

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The first task of writing any scientific account is to make sure that the theory expressed is justifiable. To justify the accountability of a scientific theory is complicated in many respects. Without going too deeply into this matter, in this introduction to didactic pedagogics, it is noted that the concept “account” means that the author of such a theory can explain the origin, nature and, ultimately, the methods of verifying his/her scientific findings. To illuminate this more closely: The scientific results which the scientist has arrived at must include everything which can be said about the terrain of that science. In didactic pedagogics, this involves the question of teaching within an educative (pedagogic) situation. This means that everything one can note about teaching must be represented in aspects of the didactic or teaching theory. Although teaching is a very practical matter, i.e., an activity continually carried out by parents and teachers, all aspects (and especially its practice) remain a theoretical matter until the moment the educator (parent or teacher) starts to act (teach). This theory or pronouncement about the act of teaching must be accountable. This means it must be *true*, in the sense that it includes a genuine, accurate description of an aspect of reality with which one is involved in direct and indirect ways. The aspect of reality referred to here is teaching. The theory of teaching considered in the rest of this book, therefore, in all respects, must correspond to this reality as it *is*. It is understandable that teaching is a factual matter, and that the scientist must strictly limit him/herself to these facts.

Any scientist is continually tempted to describe reality as he/she thinks it is. Hence, the didactician also is tempted to describe teaching as he/she *thinks* it is. His/her personal views of teaching, however, do not necessarily mean that he/she sees teaching as it is. Therefore, it is understandable that, if a theorist of teaching abandons this reality in writing down his/her own views, judgments, or opinions as scientific, his/her theoretical results are not necessarily accountable, valid, or true.

Therefore, an important criterion for a theory of teaching is that, in all respects, it must agree with the essence of reality as it is found in the everyday course of a person's involvement with it. Hence, a theory must be a description, explanation, and exposition of how teaching appears in the everyday life of people, of its nature, of the terrain which it occupies, of its limits, of what associated scientific disciplines (other subject sciences) must be taken note of in studying this piece of reality (teaching), of how knowledge about it can be cast in formal findings, etc.

Only when a scientist attends to these and many additional matters scientifically and gives an account of his/her basis for arriving at particular results, can he/she claim validity for his/her theory. Then, any other scientist or student also has the right to question or doubt the account the author has given and convince him/herself of the validity of the theoretical results before him/her at this time in terms of his/her own knowledge and what is available in the literature. The criteria regarding truth, validity, and accountability also hold in studying this book. Whatever is stated here about teaching must be able to stand the test of reality itself. If this is not the case, this implies that what is offered here about teaching in the form of descriptions and explications is not valid or accountable wholly or partly. Thus, this forces the scientist to be involved with essences or essential matters.

It is unthinkable that a person can offer a valid description of a matter such as teaching if he/she is involved with what is not essential to it. One also can say that a theory of teaching must make pronouncements about the structure of teaching itself. In this context, structure means those original, primary, or basic facts by which a matter shows itself as it is. If such a description or theory is complex and difficult to understand, this is because that reality (in this case, teaching, itself) in many respects is complex and difficult to understand. The scientist never tries to obscure or hide that of which he/she speaks. The contrary is true: the scientist makes an honest attempt to illuminate, explain, and clarify the reality with which he/she is involved so it can be understood by others.

In the human sciences, this is much more difficult than in the natural or applied sciences. The matters studied by the natural and

applied sciences usually are directly and concretely available. In general, nature is directly observable and immediately present for investigation. By controlled empirical research, valid pronouncements can be made and tested or verified by the phenomena of nature themselves. If the natural scientist has instruments available by which he/she can more closely investigate natural phenomena, of whatever nature, experiments can be conducted and their results can be logically and systematically written up, and he/she can arrive at scientifically valid findings. By following the same research methods, his/her results can easily be verified by other scientists.

However, in the human sciences, the matter is very different. Here, the scientist is often involved with invisible, non-concrete, and indirectly available aspects of the reality which is the area of his/her investigation. For these reasons, it is understandable that here, the scientist, in the first place, is not able to arrive at valid scientific results by means of experiments or instruments. As far as educating and teaching are concerned, they are events which one can observe happening. But they are not things or objects such as a flower or a light bulb. Their essence or nature is largely concealed because they are human activities which, for example, cannot be duplicated in a test-tube. Also, these activities are not always uniform or simple. Their origin and nature cannot be determined by concrete measuring instruments. And yet, teaching is present as experiencing, lived experiencing, exerting, aiming, etc. actions. Teaching is *there* as a knowable, experienceable, and lived experienceable aspect of reality, but it is not there in the same sense that a tree or the construction of a ship is. Hence, the task of the human sciences is to make visible and knowable these matters, which often are concealed and not concretely visible as a physical object, by describing and explicating *what* and *how* these activities really *are* within the horizon of human existence.

