

## CHAPTER 2 THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE SITUATION (PES)

### 2.1 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE SITUATION (PES)

To recognize a PES, we must know its characteristics. What actualities or essential characteristics make a PES possible? These characteristics must be present before there can be a PES. Some of these characteristics are:

- o Educative distress
- o Educative neglect
- o Educative obstruction
- o Disturbed communication
- o Disturbed psychic life
- o Disturbed expressive life
- o Being-different and experiencing oneself as being different (inferior)
- o Lack of perspective
- o Cyclical dynamics
- o Child problems.

For the sake of a systematic description, each of these characteristics is differentiated and is treated separately, but in a PES they are inseparable interdependent actualities which are interwoven. In the following descriptions, the connections among them are emphasized.

#### 2.1.1 Educative distress

A PES is a situation of pedagogical distress. A child is in a distressful **relationship** with his/her educator(s). The concept **child-in-educative-distress** holds here. When a PES is also a family situation (in addition to the possibilities of an educational institution, or school situation), there is a **family-in-educative-distress**.

##### 2.1.1.1 A child-in-educative-distress

In this connection, we borrow three concepts from Van der Zeyde's book, <sup>(1)</sup> which has already become a classic in pedagogics:

**(a) The good child life:** a child lives in community with his/her educators and is directed to adulthood—he/she is **secure**, **receives** what he/she needs and experiences the world as **enticing**. Fundamental peace of mind is a characteristic feature of a good child life.

**(b) Educative deficiency:** all educating is deficient; no one develops all his/her potentialities. There are impediments to the complete development of adulthood. An educative deficiency **can** become educatively distressing; educating is affected when the deficiency has the character of **distress**.

**(c) Educative distress:** this is measured by a child's own distress--only if he/she notices the defect is there educative distress. One of the facets of a good child life is missing. This lack means a child's entire existence is affected. A child in educative distress has difficulties in an educative **relationship**; a child who is not closely connected with his/her parents is not directed to the future or to life. With educative distress, a child especially feels **insecure** and responds to this with **anxiety**. He/she is not sure his/her parents will meet his/her needs.

Regarding the concept of a **good child life**, the question arises regarding what a child needs--what does he/she need to feel prepared to move out of a sphere of security and tranquility to explore an enticing world and, thus, actualize his/her growing up? In answer to this question, some of the **primary psychic needs of a child** are mentioned:

- o **Physical needs:** the fulfillment of which are, via bodiliness, primarily experienced emotionally; he/she then is psychically content.
- o **Need for security:** a child only feels secure in experiencing demonstrated love (Langeveld).
- o **Need for acceptance, and a feeling of belonging.**
- o **Need of respect for human dignity as a child.**
- o **Need to know and understand--a child wants to know.**
- o **Need for self-actualization.**

To satisfy these needs, an educator must actualize the following facets in dealing with a child:

- caring** for a child, as is appropriate to his/her life and falling within an educator's responsibility;
- accepting**, as a deepening of this caring relationship; **giving** as a way of actualizing it;
- protecting, and challenging** as an aim.

These facets should characterize each educative act. <sup>(2)</sup>

The concept of educative distress holds for a handicapped as well as a non-handicapped child. A handicapped child, e.g., experiences educative distress if he/she does not receive the specific and special help and support needed.

A description of how a child's life becomes disturbed when in educative distress, and of how he/she experiences this distress (conscious discernment, giving meaning) follow later.

### 2.1.1.2 The family-in-educative-distress <sup>(3)</sup>

Within a family, a distinction is made between pedagogical and non-pedagogical relationships. Examples of the latter are the relationships between the parents, among the related children, and among the parents and their already adult offspring. When educative problems arise in the family and when these are also related to disturbed pedagogical relationships, the non-pedagogical relationships also are a negative influence, and the entire family life becomes disturbed. Because family life is such an intimate, interactive event, all family relationships now become disturbed. The becoming of all family members is restrained. There is family dysfunction. A family is dysfunctional as a **social system** as well as an **educative system**, i.e., a family situation is a problematic communal situation as well as a PES.

**Conflict** arises on an individual as well as a group level. The latter implies a **vicious cycle** of alienation and **disturbed communication** of the family members. In this human interaction, child and educator **experience** themselves as insecure, defenseless and delivered to the disturbed situation and the PES is experienced as being **without perspective**, as meaningless, threatening, and unpleasant.

The family-in-educative-distress is especially characterized by inadequate educative influencing, disturbed communication, disturbed execution of tasks, unsuccessful socialization.

#### **(a) Inadequate educative influencing**

With educative distress, influencing a child is

- o **discontinuous:** the parents do not grasp the progressive nature of their child's becoming, but sometimes they approach him/her as a much older child, and sometimes no longer as a child but as an adversary. The parents withdraw themselves as educators and their child stands alone.
- o **incomplete:** the parents are not directed to the ordinary in their association with their child--they are preoccupied with his/her problem and direct their available energy to them. The parents intervene only with attempts to get their child to unlearn the undesired behaviors.
- o **inconsistent:** the parents are weary, pessimistic, and no longer future directed. They let their ambivalent feelings toward their child appear, and inconsistency and impulsivity are what characterize their educative attempts.

#### **(b) Disturbed communication**

The parent-child, as well as family interaction is disturbed, especially regarding the following aspects of interaction (following Mishler and Waxler's differentiation of the concept of communication):

- o moments of emotion (expressing positive and negative feelings)
- o moments of control
- o moments of flexibility

- o moments of acknowledging the other.

### (c) Disturbed execution of tasks

The family cannot actualize the following family tasks:

- o educator attachment (a precondition for educating)
- o the caring task
- o the enculturation of the educand
- o the emancipation of the educand
- o dealing with family crises.

The consequence of this is the individual pathology (deviance) of one or more family members, deviant educator attachment, unsuccessful/problematic caring, enculturating, and emancipating.

### (d) Unsuccessful socializing

Forms of this **disturbed living together** are:

- o absence of socializing--the adult does not present him/herself as educator.
- o insufficient socializing--for example, the hardened child.
- o unnecessary socializing--for example, over-protection.
- o inadequate socializing--for example, the parents try to reach their child but fail (e.g., the autistic child).
- o terrorizing socializing--for example, rejection and mistreatment. <sup>(4)</sup>

Neither a parent nor a child can bring about change in the alienating event. Educative distress can/must be eliminated with the help of a third person outside the educative interaction between child and educator, i.e., an orthopedagogue. It is professional assistance and pedagogically founded help (orthopedagogic action) which is needed.

### 2.1.2 Educative neglect

This concept (essence of the PES) points to educating which falls short of the mark. An educator does too little in educating, guiding, exercising authority, and discipline, he/she presents too few demands of self-restraint, values and norms, the child is too free to direct him/herself to what is immediately gratifying. There are material, affective, and normative forms of educative neglect. This means that a child does not receive what is needed for his/her normal becoming adult, and which he/she is not given help and support to actualize potentialities.

A child's educating is neglected, in the sense that there is **inadequate educative intervention**. This means the essentials (fundamental structures) of the pedagogical situation are actualized inadequately. Thus, the three concepts are synonymous:  
**educative neglect,**

**inadequate educative intervention,  
inadequate actualization of fundamental pedagogical  
structures.\***

The essentials of the pedagogical situation which are actualized inadequately in the PES are presented in terms of Landman's<sup>(5)</sup> phenomenological analysis of a pedagogical situation:

**2.1.2.1 The pedagogical relationship structures**

**(a) The pedagogical relationship of trust:** Two preconditions for a child's trust in an adult are that the adult **accepts** him/her and shows respect for his/her **human dignity as a child**. The actualization of this relationship of trust prepares a child to **venture** with the adult (guidance, accompaniment) as well as move away from him/her (become emancipated). A conflict in trust leaves a child feeling so insecure and uncertain that he/she does not venture. Important aspects here are showing love, loving care, interest, protection, sympathy (feel with), sociality (we-ness), stable emotional bonding, tranquility, understanding, mutual trust; a child must feel that he/she is welcome by his/her educators and that he/she ought to be there. A child is traumatized (psychically wounded) by the inadequate actualization of this relationship because of defective love and care. With defective trust, a child cannot share his/her anxiety with his/her parents and then he/she becomes a task for an orthopedagogue.

**(b) The pedagogical relationship of understanding:** An educator must **know** and **understand** a child and show him/her **understanding**. Often parents have their own conception of **a child** to which their demands and expectations are turned. Their view is that of an idealized, normal child, which their own difficult-to-educate child hardly fits. This gives rise to pedagogical, and affective uncertainty in the parents regarding their child. In his/her turn, a child experiences uncertainty, as well as not being understood.

A lack of genuine knowledge leads to making unreasonable demands of a child. This disheartens, frustrates, and confuses him/her, and gives rise to feelings of guilt, conflict, and derailment. A child asks for understanding from an adult educator during his/her encountering the adult world and during the long, difficult transition from a child attunement (free, carefree, blindly trusting, playful) to the world of the adult with its demands for order, soberness, efficiency, matter-of-factness, being time-bound, etc.

Muller-Eckhard<sup>(6)</sup> comments on a child not understood as follows: the little being suffers harm which appears--because it occurs at such a decisive time—and will continue for a lifetime. The child becomes disturbed in his/her entire psychic development. And why? Because, in one sphere, he/she experiences that his/her spirit is not supported.

**(c) The relationship of pedagogical authority:** A child has a need for consistent, sympathetic authoritative guidance. This authoritative guidance must be stable, and not labile, or impulsive. Such authoritative guidance especially gives a child normative

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\* Although these three concepts indicate that the intervention of the **educator** is inadequate, it must be strongly stressed that a child **himself** has a role in his educating and growing up and that he is co-responsible for actualizing the fundamental pedagogic structures.

confidence, firmness, and security. This relationship implies additional moments such as setting limits, demands, prohibitions, norms, values, as well as discipline, routines, rules, and firm guidance.

### 2.1.2.2 The pedagogical sequence structures

**(a) Pedagogical association:** Here educator and child are **by** each other. Through the one-ness, and we-ness which arise, a child feels safe (from loneliness and insecurity).

