflection on the life-world and political and social action more meaningful.

And further on she says:

The understanding of knowledge or content in relation to FP may in some ways explain its rejection on political grounds – it left out ‘real’, contextual, everyday knowledge, and was thus construed as apolitical, conservative and socially blind. Under apartheid, amongst liberal academics in a highly politicized environment where education was seen as key to liberation, this was anathema (p. 60).

And finally:

It is doubtful then that FP fundamentally shaped and defined pedagogic practice under apartheid. Even in relation to teacher education, the more ideological aspects are more likely to have inhered in Christian National Education rather than FP, and it could be the tight coupling of the two that generated more heat towards FP than perhaps it warranted (p. 61).

In the above comments, Hoadely offers a less political appraisal of FP and strongly suggests that the political critiques of it might have been undeserved. Even so, given that those involved in practicing FP at Pretoria were embedded in the culture of Christian Nationalism and its educational policies, it is easy to assume that there must be a “tight coupling” of FP and CNE. However, in order to do fundamental pedagogical studies, CNE (among other ideologies) must be bracketed and this bracketing keeps the two uncoupled. The “scientific” practice of FP occurs only when the phenomenological reduction (bracketing) is operative.

A lack of keeping the methodological act of bracketing in mind when reading fundamental pedagogical studies seems to be at the core of misunderstanding what FP does and doesn’t have to offer practice. The phenomenon studied by FP certainly is normative in at least two sense: the essences and structures of an adult-child

educative relationship are preconditions for what one must do to give rise to and sustain this relationship and thus they are “norms” in the sense that they specify how an adult and child should interact; but it also is normative in the sense that this action is guided by a particular image of being adult. The specific contents of this image are provided by a particular ideology, view, etc. and NOT by FP.

Why is it so difficult to see that this adult-child relationship is the “point of equilibrium” of educating that can be disturbed by placing too much emphasis on the adult, the child, the psychological, the didactical, etc.? The reality of educating usually is approached as schooling in terms of some doctrine (e.g., Marxism, idealism, Christian Nationalism), i.e., with the bracketing disengaged. Without engaging bracketing, the reality of educating can be penetrated to its essences only haphazardly if at all. The phenomenological method, as described earlier, was designed to disclose and describe such essences. Also, the suspension of bracketing makes it extremely difficult to distinguish educating (one type of positive forming) from positive forming in general.

Finally, there has been mention of science and post-science, of a theory OF educating (as disclosing and describing essences phenomenologically) and a theory FOR educating (as ideologically prescribing policies and actions). A fundamental difference between these two pairings is that bracketing is engaged in the first and disengaged in the second. Many of the criticisms of FP arise directly from conflating the two.

Closing comments

In reading critiques of FP, most leave one with the impression that the faculty of education at Pretoria was vigorously focused on defending and justifying apartheid education and that their efforts were little more than a reflection of the religious and political agendas of Christian Nationalism. At first glance, the plausibility of these claims might seem to be obvious; after all, faculty members at Pretoria presumably were “good citizens” committed to the prevailing ideologies of their society.

In contrast to these claims and expectations, my first-hand experience with the faculty in 1980 is that they were engaged in trying to promote the study of educating as an autonomous science. The literature reporting their results disconfirms the above claims. In following the suggestion of Langeveld, Pretoria's primary approach was the phenomenological method that was designed to disclose and describe universal essences of the phenomenon of educating while, at the same time temporarily "controlling" for any distorting influences from religious beliefs, political policies and many other preconceptions.

Two reasons why the universal essences resulting from Pretoria's phenomenological studies (and Langeveld's as well) cannot implicate any particular religious belief or ideology is that, in the first place, their method specifically tries to negate the potentially obscuring and distorting influences of particular ideological commitments, etc. in disclosing these essences, and, in the second place, the reality of educating itself, as a universal human occurrence, must accommodate any number of ideologies and thus cannot prescribe any **particular** one—even though, as a normative reality educating must be directed by an image of what ought to be, as nuanced by a specific ideology of **some sort**.

As I have noted many times in this paper, most of the critiques of FP conflate "theory" and practice, science and post-science, form and content, etc. These conflations mostly stem from a lack of understanding or a rejection of phenomenological bracketing. This can lead to critiquing FP, e.g., for proposing a particular authoritarian teacher-student relationship, rote memorization and meaningless learning, for omitting explicit political perspective. FP is not in a position to propose any content to practice and that is not its purpose. It does describe essences that can clarify practice for an educator because in an activity such as educating, in fact, essences offer an educator pre-conditions and thus guidelines for how to act in order for an educative adult-child relationship to even arise.

What should be examined and critiqued, if need be, is the adequacy of their descriptions of the essences or categories disclosed, their

mutual coherences and, above all, the extent to which they seem to be an accurate expression of the reality of educating itself.

In light of all of this, perhaps the greatest loss resulting from these sometimes questionable critiques is the interruption of if not complete prevention of many generations from continuing to contribute to the study of educating as an autonomous science and to fostering our understanding of the nature of guiding a child to adulthood. Also it seems that books, theses, etc. have been relegated to gather dust on obscurely located library shelves. I find the phenomenological results of the Pretoria studies to be a treasure trove of insights, and it is a shame that they are denounced and even ostracized almost exclusively because of doubtful political characterizations of these results. For all of the above reasons I have been and continue to be an unapologetic defender of the achievements in fundamental pedagogics at Pretoria.

SUMMARY

This paper begins with a brief sketch of my venture in transitioning from a natural science to a phenomenological study of education, at first educational psychology, inspired by the phenomenological studies by the Pretoria Faculty of Education. I was shocked a few years later when I read some devastating criticisms of these studies that didn't correspond with my own understandings of them. This led me to the question of why there could be such a discrepancy, which is the main thrust of this paper. The phenomenological method used at Pretoria is explicated briefly, in particular the importance of the phenomenological reduction (bracketing) for trying to answer this question. Following this, I present my understanding of fundamental pedagogics and what it is about it that I am defending. Then I consider in detail some claims by Suransky-Dekker (1998) about the connection between Langeveld's pedagogy and fundamental pedagogics in the context of apartheid education. Finally, I consider carefully some of her specific claims about fundamental pedagogics in order to tease out and show the possibility that the discrepancy in understanding or interpreting the meaning of fundamental pedagogics is related to whether or not the phenomenological reduction (bracketing) is operative.

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