In the light of the nature of the descriptions which follow in the other chapters, it is meaningful to go still further into this topic and explain it more fully.

Teaching is a human action. This type of human activity *is* real: people are continually involving each other in teaching. We observe

this event but cannot always account for what we see. To understand the problem better, we can compare it to human thinking. A person thinks, but we cannot directly perceive how he/she thinks. All that is available for observation is the results of his/her thinking. These results appear, e.g., in terms of what he/she remembers, and in the light of what he/she wants to achieve or understand. We can perceive that someone is thinking; thinking is a real activity.

In the same way, as with teaching and thinking, a person continually involves him/herself in certain aspects of reality. He/she continually builds up relationships with reality because of the ways he/she involves him/herself in general human activities in the world. Thus, the scientist must observe teaching in terms of his/her own experiences and decide what the nature of this activity really is, and then systematically plan his/her investigation of its nature and essence, and write up his/her results.

The aim of a theory of teaching, therefore, is to offer a description and explanation of an activity by which a person continually enters a relationship with the reality surrounding him/her. The point of departure for doing this is very simple. It involves the fact that a person is (exists) in the world. He/she lives in the world as a person. This implies that he/she is in a definite relationship with everything which surrounds him/her, and by which his/her activities are motivated and directed. Because this statement (a person exists in the world) is the basic or primary point of departure for any theory about human beings, it warrants closer examination.

To say that a person is in the world implies that we are aware of the humanness (humanity) of persons and, especially, that we, as persons, are only aware of everything which surrounds us from a human point of view. A human being cannot exceed the boundaries of his/her humanness, i.e., he/she cannot live other than as a human. All his/her experiencing is human experiencing, and his/her knowledge of things only represents human knowledge. A person is conscious of reality (the world) to the extent that a *human being* can be conscious of it. Hence, our humanity is really a barrier which no person can exceed during his/her lifetime. Consequently,

it is meaningless, for example, to try to understand the humanity of persons in terms of the animality of animals. No scientist can learn something *essential* about human existence, as such, e.g., by only studying animals.

This implies still more. A person appears in the world as a participating and acting being. He/she is continually involved with the things which surround him/her. This reality, with which he/she is continually involved, is diversely rich and often very complex. Thus, the nature of his/her involvement with it is equally complex and varied. A human being does not live in *simplicity*, but in *multiplicity*. In other words, a person's involvement with reality has a multiform character; it varies not only in accordance with the individual person's own nature (personality and interests), but also in accordance with his/her situatedness, and the demands it makes on him/her, and to which he/she must act and respond.

The statement that a person is "being-in-the-world" is the primary scientific pronouncement about all human activity. Formally, this is known as the first ontological category. This category is the primary means of thinking in terms of which a human being's involvement with reality can be investigated and described. The importance of this matter for establishing a didactic theory is clarified in the following chapters.

From this first, basic pronouncement, a second matter arises, which is of paramount importance for a theory of teaching, namely, the question about the nature of the relationship which necessarily exists between person and world. This question is particularly important for a theory of teaching because, in its essence, teaching continually aims at changing this person-world relationship, e.g., because, in teaching, knowledge about reality is communicated.

To build up a relationship between person and world, a teacher must have fundamental insight into this matter. A careful consideration of this relationship indicates only two possible approaches for investigating it. One possibility is to proceed from the standpoint that there is a clear, objective, and noticeable distance between "person" and "world". This is the view that "person" and "world" have separate identities, and that each can be

studied and explained in isolation from the other. By implication, this means that “person” and “world” essentially have nothing to do with each other, and that scientific findings about persons can totally ignore the fact that they are in the world, and still give valid scientific explanations. The same standpoint can be held regarding the matter “world”.