**(b) Pedagogical encounter:** Here educator and child are **with** each other; they enter each other's world. We-ness means that there is a common (shared) world between them. It is only through this encounter that pedagogical influencing is possible.

**(c) Pedagogical engagement:** This points to the responsibility-for-relationships of both the educator and the educand. [Here they are **for** each other.]

**(d) Pedagogical intervention:** This can take the form of **pedagogically corrective** action (disapproving, punishing, prohibiting) as well as **pedagogically approving** (allowing, praising, prizing, accepting).

**(e) Return to pedagogical association:** Here a child can again be someone him/herself, he/she can peacefully assimilate the educator's intervention [approval or disapproval] while with the educator so that, by giving meaning, he/she can grasp what was presented to him/her.

**(f) Periodical breaking away:** Here a breaking away from the pedagogic association and encounter occur, i.e., child and educator temporarily withdraw from each other's presence. Thus, the pedagogical sequence includes moments of encounter, breaking away and encounter again. This periodic breaking away implies that this gradually makes the educator superfluous to the child--this is practiced so that complete (pedagogical) separation one day will be possible.

### 2.1.2.3 The pedagogical activity structures

This has to do with the essentials of an educator's helping activities. The actualization of the pedagogical activities includes helping a child exercise the following:

- o Giving meaning
- o Exerting (making effort)
- o Following norms
- o Venturing
- o Being thankful
- o Assuming responsibility
- o Hoping
- o Designing
- o Fulfilling
- o Respecting
- o Self-understanding
- o Freedom

### 2.1.2.4 The pedagogical aim structures

An educator is directed to a child's future and destination (adulthood), and he/she will lead him/her to the following:

- o Meaningful existence
- o Self-judgment and self-understanding
- o Respect for human dignity
- o Morally independent choosing and acting
- o Responsibility
- o Norm identification
- o Outlook on life (philosophy of life)

The question to be answered in another section is how does a child's psychic life become disturbed when the above pedagogical essentials are actualized in inadequate ways?

The following is emphasized: With educative neglect, a child is not adequately helped and supported in actualizing his/her potentialities, and **his/her becoming toward adulthood is restrained**. He/she is in **distress** with respect to his/her **educative relationships**, and regarding the **educative activities** which must occur for his/her own sake.

With respect to inadequate educative intervention with a child, Van der Geld\* says the following: To form an educand into a self-responsible, self-determining person, into someone who is free and mentally healthy, is difficult in an educative situation which contains one or more of the following aspects: a patriarchic, or *laissez-faire* attitude, too extreme educative activities which allow the child to be "unfree" and, thus, do not "make him free"; materialism, as compensation for the lack of a real loving educative relationship (compare the so-called "fat boys" in the U. S. A.); too much domineering; too much bonding; negativism regarding the child's potentialities expressed in such phrases as "you can't do this; you don't understand it", in contrast to encouragement, and stimulation; too little influencing within the totality of educating in the form of help with his/her development of independence, by which the impetus to independence too easily can fall into a (fatal) rebelliousness.

### 2.1.3 Educative obstructions

Each educative situation is characterized by **educative-promoting** and **educative-obstructing** factors. In a PES, the educative-obstructing factors dominate. Indeed, an educative situation is problematic when the educative-obstructing factors outweigh the educative-promoting ones. As a dynamic event, and as a precondition for a child growing up, educating then is impaired, blocked, and obstructed. The educative event comes to a relative **standstill**, and eliminating the PES should mean that a **progression, and a new beginning** in educating are brought about. In this connection, it is said of a child that he/she is **restrained** in his/her being educated and growing up.

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\* Van der Geld, A. M. C.: *Begeleiding van Opvoeders en Kinderen* (Guiding educators and children), Samson, Alphen, 1973, p. 287.

**Educative obstruction** implies that, in terms of a child's **personal potentialities** and **educability**, there is a disparity between the **pedagogically achieved** and the **pedagogically achievable**.

**Educative distress**, **educative neglect**, and **educative obstruction** are closely related to a PES. Nevertheless, they stress three distinguishable facets of the PES: **educative distress** refers to the distress experienced by a **child**; **educative neglect** refers to the inadequate intervention from the side of an **educator**; **educative obstruction** refers to the impairment and blocking of the actual **educative event** itself.

#### 2.1.4 Disturbed communication

The pedagogical situation is an interpsychic (between persons) field of tension, where educator and child must be attuned to each other, and take each other into consideration. The expression "parents bring up children" allows this event to seem too much like a one-way event--the **communicative aspect** of the pedagogical situation is not obvious. There is an interaction between a child who wants to become someone him/herself, and an educator who makes his/her own demands and sets his/her own expectations. A characteristic of a PES is that this communication (encounter, dialogue) between educator and child is disturbed.

Without educating (as a dynamic, human encounter), a child cannot properly actualize his/her becoming-a-person (Langeveld); in its turn, educating can only thrive where educator and child live together in a **genuine communicative relationship**. Other concepts which point to this necessary **pedagogical communication** are complete child-parent love (Langeveld), a love rooted in a natural kinship (Waterink), a personal courtship (Carp), an affective **I-you** are bonding (Hanselmann), a loving being connected (Wijngaarden).

Thus, educator and child each enter the world of the other; a common (shared) world arises. There is real interpersonal contact where there is a relationship between persons who want to know and encounter each other in depth **as persons**, where the personal reality (he/she as he/she is) and identity (uniqueness) of the other is acknowledged. The one has a love for and interest in the other for the sake of the other. He/she is captivated by the other person with his/her positive qualities as well as shortcomings.

Communicating means **encountering**: [here there is a clever play on words which I don't know how to translate into English; in Afrikaans, encounter = ontmoet. The claim here is that in an encounter the other is "relieved" (ont) of all "obligations" (moet)—G.D.Y.]. In an encounter, a child [and educator] is free to be him/herself; an intimate, warm, interpersonal space is created where a child can be completely him/herself.

In contrast to the **loving connection of communication** is the **anxious isolating** of a disturbed communication. **Anxiety** arises in a child when he/she becomes isolated from his/her educator. Being closely connected gets lost and a child stands **alone** against what for him/her is strange and menacing. By virtue of his/her nature, a child cannot stand alone. His/her possible existence is endangered. Essentially, anxiety is the experience of loneliness which has arisen with the severance of being lovingly connected. **Everything**

**lacking in a loving connection which a dependent child experiences endures unconsciously as life menacing, as an assimilated anxiety** (Wijngaarden).

Wijngaarden<sup>(7)</sup> elucidates the following regarding a child who finds him/herself in a situation of disturbed contact:

A child cannot yet assimilate such a situation, and the degree to which these circumstances are serious, or the degree to which a child is sensitive, the greater the "disposition for anxiety". He/she still lacks the power and maturity to again bring about a genuine contact; on the contrary, painfully wounded, he/she **pulls back into him/herself** and **cuts him/herself off** or directs him/herself only to the outer world to defend him/herself as well as possible, or he/she keeps outside afraid to fail. Thus, this outward attitude can be hesitant and fearful (escape attitude), or indifferent, rude, impulsive, as well as negative (defensive attitude).

From the experience of a lack of love (based on educative defects, or oversensitivity by a child), a fear of contact arises--because it can injure anew—and, in doing so, the contact is avoided or broken. A vicious cycle is closed; the fear of contact breaks the possibility for contact, which is an objective danger for being fundamentally connected. A child can only be helped [to get] out of this situation if **contact** with another is **reestablished**; the adult him/herself must bring about this reestablishment. If this is not brought about, then a disturbance in development appears.

In a PES, a child deals with distress, and his/her life is disturbed. In this connection, Langeveld<sup>(8)</sup> elaborates as follows: With disturbed children, there is a failure in communication. This not only means that a child expresses too little about him/herself or, rather, conceals than manifests his/her interiority; it also means that his/her behavioral and expressive life are "unreadable" to his/her daily educators.

Disturbed communication is also described in terms of **interpsychic conflict** (conflict between persons). A gap has arisen between an educator and child by which all obviousness, flexibility, and mutual attraction are lacking. The educator and the child are involved in this situation with disenchantment, despondency, guilt, loneliness, insecurity, anxiety, and desperation.

The communication between educator and child is primarily an affective (emotional) connection. Disturbed communication is **emotion poor**. By this, the emotional life of a child is damaged precisely because he/she has such a primary need for love, warmth, sociability, friendliness, pampering, coddling, interest, tenderness, and acceptance. Thus, the danger of disturbed communication is **affective neglect** which gives rise to **affective hunger** and **distress** in a child.

Hence, a disharmonious educator-child interaction means for a child affective distress, loneliness, and is "growth-stopping". It is possible that disturbed communication (inability to communicate adequately) can be the origin of a PES, i.e., that a child, because of a handicap, cannot communicate, and that this serves as an educative-obstructing factor, e.g., an autistic child.

In the following, reference is made to the connection between **disturbed communication** and the three other factors of a PES already considered, i.e., **educative distress**, **educative neglect**, and **educative obstructions**. The connection between disturbed communication and educative distress is the following: a child's distress is primarily on a communication level (relationship level). Educative distress can be interpreted in terms of disturbed communication: the inability of the parents to help their child, and the inability of a child to ask his/her parent for help is situated in the defective connection between them.

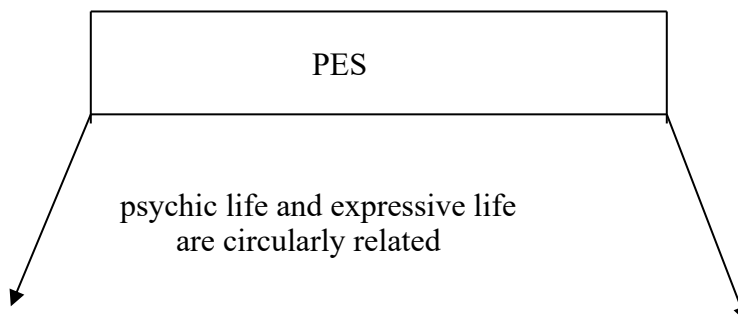
In addition, educating can be viewed as an **unfolding communication** between educator and child. Because pedagogic influencing can only be actualized via pedagogic association and encounter, **communication neglect** (defective association and encounter) also means educative neglect; similarly, disturbed communication prevents an educator from truly being able to adequately intervene with the educand. And, because educating is an unfolding communication, the following is stated: communication-obstructing factors in a pedagogical situation also are educative-obstructing factors.

### 2.1.5 Disturbed psychic life

For an orthopedagogue, this clearly has to do with the question of what a child experiences (intra-psychically) when he/she finds him/herself in a PES. The question of the mutual connection between the child's lived experiences and behaviors, and these with the PES is central for an orthopedagogue.

Where disturbed communication is regarded as a factor in a PES, the emphasis is on the interpsychic conflict between educator and child and, here, the emphasis is on **intrapsychic conflict**, i.e., the conflict and disturbance regarding a PES which exists within the individual persons concerned. That is, in a PES we are involved with living and lived experiencing persons. The psychic life of a child and educator become disturbed because both attribute negative and disturbed meanings to the PES. Educator and child experience themselves as insecure, abandoned to, and unprotected from the PES. The PES itself is experienced as being without perspective, as meaningless, and as menacing. Educators and children experience dejection, disillusionment, feelings of guilt, pessimism, confusion, desperation, etc. Thus, a child's distress is an **affective distress**. The words **insecurity** and **anxiety** can be written over the entire PES.

Regarding their connections, the present matter is schematized as follows:



disturbed psychic life  
e.g., anxiety  
insecurity  
loneliness  
uncertainty

←————→ disturbed expressive life  
e.g., bedwetting  
lying  
stealing  
stuttering

Now the question is what specific distress does a child experience when the educative intervention is inadequate?

When the **pedagogical relationship of trust** is inadequately actualized, a child feels that his/her individual security is threatened. A conflict in trust is always paired with feelings of insecurity. This leaves him/her defenseless, feeling completely powerless and this is paralyzing. A young child's trust is "blind" (unreasoned, unlimited, uncritical, unconditional). With broken trust, this blind trust changes into distrust. A child feels abandoned, forsaken, and betrayed, with the correlated feelings of hate, anxiety, and uncertainty. It is difficult for a child who is uncertain to trust in life again. A child who is affectively neglected feels unaccepted and unworthy. Feeling insecure and anxious is almost a rule with neglected children (Van der Zeyde). When a child does not receive enough support and help via a relationship of trust, his/her helplessness leads to anxiety. In love, oneness and security are present, in anxiety, insecurity and loneliness prevail (Carp). Trust gives rise to favorableness, willingness, calm, and tranquility; in distrust there is fear, animosity, threat, unrest (Lersch). Emotional insecurity and distrust between parent and child mean stress for a child.

In connection with the inadequate actualization of the **pedagogical relationship of understanding**, a child becomes discouraged, frustrated, and confused. A defective understanding of a child leads to making unreasonable demands. It is discouraging and paralyzing and crushes his/her self-confidence every time there are demands and expectations which he/she knows he/she cannot meet, and this thrusts conflict and derailment on him/her.

When **pedagogical authority** is inadequate, a child does not learn to know and obey norms and values; he/she remains uncertain about them. He/she becomes egocentric, obstinate, and unrestrained. He/she has difficulty acquiring his/her freedom, and responsibility. Also, his/her socializing suffers in that he/she does not learn to take fellow persons into consideration.

In connection with the non-actualization of pedagogical association, encounter and intervention, the following are noted: pedagogical influencing and pedagogical activity are possible only through pedagogic association and encounter. When they don't occur, a child's practicing-to-adulthood regarding the following facets are neglected (see the pedagogical activities in section 2.1.2.3): He/she doesn't learn from the adult's example to give **meaning** to reality (persons, things, situations, events) on a continually higher level. His/her meanings remain childish (infantile), and this restrains his/her becoming. He/she will signify a situation (e.g., a vicious dog, poor learning achievement) with anxiety and insecurity instead of modifying it according to the educator's example. He/she does not

cultivate a readiness to **exert** him/herself to contribute to his/her own becoming adult. He/she does not learn to live in accordance with **norms**, so he/she is unable to reach **proper** adulthood.

Defective exemplification (by the educator) and emulation (by the child) of norms, values, principles, and rules lead to the normative flavor of a child's psychic life (and expressive life) suffering damage. Without trust, a child will not **venture** with or follow an educator's way (see below). An insecure child also cannot be **thankful** for the security the adult must assure for him/her. Also, he/she doesn't show the desired child **responsibility** (accountability) for his/her deeds and for his/her share in educative relationships. In addition, he/she doesn't experience much **hope** in and perspective (see below) on his/her future. His/her realization of his/her destiny (adulthood) is restrained. **Respect** for his/her own being a person, and for other persons is lacking, as is respect for what a person ought to do or not do. He/she doesn't learn to **understand** and judge him/herself, and over-estimates or under-estimates him/herself. He/she does not acquire **freedom** to responsibility.

Rienstra<sup>(9)</sup> nicely describes how a PES injures a child in the form of his/her disturbed psychic life. Some disturbed lived experiences of a child which he mentions are the following: affective hunger; fawning attitude; defensive attitude; lack of interest; egocentricity; feelings of rejection; affective instability; restlessness; hostile attitude; apathy; indifference; insecurity; anxiety; jealousy; neglect; feelings of guilt; trauma; frustration; loneliness; uncertainty; inferiority; lack of initiative; resentment; discouragement; spite; resistance; animosity; aggressive feelings; etc.

Lubbers<sup>(10)</sup> explains, in his "anthropology (person image) of the life of a disturbed child": if a child is not accepted in love, he/she is continually confronted in his/her growing up with situations which he/she is unable to deal with. **Uncertainty** leads to **insecurity**, and his/her life is without prospect. In his/her **helplessness**, he/she is abandoned to danger. He/she cannot free him/herself from his/her **anxiety**, and because of a **conflict in trust**, he/she cannot share his/her anxiety with his/her parents. Disturbing a child's life also means **disturbing communication**.

Clearly, the PES is a situation of conflict. Intra-psychic conflict, tension, and disturbance arise when a child's needs, yearnings, and initiative are frustrated by serious educative deficiencies. Some examples:

**The need of a child**

**The conflict situation**

The child has physical needs /	they remain unfilled.	
The child has a need for security /	he feels insecure.	
The child has a need for self-restrained.	actualization	/ it is
The child wants to be someone himself (adult)	/ he is kept small.	
The child wants to be accepted /	he feels rejected.	
The child wants to feel of worth /	he feels inferior.	
The child wants to be understood /	he feels misunderstood.	

The child seeks support to fulfill his potentialities	/	he is constrained.
The child wants to know where he stands	/	he is disoriented.
The child wants to be able to deal with new situations	/	he is frightened of them.
The child has a need for authority	/	he experiences it as lacking.

Considering the above, the following are **essentials of a child's disturbed psychic life**:

- o **being different** (the child feels different, in the sense of conspicuous);
- o **being inferior** (the difference makes him/her feel less worthy and even unworthy);
- o **loneliness** (he/she deals in an affective no-man's-land; severs contact);
- o **helplessness** (clumsy, dependent, powerless);
- o **uncertainty** (confusion, despair, bewilderment: a general basic uncertainty--lack of confidence--about life);
- o **anxiety** (lack of a close loving being connected; separated).

Anxiety is the **fundamental attunement** of human existence, and it accompanies the above disturbed emotional lived experiences.

A child's experiences of his/her pedagogic situation do not leave him/her untouched; they are either favorable or unfavorable for his/her growing up. A child's disturbed experiences of his/her PES mentioned above obstruct his/her psychic-spiritual development. Here there is a **restrained becoming and learning**.

**Restrained becoming** means that the principles or moments by which a child's becoming must prosper are not actualized (principles of helplessness, security, exploration, and emancipation). This amounts to a child **not** being able to conquer his/her **helplessness because** of his/her **feeling of security** and being prepared to **venture**, in the sense that he/she **explores** what, for him/her, is an unknown world and, in doing so, realize his/her **emancipation** to adulthood. Thus, there is mention of

- o defective or **destructive exploration** instead of **constructive exploration**: A child explores his/her world, but the nature of the exploration is defective, or it points to a destruction of him/herself and others, e.g., he/she explores too early with sexuality, drug use; he/she engages in delinquent or meaningless, fatalistic, and rebellious conduct;
- o **failed emancipation**: A child attains incomplete or improper adulthood, or even a seeming-adulthood.

The PES can be a serious threat to a personality-in-becoming. It can push a child's personal development to defective emancipation, improper adulthood, psychic "distorted growth", and "mis-growth", personal disintegration, a break in psychic-spiritual health. Serious educative defects, or inadequate educative situations are important factors in the event of impoverishing the psychic structure. This is expressed in childhood, and later in adulthood in an inability to establish affective relationships, and in inhibitions regarding participation in society. For example, Ringel\* describes five frequently occurring adult-types, which someone with an unfavorable personal development can experience:

- o the "**broken person**" no longer can develop his/her own will or, at least, doesn't have the courage to show this outwardly. He/she will not take responsibility for him/herself; more strongly, he/she avoids this responsibility in anxious ways.
- o the "**hypocritical person**" cannot bring the outer and his/her inner worlds into correspondence with each other. Outwardly, he/she shows him/herself as diligent, and adjusted; inwardly, he/she is full of aggression, and at odds with the situations around him/her.
- o the "**restrained person**" behaves in unnatural ways in associating with persons. For him/her, everywhere there are obstacles in human contact, and he/she doesn't have the courage to face and overcome them.
- o the "**distorted person**" no longer has the power to spontaneously live his/her total personality; he/she has, as it were, lost his/her natural base, and is at the mercy of "deviant mechanisms".
- o the "**childish person**" is characterized by his/her infantile relationships to the world around him/her. Everything is primitive and is seen superficially; things are taken lightly, and a childish excessive optimism is displayed.