Even at this early stage, this view is in direct conflict with the first ontological category (i.e., being-in-the-world), because neither person nor world can be thought of as being separate. Surely, a person cannot exist or be thought to exist outside the world. For this reason, the second possibility is valid, namely, that “person” and “world” essentially assume and imply each other. Person and world represent an inseparable and necessary unity of a fundamental nature.

The core question of this whole matter revolves around the assumed *relationship* between “person” and “world”. The “relationship” which is assumed here becomes clear when one understands that “world” implies the totality of reality with which a person becomes involved while he/she lives. The relationship between person and world always has to do with the meaning of a person’s existence, i.e., the meaning of his/her involvement with reality, by which he/she lives. For this reason, a person cannot be divorced from or thought of as separated from his/her world; also, the world cannot be thought of as separated from a person. By the nature of this matter, a simple and everyday experiential fact, which everyone can confirm, is that a person is necessarily involved with things of the world, and that these things cannot appear outside his/her involvement in, or his/her consciousness of them (in the form of contents). “Person” and “world” are essentially dependent on each other. They form a unity like two sides of a coin.

It is indicated that “world” is a comprehensive, all-inclusive concept. In fact, the world, as such, is interminable. No person can grasp or command everything with which they can become involved. A person’s everyday involvement in the world indicates that, strictly speaking, every person lives in his/her own world, i.e., among the things he/she knows and is familiar with. Outside this field of involvement of known and familiar matters, of things he/she has

experience, and with which he/she feels comfortable and safe, he/she and the rest of the world are relatively foreign to each other. For many persons, the world ends at the boundaries of their town or city, in the sense that beyond them the world doesn't exist because they are completely unaware of it. At the same time, one also must realize that familiarity with the world differs from person to person. For this reason, "world" cannot be a constant factor in any description, because the horizon of familiarity and mobility in the world varies from person to person.

This holds true as far as the *scope* of a person's involvement with reality is concerned, but not for the *nature* of this involvement. All persons are only involved with reality as persons. They play, mourn, work, bring up children, etc. These ways of being involved are valid for everyone. Each person ultimately creates or constitutes his/her own world because those things surrounding him/her are known and meaningful to him/her. In this way, every human being possesses his/her own world of known and meaningful things, and this world is delimited by a horizon which demarcates the unknown. As a person broadens his/her horizons by learning or experiencing, the world in which he/she lives expands. Also, the horizon of our world is not a constant factor, and is continually being enlarged by our greater knowledge through study, wider experiences, accepting greater responsibility, etc. Consequently, for each person, "world" really is an extremely personal matter: it is a horizon of known, familiar, and meaningful things (contents) in terms of which he/she lives as he/she does. His/her lifestyle is closely related to his/her world.

Therefore, it is quite correct to speak of a person's own lifeworld as the horizon of the things he/she knows, understands, and is familiar with. From experiencing, we also know that this lifeworld is not merely present to each person from birth. Indeed, each child is born into the world, but he/she has the task of eventually constituting a lifeworld for him/herself by giving value and meaning to things. Formally stated: each individual person creates or constitutes his/her lifeworld from the meanings with which he/she is accosted and the sense and meaning he/she gives to them.

The concept “world” must not be interpreted simply as a place or space. “World” means a known reality. Apart from being a place or space, “world” is a matter of contents, meanings, preferences, experiences, choices, etc. Thus, it is not a matter of objects or concrete things. Its scope includes *everything* a person is aware of—his/her own interiority as well as surrounding external things.

Thus, it is understandable that a person, amidst all which surrounds him/her, has a perspective on the world or reality. He/she views or sees it in a particular perspective which is of decisive importance for the meanings which he/she attributes to the world. Coupled with the fact that each person constitutes his/her own lifeworld, the implication also is that each person holds a particular life and worldview as this is shown in his/her likes and dislikes, among other ways. This life and worldview (philosophy of life) also are closely related to his/her awareness of a reality, over and above him/herself as a person, i.e., a reality which transcends him/her. This phenomenon is common to all cultures and is not easily explained scientifically. It is closely related to the nature and ways he/she gives meaning to his/her own existence and his/her own destiny.

Each “candid” scientist who studies the human being and his/her activities knows that a philosophy of life provides the ultimate content, and indicates the meaning of human existence, in general. [As Afrikaners, we fearlessly hold a definite philosophy of life, namely, a Christian National, or, more specifically, a Calvinist one. As a philosophy of life, it incorporates the views of our existence as a true belief in the Trinity God who has created everything and reigns over it. Thus, the content of this philosophy of life is not only a sure knowledge of His manifestations but also the firm belief that our being in the world is under His rule and guidance as the highest authority.