In childhood, the inhibition of becoming means that his/her life as a child is characterized by **infantilism**: life habits are left-over from an earlier stage of development in his/her life, e.g., thumb-sucking at 12-years, bedwetting, as a psychic response to tension, temper tantrums (even as an adult), by which the child tyrannizes his/her educators and environment.

**Inhibition of learning** means that a child is blocked in learning activities and achievements. Feelings and thoughts are two fundamental psychic phenomena, and they are a precondition for actualizing his/her cognitive potentialities (intelligence, thinking, remembering, etc.), hence, his/her emotional life must be undisturbed. Consequently, an emotional disturbance also means a disturbance in his/her intellectual life. Then, he/she becomes an under achiever at school because he/she becomes emotionally blocked in his/her intention (motivation) to learn.

Finally, the following three-fold distinction is made:

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\* Ringel, E., as cited by Van der Geld, A. M. C. : **Begeleiding van Opvoeders en Kinderen**, Samson, Alphen, 1973, pp. 285 and 286.

**o correctable disturbed psychic life:** when the disturbance is a result of a PES, e.g., emotional disturbance, or under achievement in the learning event, this can be eliminated by correcting a PES.

**o uncorrectable disturbed psychic life:** here a child's disturbed psychic life is the origin of his/her PES, e.g., a child with psychoneurological dysfunctions (brain damage), by which a neurological defect shows itself in psychic dysfunction (fluctuations in attending, emotional instability, perceptual disturbances, etc.). Consequently, the disturbed psychic life of the child is an uncorrectable factor of educative obstruction which gives rise to a PES. In such a case, the disturbed psychic life of the child, nevertheless, is an essential of a PES. The same holds for the epileptic, intellectually retarded, and autistic child.

**o the possibility exists that a handicapped child's psychic life can become disturbed because he/she cannot assimilate and accept his/her handicap.**

Although the handicap might be uncorrectable, the related psychic disturbance might well be correctable, in the sense that he/she can learn to accept and live in peace with his/her being handicapped and different.

### 2.1.6 Disturbed expressive life

A child expresses his/her disturbed psychic life in one or another form of disturbed, undesirable, or problematic behavior (externally perceivable action). Ordinarily, we say a child has behavior problems, or deviant behaviors. An orthopedagogue does not direct him/herself primarily to these behavior problems, since he/she views them merely as the **symptom, sign, or expression** of a child's disturbed psychic life. Indeed, it is in terms of his/her disturbed expressive life that an educator notices that his/her psychic life is disturbed. However, often, a child is "unreadable" to an educator, and the question is whether the educator is always able to adequately interpret his/her disturbed behaviors in terms of disturbed experiences.

Freud has stated that thwarted needs become expressed in a child's behavior. Disturbed behaviors, indeed, are life expressions of a distressed child psyche to which the tensions of a PES give rise. Examples of conspicuous behavior (or worse), which are expressions of an unsolved disturbance, are the following: enuresis (wetting the bed or pants), encopresis (soiling pants), sexual deviations, theft, unstable behavior, withdrawal, irritability, eating disorders, aggressive behavior, hyperactivity, and restlessness, fatigue (tensions and conflicts often demand lots of energy); a child is unable to relax, rest, or sleep, he/she feels too threatened, intellectual under achievement, thumb sucking, nail biting, fighting, lying, stuttering, disturbed sleep, headache, fear of the dark, obstinate behavior, motor unrest, etc.

Often a PES offers little perspective for a child's psyche. He/she consciously and unconsciously looks for ways out of his/her psychic misery. His/her PES limits his/her freedom to be him/herself and gives rise to restraints and disturbances in him/her. He/she responds to the distress and anxiety of his/her PES through an inner defensive attitude and associated external deviant behavior. In this way, he/she tries to protect him/herself. We differentiate three directions of fleeing (as a fleeing and escaping from an inner state of distress):

**o a fleeing forward (aggression):** he/she comes into open, intentional assault on and opposition to his/her educator, paired with the fear of reprisal by the adversary, because his/her educators are adversaries. Examples of this fleeing forward are lying, deceit, stealing, running away, rebelliousness.

**o a fleeing into oneself (isolation):** he/she withdraws into him/herself, withdrawing him/herself from the influences which hinder and restrain his /her development. He/she finds him/herself on an island of loneliness (and **anxiety**). He/she is no longer "readable" to his/her educators; he/she is no longer reachable, either through strictness, or love. He/she maintains an isolating, contact avoiding, or contact-breaking attitude toward life. This disturbed communication leads to inner loneliness, isolation, and a consuming feeling of abandonment.

**o a fleeing back (regression):** he/she falls back and holds onto an earlier stage of becoming, with the unconscious aim to return to a lost child paradise (an atmosphere of adequate security). He/she flees into the forms of existence of a younger child. Bedwetting is a typical symptom of regression. Other forms are stuttering, thumb sucking, nail biting, etc. The psychic dynamic underlying this fleeing back can be explained as follows: "Don't you see how little, helpless and dependent I still am? Thus, I still wet my bed. Don't you hear how I talk? I suck my thumb (bite my nails) because something is missing--genuine loving interest!"<sup>(11)</sup>

The disturbed expressive life of types of handicapped children can be mentioned. Once again, the disturbed expressive life, or problematic behaviors of these children are the **origin**, and not the result of a PES. Examples of this are hyperactivity, rhythmic defects, antisocial behavior, and the poor reading and spelling of a brain-damaged child, the seizures of an epileptic child, and the absence of eye contact with an autistic child.

In this regard, Hart de Ruyter, et. al. <sup>(12)</sup> differentiates the following forms of disturbed behavior, which can give rise to clashes with the environment, and serious deformations of character:

**o retarded behavior:** a mentally deficient child's behavior is often seriously disturbed, and socially disturbing, especially when care is inadequate, e.g., straying, moral misdeeds, organic deviations, paired with mental deficiency.

**o psychotic behavior:** Because of deviations in person-structure, the person cannot link up with the community. His/her emotional life, temperament, and character are disturbed. Psychotic behavior seldom appears in children and youths;

**o cerebrally disturbed behavior:** this is the result of psychic and neurological disturbances in brain-damaged children, and in epileptic children, who are not amenable to medical therapy;

**o disturbed behavior in the poorly (intellectually) endowed:** poor or seemingly poor endowment often are related to problematic behavior;

**o disturbed behavior connected with a phase of development:** examples here are abnormal obstinacy in toddlers, and serious rebelliousness in children in puberty;

**o situationally disturbed behavior:** behavior which is disturbed because of the situation within which a child lives, e.g., a PES. These disturbed behaviors essentially are alarm-signals which a child's psychic life is disturbed;

**o reactively disturbed behavior:** this is a child's intrapsychic response (reaction) to circumstances, e.g., the death of a next-of-kin, uprooting, divorce, and serious psycho-traumas (shocks). This can be temporary (he/she assimilates the psychic conflict), or he/she can become neurotic. An example of such behavior is a psychosomatic illness, such as asthma;

**o neurotically disturbed behavior:** an anxious child can show compulsive behavior, defensive behavior, and hysteria, which are expressions of insecurity, and anxiety.

The above specific forms of disturbance, with the related behavioral disturbances are dealt with briefly in chapter three.

### 2.1.7 Being different and experiencing oneself as being different (inferior)

A PES is characterized by a being different, in the sense that, as a pedagogical situation, it has become conspicuous. Also, a child in a PES is referred to as being-different, or as a child conspicuous in his/her becoming. It is precisely this being-different, e.g., of a handicapped child, which gives rise to a PES. A child is different; this changes the educative situation. A child experiences (attributes meaning to) things and events differently (his/her world is different). His/her educators often find it difficult to be attuned to his/her being different, and this leads to a lack of understanding, and disturbed communication.

When a PES originates from obstructive factors which are correctable (e.g., deficiencies in educating), then the disturbed behaviors of an educator, as well as a child, are the different, or conspicuous factors of a PES.

Being different because of deafness is of another nature than because of blindness. Hence, each child is **uniquely** different in his/her needs.

A child in a PES is different, but he/she also experiences him/herself as being different, i.e., he/she is explicitly aware that he/she is different and conspicuous. He/she experiences his/her defect (e.g., learning problem, deviant behavior, physical handicap) in the eyes of the other--under the look of the other. He/she is aware that others notice his/her deficiency, and this makes him/her self-conscious.

The essence of this experience of being different is a **self-devaluation**, a subjective experience of the defect as something which makes him/her feel inferior to those around him/her. Thus, he/she experiences him/herself as different, in the sense of inferior (of less value). A clever pupil, a champion athlete, and a beautiful high school girl also experience themselves as different, and conspicuous because of a specific status, but not in the sense of self-devaluation, and a feeling of less worth. A conspicuous child experiences him/herself as "a bit of bad luck"--"I have a defective body", "I have a learning problem", "I have parents who don't understand me". He/she feels of less value in the eyes of the other. He/she is aware of their "hidden, masked negative feelings,

which he/she experiences as depreciating" (Rupp). Others devalue him/her because of his/her deficiency. He/she accepts the other's judgment that he/she is of less worth, and he/she devalues him/herself.

This experience of self as different and inferior, means for a child a disturbance in his/her psychic life. It also means a disturbance in his/her expressive life because he/she will continually behave as someone who is of less value.

### 2.1.8 Lack of perspective

An educative situation always either **provides a perspective or is without one**. In two respects, a PES is a situation without a perspective. On the one hand, it is characterized by an **obscure future perspective** and, on the other hand, by an **educative perspective which is deficient**.

#### Regrading an **obscure future perspective**

A person is historicity (past, present, and future). Only the present is livable, as there is a past, out of which, and a future to which it can be lived. The PES in which those involved find themselves colors the way in which their future is seen. Child and educator experience a PES as not having a future perspective, as meaningless, and as menacing. From the disturbed here-and-now of the PES, an ordered future does not seem possible. Educative distress (the good child life is disturbed) means a child is no longer directed to the future, or to adulthood. Being without perspective means that neither educator nor child looks to the future from the disorientation of the present PES. Then, an educator asks, "What will this child become one day?" A child might ask him/herself "How am I going to attain proper adulthood one day if I have already run aground?"

Thus, hope-in-the-future is lacking. It is this hope-in-the-future which makes a child's growing up meaningful and awakens in him/her agreeable expectations for the future (Landman).

As far as **lacking an educative perspective** is concerned, a PES is a situation of confusion and impotence. A child is in educative distress, but the educator is **confused about action**. He/she does not know how he/she should act further pedagogically with the child entrusted to him/her. He/she does not know how to correct the educative deficiency which has given rise to the PES. Or he/she does not know what specific, different kinds of special educative actions to apply to his/her handicapped child. He/she needs advice, support, and guidance from an expert orthopedagogue. Because of his/her educationally difficult child, he/she is dealing with pedagogical and affective uncertainty. He/she does not always understand the experiences and behaviors of his/her child-in-distress, so his/her pedagogical intervention is characterized by uncertainty and misunderstanding.

Ter Horst<sup>(13)</sup> links the lack of perspective of a PES to the disturbed psychic and expressive lives of a child and educator as follows: The lack of perspective shows itself in a child, e.g., as loudness, depression, anxiety, aggression, destructiveness, isolation, task refusal, lack in a sense of reality, stereotypic thinking, psychosomatic symptoms, rambling, psychoses. In an educator, it presents itself as depression, over-protection,

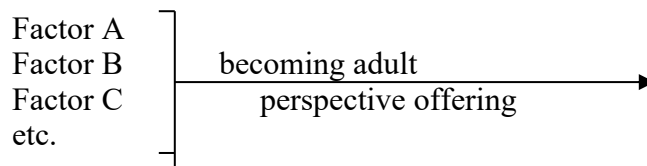
strictness, fickleness, rage, isolation, neglect, rejection, abandonment, psychosomatic symptoms, a “let-it-be” attitude.

The findings of Van der Geld<sup>(14)</sup> serve as a meaningful illustration of both an **obscure future perspective**, and an **educative perspective which is lacking**, as essentials of a PES. According to him, the following are experienced by parents who are involved in a PES:

- o uneasiness about the child's future
- o uncertainty about his/her future
- o feeling impotent
- o feeling that they fall short of the mark
- o feeling educative uncertainty
- o feeling that they have failed educatively
- o alarm about the child's actual behavior
- o uncertainty about educative decisions
- o the question and uncertainty: what must we do further with this child?
- o concern about the child's improper development.

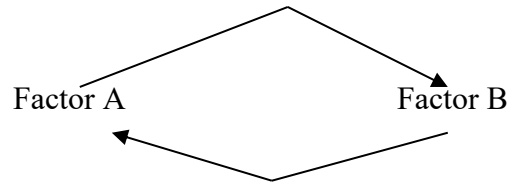
### 2.1.9 Cyclical dynamic

A non-problematic educative situation is a **dynamic field of tension** within which the perspective-offering factors (e.g., educator, child) are attuned to each other such that they continually can move forward with each other. **Dynamic** means that there are **action** and **movement**; something **happens** there. In a non-problematic educative situation, the dynamic is **linear**, i.e., the interdependent forces of the situation promote a child's becoming toward adulthood. This is represented schematically as follows:

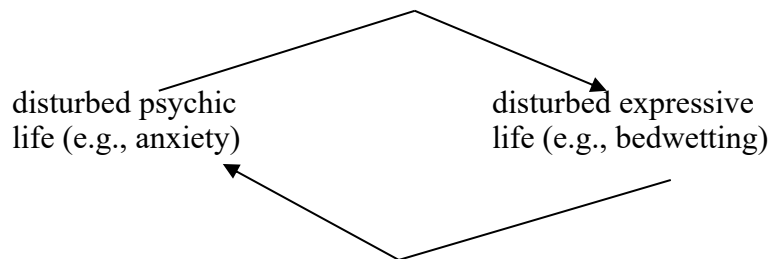


Although educating and becoming have come to a relative standstill in it, even so a PES is also characterized by a dynamism. However, the factors of a PES are attuned to each other, and act upon each other without perspective and impede each other. (For example, the factor **educator** acts as an educative impediment on the factor **child**). Thus, in a PES, the dynamic has degenerated from a **linear** to a **cyclical** one. A child's educating and becoming are obstructed because a **vicious cycle** has arisen which is relatively impervious to influences by other factors, and which is not broken out of to a new forward movement of educator and child. A vicious cycle implies that two interdependent factors of the PES mutually influence each other negatively by disturbing and obstructing each other so that the disturbance and obstruction increasingly become

worse. This cyclical dynamic or vicious cycle is one that is closed.

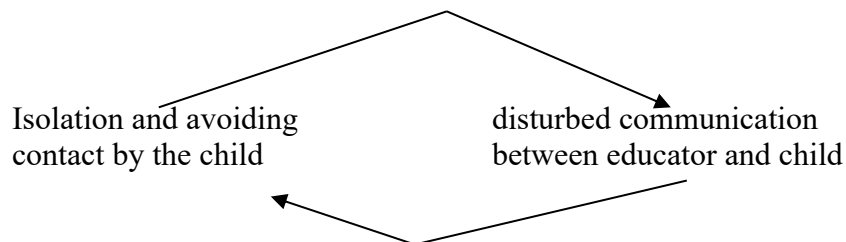


An intrapsychic as well as an interpsychic cyclical dynamic is possible. An example of an **intrapsychic cyclical dynamic** is the following: The psychic and expressive lives are connected as a cyclical event. A disturbed psychic and expressive life are connected as a vicious circle. For example:



Similarly, a vicious cycle is possible between an emotional disturbance and a learning problem.

The following is an example of an **interpsychic cyclical dynamic**:



Further examples of this are that between the pedagogical, and non-pedagogical relationships in the family, which between educative distress of a handicapped child, and the pedagogical uncertainty of his/her parents. Such a dynamic is actualized as follows: a child is handicapped, and requires special, different educative intervention. His/her parents are uncertain about how to act in this special case, and their educative attempts do not fulfill the special needs and wants of their child. The child becomes educatively distressed, with a related disturbed psychic life (anxiety), and disturbed expressive life (breaking contact). In the light of the child's disturbed expressions (behaviors), the parents become even more unsure about how to educate their handicapped child because now he/she is a restrained, as well as a handicapped child.

### 2.1.10 Child problems

Educating is helping a child become an adult. A PES implies that there is a problem regarding a child's becoming adult. Thus, an essence of a PES is that the educator experiences problems about his/her child. The concept of **child problems** is chosen over the concept **problem children** because a child with his/her conditions and capacities is not always the obstructing factor (leading to a PES), and because the origin of the problem is not always the child. Often, there are **problem parents** rather than **problem children**, i.e., when a parent fails in his/her educative attempts and, thus, becomes the obstructing factor.

The concept of **child problems** always refers to a **child life-with-deficiencies**, whether the deficiencies are correctable restraints or uncorrectable handicaps. The important distinction in this connection is made earlier, i.e., whether a child **has** a problem, or **is** a problem. Examples of these two types of problem are indicated (in Chapter 1).

## 2.2 THE ETIOLOGY OF THE PES

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Etiology has to do with the question of what factors lead to a PES. The fact that a PES has **multiple "causes"** must be emphasized. Usually, more than one factor, or even a multiple combination of factors acts as obstructions in a PES; e.g., a child can be sickly but, because of this, his/her parents make the educative mistake of over-protecting, or over-indulging him/her.

Also, once again, it is emphasized that the different obstructions are **interdependently** woven together and influence each other dynamically such that they can only be **distinguished and** should not be depicted as separate from each other. The elimination of these obstructing factors also means eliminating the PES. These factors are often correctable, e.g., a temporary illness, educative errors, poverty, marital quarrels. However, some are not correctable (e.g., the death of a parent, brain-damage, intellectual retardation) so that other doors to eliminating the PES must be found.

#### 2.2.1.1 Educative-obstructing factors

The following six groups of **educative-obstructing factors** are distinguished:

##### (a) Physical (bodily) factors

The congenital, or acquired physical deviations, and sensory deficiencies of a child create problems for his/her parents with respect to educating and handling him/her. His/her different physical status--and his/her **experience** of his/her physical handicap--requires a modified, special educative situation, and presents the parents with a difficult, problematic educative task to which they are not always able to respond. Examples of obstructing physical and sensory conditions of a child are the following: blindness, deafness, weak sightedness, being hard of hearing, loss of the sense of touch (e.g., being burned), epilepsy, brain damage, and minimal brain dysfunction, chronic illness, such as

heart disease, diabetes, kidney defects, leukemia, polio; in addition, muscular dystrophy, asthma, hemophilia, loss of a limb, birth defects, speech defects, tuberculosis, spina bifida, and mental retardation.

Concerning these physical and sensory handicaps, as factors of a PES, the task of a physician, medical, and paramedical specialist, child specialist, internist, optometrist, neurologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech therapist, etc. is to entirely, or partially, eliminate the PES. Thus, educative obstructing factors such as epilepsy, can be treated with medicine, or weak sightedness can be eliminated through ophthalmic correction.

### **(b) Psychic-spiritual factors**

A child's psychic-spiritual being restrained and handicapped, with a paired intellectual deficiency and/or emotional disturbance, act as an educative obstruction, especially because there is a defective possibility of communication. Examples of this are the defective contact of an autistic child, psychic dysfunction of a brain damaged, and epileptic child, the intellectual impotence of a mentally retarded child, and the disintegrated personal structure of a youthful psychopath.

Besides these possibilities of uncorrectable handicaps (defects, dysfunctions), correctable restraints can act as educative obstructions, e.g., disturbance in the psychic life of a child who cannot assimilate one or another incident or situation in his/her life (educative distress, death of a close relative, a physical defect, failure at school, etc.). For example, poor school achievement can be the origin, as well as the outcome, of a PES.