It is important to remember that the pronouncements of a life and worldview have unconditional validity and its authority is absolute. As content, it is particularly Christian, Scripture bound and, therefore, paired with our deepest convictions about the manifestations of God in the Scripture and in nature. All forms of our general human existence in our daily life are filled and colored



by these contents. The important fact is that our entire “being-in-the-world” must be interpreted in its light.]

A child is born into the complex relationships of a meaningful “being-in-the-world” as totally ignorant and immobile regarding our multidimensional existence—but in the world. The fact that he/she is there presents an educative task to his/her parents, i.e., the task to support and guide him/her to become a proper adult. How this matter is related to a theory of teaching is explained later.

It is remarkable that the general statements about valid theoretical pronouncements, and the few related facets or deliberations discussed, now have acquired a particular complexion. Before a closer description of the matter “teaching” can be broached and explained further, this orienting introduction still must further clarify a few other things to put into perspective what is to follow.

The findings provided above about the relationship between person and world within the frame of reference of a philosophy of life, certainly imply that any science dealing with human beings (in this case pedagogics) must give a necessary and clear indication of a view of being human or a (philosophical) anthropology. Outside the question of the essence of being human, the matter of the person-world relationship cannot be dealt with easily because the meaning of human existence immediately would fall through. Outside the pronouncements of a philosophy of life, it is not possible to keep in focus a human being as a structure-in-function, as well as an acting *person*. Consequently, the connection between a view of being human (a philosophical anthropology) and a philosophy of life is that, respectively, they provide an answer to the question of the meaning of human existence in general [scientifically] and in particular [post-scientifically].

As far as educating is concerned, this is an extremely important matter. An activity such as educating is meaningless if an educator does not purposefully try to help create in the child a *specific* human image as he/she becomes adult. Thus, (philosophical) anthropology is of fundamental importance when educating and teaching are described. The fundamental significance of a human image, which is striven for, is that the concept “human being or

person” does not have a static, sterile meaning. On the other hand, a person *is* in the world but, on the other hand, he/she *becomes* different, and also he/she ought to become different. This statement is a greater task for the child than anyone.

Another aspect which essentially affects the person-world relationship is that everyone lives within the limits and under the authority of specific norms. These norms or standards serve the purpose of providing definite indications or guidelines about what is and is not proper. The questions of how a human being *is* (exists) and how he/she *ought* to be, are questions which cannot be separated from each other any more than the concepts “person” and “world” can be. A person appears in his/her lifeworld in accordance with the totality of his/her activities. These activities are subject to the authority of specific norms such as religious, judicial, economic, social, and political considerations, to mention a few. Consequently, what “is” and what “ought” to be are undeniably related and form a unity without which the image of a person does not appear. The implication of the fact that a person is in the world, really is obvious. To be a person in the world is a matter of elevating and ascending. The child has the task of becoming different in a variety of respects by an increasing involvement and participation in the activities of life and world (lifeworld).

To try to separate “person” and “person image” would have the same scientific effect as trying to separate “person” and “world” from each other. It is true, however, that there are a wide variety of “human images” available, for instance, the Christian, naturalistic and humanistic, to mention only three. How these appear, and what their influence is on describing the person-world relationship are not directly relevant here. What is of great importance is that a human image must always be present in any explanation which considers a person in the world. Therefore, it is understandable that in founding, describing, and explaining a theory of teaching, this matter will continually crop up directly and indirectly, and will exercise an extensive influence on the theoretical formulations and relevant particulars connected with a philosophy of life.

Another matter which is mentioned only in passing must now be considered carefully. Above there is reference to the person-world relationship as a matter of meanings. Indeed, the question of a person-world relationship simply does not emerge outside of meanings. If one looks at this more closely, the above statement implies that “world”, along with place or space and objects, also is a matter of *contents*. In the daily course of a person’s life, the spatial aspect and things or objects which appear, understandably cannot be ignored. This spatial facet of his/her existence, and the objects with which he/she is continually involved, however, are not the only, and often not the most important things with which he/she is involved. Therefore, “world”, above all, implies contents for a person in terms of which he/she arrives at his/her own ordering of everything which surrounds him/her in accordance with the *meanings* he/she attributes to them. Constituting a personal lifeworld assumes that it is a response to the question of the sense and meaning of reality as contents.