Eliminating a PES with respect to the above restraints, and handicaps is the task of an **orthopedagogue**. He/she has the task of designing and implementing special forms of activity (forms of pedotherapy) with these children. However, when a child's personal structure is disturbed, and he/she displays a psychiatric image, he/she finds him/herself outside the purview of an orthopedagogue, and he/she becomes a special task for a psychiatrist.

### **(c) Factors arising from relating to reality**

Here the educative obstructions are situated in the human, and non-human **reality** to which a child is in **relation**, i.e., persons, animals, plants, things. This primarily has to do with the **human relationships** a child finds him/herself in, and where there is a distinction between **pedagogical relationships** (parents, teachers) and **non-pedagogical relationships** (brothers, sisters, friends, classmates, age cohorts). Of these, the former are the most meaningful for a child.

In this connection, the matters of **disturbed educative relationships** and **educative errors**, as educatively obstructing factors, are central for an orthopedagogue, and his/her task is to eliminate them. In this light, the facet of a PES called **factors arising from relating to reality**, and their **elimination** receive specific and detailed attention below.

### **(d) Family factors** (not belonging to group (c))

This involves the non-pedagogical relationships, and conditions in the family which can act as educatively obstructing factors. Here, one thinks of an incomplete family (death of one or both parents, divorce), individual mental disturbances of one or both parents (neurosis, mental retardation), marital tensions, conflict between parents and their adult children, family crises, such as poverty, illness, homelessness, unemployment, separation (e.g., because of war).

The modern family is characterized by a certain tragedy. The family situation which struggles for permanence amid impermanent social relationships is tragic. Family members diverge from each other by which, in our society, the family clearly is a field of social tension. Many family and educative difficulties can be related directly to the contemporary structure of society. The educative function of the family no longer is consistent because educating (to participate in society) is continually influenced by changes in the social structure. This is an unavoidable dynamic in the educative function of a modern family. Appropriate participation in new social situations must continually be brought about (Van der Geld).

The elimination of a PES with respect to family factors is the task of a family sociologist, social worker, clergyman, psychiatrist, family counselor, marriage counselor, etc.

**(e) Subcultural factors** (not belonging to groups (c) and (d))

Disturbances in an unfavorable life community, or social situation within which a child and family find themselves can function as educatively obstructing factors. Possibly the family finds itself in a crime-infested, or socio-economically underprivileged environment. The system of values, attitudes, customs, and lifestyle of the subculture can retard, or disturb a child's personal becoming. A good example of this is the terrorized communities in Ireland. Conflict and violence between religious and socioeconomic clashing groups give rise to children growing up with hate, aggression, and anxiety.

The elimination of such factors is the task of politicians, economists, sociologists, community leaders, social workers, etc.

**(f) Societal structural factors** (not included in groups (c), (d), and (e))

The broad structure of society thoroughly influences (promotes or hinders) family life, and educating a child, and can be educatively obstructing. This includes social, and economic factors, such as power, status, assets, consumption, etc. in society. Socially determined structural factors, such as national poverty, famine, epidemics, and housing problems directly affect the family and, thus, are education obstructing factors. There can be deficient financial means for adequate teaching and schooling, or for child medical services; city planning, and house building can occur without taking the child into consideration.

In addition, the following social structural factors are examples of what can be disturbing to family stability and obstructing to educating a child: the increased pace of life in

society, neuroticizing factors (psychic pressure on family members), psychically dissatisfying work, economic tightness, and uncertainty, the ambiguity of our time, uncertainty, and decline of social status, population explosion, urbanization, the multiformity, and complexity of cultural influences.

The great societal elevating task is the work of the politician (state), sociologist, economist, city planning expert, ecologist, etc. They must work together to bring about change to create a better, more humane society. Not only must a child become equipped for life, but society must be made livable for a child (Ter Horst).

From the above classification, factor groups (b) and (c) are the task of an orthopedagogue for eliminating a PES. Next, the educative obstructing factors belonging to these groups is treated more particularly under the following themes:

- o mistakes in educating as factors of a PES;
- o disturbed relationships, as factors of a PES;
- o specific family situations as factors of a PES.

### **2.2.2 Mistakes in educating as factors of a PES**

It is difficult to educate a child correctly. Since no one is perfect, it also is natural that an educator makes mistakes (compare the concept **educative deficiency**). Mistakes are made based either on indifference or ignorance. A child's natural equipment enables him/her to overcome the damage from the educative mistakes of his/her educators. However, an educator can focus on his/her mistakes. Therefore, he/she should continually strive to get to know his/her child and make his/her educating him/her better and improve him/herself as an educator. Preventing is always better than curing. The natural equipment of an educator enables him/her to be successful at educating his/her child without knowledge of pedagogics because of his/her **intuitive attunement to what is right or wrong for his/her child** and because of his/her **love for his/her child**.

The matter of educative mistakes centers on the fact that an educator inadequately considers:

- o the primary psychic-spiritual needs of the child (hence, neglect); and
- o the natural psychic-spiritual stage of becoming (level) of the child (hence, spoiling and interrogating, hardening, and other excesses).

The following inappropriate educative attitudes and actions of the parents are distinguished:

#### **2.2.2.1 Neglect**

For his/her growing up, a child receives insufficient material care as well as too little help and support in the forms of guiding, disciplining, establishing routines, etc. Often, there is good material care, but the parents are so busy with their occupational or social life that

they have no time to give attention to their child. The association and encounter with their child, within which an opportunity for educating lies, are not actualized enough. The occasion is lacking where demands, norms, commands, and prohibitions can be presented to the child. He/she is allowed to do whatever he/she desires. This leaves him/her insecure because he/she is now groping with uncertainty about how he/she should act in a strange, menacing reality. Then, his/her exploration of his/her world is often destructive and his/her deeds occur at the cost of others. The child's conduct and behaviors are unrestrained and uncontrolled. He/she does not consider others and accepted norms, and this defect can degenerate into criminality.

Although there is often average or good intellectual potentialities, at school he/she is not disciplined enough to concentrate or he/she doesn't exert him/herself enough to satisfactorily achieve cognitively. In class, he/she is restless, obstinate and unrestrained and he/she directs him/herself only to what is pleasant. He/she is bored and his/her attention fluctuates. His/her weak focus on work leads him/her to "rattling off" a task merely to get rid of it. Also, he/she exerts no effort, or discipline with respect to any thinking activity.

#### 2.2.2.2 Overindulgence (spoiling)

This means that the parents unreasonably "spoil" their child by an overindulgent attitude. This is certainly the most difficult educative mistake to avoid. If the educators cannot distance themselves from their child, or if they don't possess the mental strength to say "no" to him/her, they are too slack and irresolute. They give in to everything their **child** wants and not to what **ought** to be. This everything-may and everything-can educative climate leads to chaos in a child. The parents try to avoid conflict and unpleasantness with him/her by giving in to his/her whims. They try to buy kindness, and favor from him/her or they spare themselves from the immediate frustration. However, this educative attitude is shortsighted--the child avenges him/herself by demanding even more from his/her educators.

Often, the reason for this overindulgent attitude is that a child is ill or handicapped. A child is a physical invalid, but the parents also make him/her a mental invalid. Some parents want to educate their child in a "modern" way, or "psychologically," and he/she must be allowed to be "free" to do what he/she wants. Prohibitions, and punishment will lead to "complexes" arising in a child. Often, because of loose family ties, a child is "free" to go his/her own way. Sometimes the parent compensates for his/her deficiency in giving love, real **personal** interest, and discipline by flooding his/her child with material goods. He/she buys off his/her own conscience by overindulging his/her child. The grandparents are the natural overindulgers of the child. They control their grandchild with difficulty. They do not demand and only give because they do not carry the primary responsibility for educating him/her.

A child who is spoiled and treated indulgently is a stranger to life in a harsh reality. He/she remains on a **gratification level** while achievement on a **reality level** is what is desired. He/she doesn't learn to endure aversions, difficulties, disappointments, and frustrations. He/she doesn't learn to exert him/herself to meet the demands of reality. Especially in school, he/she has difficulty accepting punishment and strictness from a

teacher. Here, he/she under achieves because he/she is used to standing outside of and above demands, obligations, and prohibitions. A child who is materially indulged doesn't learn the value of money and goods and he/she never learns the joy of receiving because he/she is too used to receiving excesses.

A spoiled child becomes egocentric. The world is made only for him/her. He/she tyrannizes his/her environment with his/her being obstinate and overreacts when he/she doesn't get his/her way. He/she is without norms and respects nothing and no one. His/her self-interests reign on a hasty level, and he/she directs him/herself to his/her own gratification. His/her behavior degenerates and becomes blatant, offensive, trite, and vulgar. Often, when he/she reaches puberty, he/she escapes by changing into a delightful teenager.

An overindulgent educator also is inclined to permit a child and youth to do things for which he/she is not yet ready and which are not appropriate for his/her age, e.g., a girl who is allowed to date boys, or to wear makeup at too early an age.

### **2.2.2.3 Hardening**

Hardening is the opposite of overindulging. Many educators exaggerate the view that a child should be made hard through educating so he/she can maintain him/herself in a hardhanded world, and against the difficulties, and problems of life. Especially, a father might detest a spiritless child and want to make his son a "man". Then, the boy is not allowed to cry and run to his parents after each difficulty. A child's becoming independent is absolutized. Sometimes the parents' attitude is one of lovelessness, and a sadistic mentality, and he/she then deliberately creates situations where his/her child is uncomfortable (cold bath water), anxiety, and disappointment must be endured, and he/she must learn to suffer. Sometimes, a child is treated ruthlessly--beaten and punished. Or he/she is rejected when he/she wants to reconcile him/herself with his/her father. Such parents stress games and sports, which make him/her rough and hard.

Overlooked is the fact that punishment is a symbolic activity with the sole aim of improving a child morally. The parents know nothing of prudence and gentle firmness, and of forgiving and reconciling. Their manner of punishment works to harden their child and often is more of a personal emotional discharge on him/her rather than the use of punishment as a responsible means of educating. Irrespective of the anxiety and disposition to anxiety which is central in the world of an educatively hardened child, he/she becomes blunted, devoid of feeling, degenerate, devalued and, indeed, hard. Educative hardening means for the child a psychically distorted growth.

### **2.2.2.4 Overprotecting**

The overconcerned and overprotecting attitude essentially means a child in his/her growing up is underestimated and, thus, underchallenged. Excessive physical pampering is usually paired with this. A child is treated as if he/she were much younger and only those demands are made of him/her which would be made of a younger child. Hence, it is said that such a child is "pampered up" rather than "brought up". This educative mistake springs from a parent's excessive fear that something will happen to his/her child.

The parent sees danger in everything and tries to protect his/her child against the danger. Then, he/she may not be allowed to move in and near the street or play with any friends. At every opportunity, the parents keep him/her too little for his/her age (infantilize him/her). Often, it is the parents' aim to keep him/her little so they can "possess" him/her longer. A child's wanting-to-be-someone-him/herself, and his/her increasing independence are not considered enough. He/she is not recognized and acknowledged in his/her developing uniqueness. Especially, mothers are disposed to over-protect, and it is said that a child becomes too "mothered".

This attitude is shown in a child being excessively bonded to his/her mother and excessively seeks his/her mother's attention. Many parents allow their child to sleep in the same room with them until a late age. Ordinarily, he/she is helped too much with everything--with homework, going to school, eating, bathing, and dressing. These parents forget the important educative principle that, if one wants to help him/her become independent, one must gradually withdraw one's help. Often, a mother interferes when the child disagrees with the father, a teacher, or a playmate. He/she is sheltered from associating and competing with peers.

Levy<sup>(15)</sup> differentiates two forms of motherly overprotection: the domineering, and the submissive mother. The first demands strict obedience and submissive of her child. All aggressive inclinations are smothered. The child is a love object which is possessed by his/her mother's complete will. He/she does everything that his/her mother wants and passively submits to her will. The submissive mother gives herself completely to her child, when he/she happily demands her attention, and complete services. Yet this mother is aggressive toward persons who dare to lift a finger to her child, and to her child him/herself if he/she acts submissively and exploits this submissiveness. He/she is too free and behaves rudely toward his/her mother. The more arrogant he/she becomes, the more his/her mother's discipline fails. Then, she must increasingly endure the situation and apologize to her child. The child tyrannizes his/her mother and makes her life intolerable.

Such overprotected children are seriously restrained in their psychic development. With this child there is no obedience but docility--a child must be able to be disobedient before there can be obedience. However, this child cannot be disobedient; he/she is too afraid that a distance will come between him/her and his/her parents. He/she is merely docile, "sweet", submissive, tractable, too polite, obliging, and reserved. He/she will never take the lead within a group of peers. He/she maintains a waiting attitude. He/she doesn't take the initiative, is dependent, passive, irresolute—his/her life is led for him/her. He/she chooses younger playmates so he/she can maintain him/herself against them. He/she remains helpless and finds him/herself “hand-in-hand” with his/her mother, rather than among his/her playing agemates. He/she drifts between the tenderness at home, and the hardness at school and with playmates. For this, he/she endures the ridicule and teasing of others.

Following the example of his/her parents' excessive fear, the child learns that everything he/she encounters means something extremely dangerous. Indeed, he/she remains "little" because he/she is restrained and disrupted in his/her growing up. He/she refuses to

become big because then he/she must fulfill obligations, and responsibilities appropriate for his/her age.

A child with a passive, over-protective mother continually treads on her love and willingness. He/she abuses his/her mother's weakness, and is demanding, insubordinate, and aggressive. At school, he/she cannot assimilate a teacher's demands and firmness, and he/she is restless, stubborn, troublesome, he/she violates the rules of the school, and shows minimal interest in the learning material.

#### **2.2.2.5 Being too strict**

An overstrict, unbending, and unaccommodating treatment of a child indicates that his/her level of becoming is overestimated. A child is educated as too grown up and judged as too adult. Demands are made of him/her which usually are made of adults, and this amounts to an excessive educative attitude. He/she must be thorough, honest, orderly, levelheaded, efficient, business-like, and always on time. These demands are too high because the educator makes them from his/her adult world, and not with an understanding of the child's world.

This mistake arises from a parent's overambitious, and perfectionist attitude. The child must contribute to this to prove his/her status by showing him/herself to be a model of high achievement. The child is forced into this model because, often he/she is merely the object of his/her parents' educative plans.

This attitude leads to excessive control and overintervention on the part of the parent (meddling instead of intervening). Their educative activities exist only in interfering and disapproving, and never in agreeing and approving. They are almost always dissatisfied with his/her child's achievements and behavior. A parent's disapproving, and overcritical attitude makes his/her child anxious, and frustrated. He/she fears the punishment, reproof, and nonacceptance which he/she must suffer if he/she does not meet certain demands. Rancor, resentment, and aggression are awakened in him/her. This is extremely discouraging, also for an adult, when someone tries his/her utmost best, but continually is unable to meet the demands and expectations made. Later, the child cannot assimilate disappointments and failures--because the parents are unable to assimilate them.

The child is so overwhelmed by the excessively high demands and he/she becomes so emotionally strained that, in carrying out an achievement task, he/she becomes paralyzed and blocked. This prevents optimal achievement. Then, others are blamed for the under achievement, e.g., the "unfair teacher". He/she feels that he/she must first achieve before his/her parents will accept him/her. He/she suffers psychic damage under the severe and continuous strain of his/her parents' future expectations which he/she is unable to fulfill. He/she becomes sensitive, reserved, extremely sensitive to criticism; defective self-confidence, and feelings of inferiority are awakened in him/her because he/she never can meet the expected demands.

Overstrict parents are guilty of a **wishful educating**. They educate in terms of their **wishes** for their child and not in terms of his/her **actual potentialities**. This attitude is

vane, shortsighted, and ignorant. These parents usually turn a blind eye and are not too satisfied. The child must be an "improved version" of his/her parents. He/she must attain what his/her parents can't, or he/she must at least equal their high achievement. The child is so pushed and shoved that his/her inner peace and carefree childhood are taken away.

A detrimental form of excess is the parents unfavorably comparing their child with a parent, or younger brother or sister. If an older child is presented as an ideal image, then, each time, this is a discouraging experience for the younger child, since he/she is unable to fulfill the achievement-demands. The oldest child feels inferior when his/her achievements and behavior are unfavorably compared with a younger brother or sister. The parents forget that children clearly differ from each other with respect to the tempo, as well as the direction of their growing up. By making unfavorable comparisons, as a form of excess, he/she is not given an opportunity to develop in his/her own way, and as appropriately as possible.

#### **2.2.2.6 Inconsistency\***

Often, parents are neurotic (personally unstable), impulsive, or pedagogically uncertain and then their handling of their child and exercise of authority are not consistent. These "hedging parents" are on one day this and on another day that. The behavior of their child, which is permitted on one day, is punished on the following day. Then, the child becomes uncertain because he/she doesn't know where he/she stands. He/she doesn't know whether his/her behavior will be approved or disapproved. There are no firm, consistent sets of rules and norms according to which he/she should make his/her choices.

A related confusing situation is when the educative attitudes of the father and mother do not agree. The father usually is inclined to be strict and exacting, and the mother indulgently concerned. Consequently, there are ambiguous expectations. Then, he/she feels wronged by the strict parent, with related fear, aggression, and avoidance, or he/she exploits the indulgent parent. This conflicting educative influence leads to unstable behavior in the child because firm lines of action require normative and affective confidence. In addition, his/her behavior is characterized by anxiety, insecurity, and hesitation in any new situation. From this, there is no adequate exploration of the world by the child.

#### **2.2.2.7 Overly-correcting**

This educative mistake is closely connected with educating which is too strict. Blind obedience, punctuality and propriety are demanded of the child. Every moment of the day, he/she is trained until he/she fits the parents' ideal image. Educating, indeed, means that the child must continually be corrected (approval, disapproval, punishment, censure, chastise). A child's mistakes must be pointed out and he/she should be given the chance to correct them; otherwise, he/she becomes unrestrained. But the parents' perfectionist aim can degenerate into an educating which exists in a chain reaction of corrections where association with the child merely exists through intervening and pointing out

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\* The author has labeled this section as "instability" but the content clearly refers to inconsistency, irrespective of the educators instability--(G. Y.).

mistakes. This smothers the child's initiative; rather, he/she does nothing because then he/she can't make a mistake. His/her behavior then is "sweet", without initiative and alien to life: an overly corrected child is forced into a style of behavior which is alien to the life of a child; he/she is not given the right to be a child or to make mistakes and this coercion overwhelms him/her.

### 2.2.2.8 "Neuroticizing"

Our modern society is demanding and encompassing, and this gives rise to several neuroticizing factors affecting the adult educator. The adult is neuroticized, often with a correlated inability to communicate, emotional instability (anxiety), and aggressiveness. The adult who has become neurotic or disposed to neuroticism does not have at his/her disposal the inner control, stability, and mental strength to answer positively the challenges, problems, and tensions which he/she comes up against. He/she finds educative tensions burdensome, along with other tensions of adult life, such as financial, occupational, social, and marital tensions. His/her neurosis, and tension then are transferred to his/her child. Or his/her child serves as a lightning rod, and the parent delivers his/her personal disintegration to his/her child. The child becomes the victim of a neuroticizing educating, and his/her psychic life becomes unstable and disturbed. There is a vicious cycle possible between the parents' neurotic outbursts and the alienation which arises between parent and child on this basis.

### 2.2.3 Disturbed relationships as factors of the PES

Several possible disturbances in pedagogical, and non-pedagogical relationships in the family situation can be educatively obstructive. All relationships in the family are reciprocally related and influence each other. The relationship between the parents is a co-determinant of each parent's relationship with their children, and the mutual relationships among the children; the relationship between parents and children mutually influences the relationship of understanding between the parents. Thus, there are multiple, interacting complexes of relationships which, when difficulties arise, easily can degenerate into confused, disturbed relationships.