Perhaps one can better understand this by proceeding from the fact that the world (its spaces and objects) speaks to human beings. Other persons, distances, surfaces, perspective, and things (objects) direct an appeal to a person. This means that each of these makes certain demands of a person by which he/she is forced to give particular meanings to them (to reality). If one now considers that each of these aspects which appears in a person’s lifeworld are present, this means that the way they come to light in his/her own lifeworld shows a definite and necessary correspondence with the meaning he/she attributes to them within the framework of his/her own existence. Understandably, this is extremely subjective: persons, matters, and objects appear to us in the way we see them. Consequently, the meanings which we attribute to them are closely interwoven with the way they are placed in our landscape or placed there by us. For this reason, we see these things as a coherence of meaning and, therefore, as important things which appear in the lifeworld. The view which the person has of reality, in the totality of its coherence, is called his/her landscape. “Landscape”, therefore, is the cohering particularities of a person’s lifeworld. A person’s landscape is his/her particularized lifeworld.

Considering the above, it also is understandable that the contents of the lifeworld do not have the same meaning (sense) for all persons. The coherence of reality does not appear the same to everyone. Also, reality does not have the same impact on all people, and its meaning is not interpreted by all in the same way. A churchyard does not make the same impression on or have the same meaning for everyone. The meaning given to it is highly personal. Hence, in terms of these meanings, “world” changes into a lifeworld, and into a landscape, as indicated above. The importance of this is that everything which appears on a person’s life horizon becomes a matter of *contents*, i.e., meaning, sense, and coherence.

This is of fundamental importance when the person-world relationship arises within the framework of teaching. All teaching occurs in terms of contents. These contents appear as meanings and, by teaching, they must be placed in a definite frame of reference based on the philosophy of life of those involved in teaching. Thus, it is such an important task of the one who teaches to determine what reality *is* present to offer in the teaching situation. For this reason, teaching is of decisive importance for the person-world relationship, and for designing or constituting an individual lifeworld.

From the above, two important matters come to the fore which are the keystones of every didactic theory. The first is that a person is in the world in particular *ways*, i.e., in terms of clearly knowable forms of living. This is the basis for what, in didactic theory is described and explained as the “form” of teaching. To further explain this here will take up too much space. The essence of this is that a human being exists in the world and becomes involved with reality in terms of certain *ways* or forms of living.

The second important matter is that reality eventually appears to persons as particular *contents*, i.e., as meaning, sense, and coherence. In a theory of teaching, this aspect continually arises as a matter of teaching content or learning material. Just as “person” and “world” are an indivisible unity, the matter of form and content have a necessary relationship which underlies a theory of teaching. Teaching always aims for an equilibrium and harmony of these two matters in the life of the one dependent on the teaching. Within an

educative context, this involves educative aims which must be achieved by teaching. It is against this background that the problems of a didactic theory must be weighed and investigated. The important thing is that this does not represent a detached or separate aspect of a person's involvement with reality but is part of a whole which previously was described as a person "being-in-the-world". By this, the explanation must be accountable, i.e., it must disclose what *is*.

The aim of this introductory, orienting chapter is to present a framework within which the reader can understand the descriptions, explanations, and reasoning in the following chapters. In the literature mentioned in the bibliography, there is indubitable evidence of various approaches to didactic theory; in fact, there are many different didactic theories. The fact about which we must be certain is this: there may be a multitude of approaches, scientific findings, or theoretical opinions about teaching written down, but *there is only one teaching*. No matter how much a scientist might try, he/she cannot describe or explain what doesn't exist. Thus, different teachings do not exist in human reality. Teaching is a single, unique activity which appears in the totality of human experience. *During all times and in all places, teaching appears the same for all people, but it also can be actualized in terms of different contents* (for example: life and worldviews).

When we speak of teaching, as such, we are dealing with something which is **universally valid**. As soon as contents arise, we are in the realm of the specific and what is particular, especially as far as the contents appear in the life and worldview of a particular society, group, or nation. All findings about teaching, *as such*, therefore, must be **universally valid**. As to *what* must be taught (content), understandably, there are a great many opinions. Hence, every country or region compiles its own curricula to ensure that those contents (aspects of reality, norms, values, etc.) deemed to be important are taught systematically.