#### 2.2.3.1 Neglected affective relationship

A child's experience of security is only bestowed in **demonstrated** love (Langeveld). However, often the parents are too busy to show this love in spontaneous association with their child or, as cold, unloving individuals, they cannot give him/her love and personal warmth. In such a situation, a cozy family atmosphere is missing, and the fact that a child has a right to a sunny youth is ignored.

A child is affectively neglected, in the sense of either a **deficient**, or an **excessive** amount of love. Then, he/she is either unsatisfied or satiated. Regarding a deficient amount of love, Ter Horst<sup>(16)</sup> says the following: Love is a core category of educating. It makes a child's personal becoming and educating possible and secures his/her humanness. Withholding love is a contradiction. One who is loving doesn't withhold it, not even during a conflict or a scolding. **A young child has nothing more difficult to overcome than a deficiency in love.** If the parents are (emotionally) absent, unloving, preoccupied,

contact-disturbing, a child's personal becoming is seriously endangered because being unloved makes the world gray and without perspective.

Being unloved usually shows itself in rejection and poor emotional contact. A child who lives in a defective loving attachment with his/her parents suffers affective hunger and remains affectively needy. Often, he/she responds with an adulation-seeking attitude--seeking love, warmth, attention, acceptance.

A child who receives too much love becomes egocentric. He/she does not cultivate a healthy, realistic sense of his/her place in the world. His/her world revolves around him/herself, and in later adult life, he/she is disillusioned by the push and pull of a cold, businesslike world.

### **2.2.3.2 Rejecting relationship**

Regarding a child's experience of this relationship, it is more serious than affective neglect. For one or another reason, a parent does not accept his/her child: he/she is an unwanted baby; the child is the opposite gender from what is desired; the child is not as ideal a child as the parent would want to have; or he/she is handicapped, of low intelligence, ill, or troublesome. An unaccepted child, then, must constantly suffer the criticism, aggression, rejection, and irritation of his/her parents. He/she never experiences a good-natured wink, a pat on the shoulder, a listening ear, a sympathetic look, or an encouraging voice. He/she feels outcast, threatened, and inferior, his/her entire child existence is assailed. He/she consciously or unconsciously reasons as follows: if they, the anchors in my life, who are responsible for my birth, do not accept me, who in the world will?

A child becomes emotionally unstable, and his/her burdensome problem of acceptance makes him/her restless, and overactive. He/she is hostile, unfeeling, and indifferent toward his/her rejecters. As far as his/her own life is concerned, if he/she is not accepted, he/she sees no sense in his/her existence, and his/her achievements. Difficulties of contact arise because, in each human encounter, he/she wonders if, and doubts that he/she will be accepted. On cognitive exercises, his/her concentration is faulty because he/she is consumed by the question of whether his/her parents accept him/her and of whether he/she can rely on them. His/her behavior deteriorates into attention-seeking, to be noticed and accepted by others. However, his/her annoying behavior has the opposite effect because he/she repels others. Thus, a vicious cycle arises among attention seeking, repelling, and being an outcast.

### **2.2.3.3 Excessive emotional relationship between parent and child**

The possibility exists of an excessive emotional bond between parent and child. Usually, this is between a parent and the child of the opposite gender. (Freud would view this relationship as evidence for his Oedipus theory). A boy excessively bonded to his mother manifests languor, passivity, and under achievement. There is a faulty identification with his father. Effeminateness, mother-bondedness, and non-masculinity characterize his later attitudes and behaviors. His effeminate looks and behavior suggest that his striving as a child can be: "Someday I gladly want to be like my mom". The son is not close

enough to his father so that he can gradually usher him, in his growing up, into the world of boys and men. In too strong a father-daughter bonding, the father worships his daughter for her beauty, while he excessively enjoys the youthful-feminine attention he gets from her. The father makes such a fuss about his daughter that she views her beauty and being a daughter as sufficient achievement, and does not feel obligated to achieve elsewhere, e.g., at school, or in behaving properly. Also, a father and a demanding mother are played off against each other, and the daughter often ignores her mother's demands, i.e., for school achievement, and acceptable behavior.

#### **2.2.3.4 Ambivalent emotional relationship between parent and child**

The impulsive parent, in relating to his/her child, will allow feelings of love and hate to alternate and, in doing so, he/she will, in turn, accept and reject his/her child, depending on how the situation influences him/her. The child is burdened with **uncertainty** about whether his/her parent(s) love him/her, or not. The parent often tries to compensate for his/her negative feelings about his/her child, or he/she tries to hide them by excessive concern and protection. Then, the child remains hesitant, waiting, and impulsive in his/her own emotional life. He/she is uncertain and anxious about what he/she can expect next from his/her parents in this unstable emotional relationship.

#### **2.2.3.5 Rivalry between brothers and sisters**

Conflict and disturbance can characterize the relationships between the children of a family. This can occur among the children, between adult offspring of a family, or between the children being educated, and the adult offspring. These conflicts disturb the entire family life and, in doing so, work to impede the educative event in the family.

It is natural that a parent more easily contacts one of his/her children than another. However, the child's anxiety for the "favor" of the other is clearly understood.

Often, brothers and sisters compete for the attention and favor of their parents. If their parents choose sides, then the favored child becomes spoiled, and egocentric, and the not favored one feels powerless, little, spiteful. For example, an older brother experiences a lack of power, resentment, and frustration if his smaller little brother is "favored" and, under the threat of severe punishment, he dares not look askance at his little brother. The younger brother then can dare to taunt him and is free to get away with it. Whenever one child is "favored", the other feels outcast and inferior. He/she responds to this with jealousy, quarreling, and bullying. On the one hand, the socialization of the children fails when competition, rivalry, and favoritism are too strong--each child learns to fight for his/her rights; he/she learns only to take and not to give. On the other hand, a child's psychic development, as well as his/her educating are damaged during a strained relationship of competition.

#### **2.2.3.6 Disharmonious marital relationship**

Where the parents live together in love and harmony, an atmosphere is created within which a child can prosper according to his/her potentialities. The tension, hate, mistrust, and spats of a marital quarrel create a disturbed domestic atmosphere, and this makes the

child anxious, insecure, and confused. Parents cannot hide disharmony in their marriage from a child because he/she is finely attuned to their relationship with each other. Often, a child is forced to choose sides in the parents' marital conflict and he/she experiences guilt, fear, anxiety, and a strained conscience toward the parent he/she chooses against. Thus, it is a great injustice to make him/her a participant in the conflict. Sometimes the marital quarrel is about the child, so that he/she finds him/herself to be a bone of contention during a disharmonious marital relationship.

A parent can try to fill a gap in his/her marital relationship by directing him/herself completely to his/her child. Then, the child receives too much love, or the parent demands too much love from him/her. This can worsen the estrangement between the parents because feelings of guilt follow about the mistakes in educating which are made. Besides the existing conflict, an additional conflict arises concerning the child. In this way, the tension of the marriage worsens the parents' relationship to their child.

## **2.2.4 Specific family situations as factors of the PES**

### **2.2.4.1 Incompleteness of the family**

Divorce, family abandonment by a parent, a second marriage, or the death, or illness, of any member of the family means a disturbance of the family situation. Any such unnatural, incomplete situation functions as a precondition for impeding educating.

Each family knows conflicts, problems, and disappointments. However, a psychically healthy family is better able to deal with and work out family crises. Through quarrels and tensions, the child acquires a healthy ability to defend him/herself, which can serve him/her well outside his/her family life and, in his/her later adult life. Educatively, this means not the avoidance of conflicts but to teach a child to work them through adequately. The above conflicts in the family can mean for the parent and child an overwhelming amount of stress, and they work to impede educating in the family situation.

Longlasting, serious illnesses of a child and parent needing home nurse care, or even hospitalization means, on the one hand, a separation of the family members but, on the other hand, also a disorganization of the entire family life. Especially, the death, or illness of the mother can cause a serious disruption in family life.

The sick child becomes bored and frustrated when he/she cannot, or may not participate in physical activities, or may not associate with other children. The danger is that the ill child is spoiled, or receives excessive attention, or that the parents are not able to help him/her assimilate his/her sickness through an appropriate, reassuring focus on the illness. Often, the child is hospitalized without preparation. He/she is separated from the warm, personal, secure domestic atmosphere and placed in the often cold, impersonal, unfamiliar atmosphere of the hospital. This separation often is paired with painful medical treatment as well as impatience from the hospital personnel.

With sickness and death come grief and anxiety of separation, and a lack, it severs the structure of the family. When the parent cannot work through this event, he/she cannot

provide consolation, and assurance to the child, who usually does not understand and is anxious about this crisis. Often, a child must carry a burden of the death of a family member because of his/her being angry at and having a death wish for this family member, which now has become reality.

A child sees his/her parents as an indivisible unity. With divorce comes duality--discord and dispute. During and after the divorce, the child oscillates between the clashing parties. For him/her this means serious disruption, intolerable uncertainty, and psychic uprooting. This is brought to a head because both parents (usually by spoiling) try to win him/her over, and because he/she is forced to make a choice between them. Often, he/she is used by one parent to hurt the other.

Illness, death, and divorce have one thing in common: the child misses the daily contact and love of at least one parent in his/her growing up, and he/she misses a relationship which can be of formative value for him/her.

In the stepchild situation, the problem of mutual acceptance prevails. All family relationships now have become more complicated: it is now at least a second marital undertaking for the parent, a stepparent for the child, and a stepchild for the parent, with the possibility of tension, disappointment, affective neglect, and a deficiency in security with all family members.

Other problems which arise in the case of family incompleteness are the fact that the mother, after the death of the father, must educate alone, and might be over-concerned, or too lenient, or she cannot handle her growing up son. The father, as an authority-figure and identification-person, has now fallen away, and the son no longer has a direction-giving ideal.

#### **2.2.4.2 Working mothers**

Essentially, here there also is family incompleteness. When a mother earns money, the family can better care for the child materially. However, the question is if the affective and pedagogical care is interfered with. A mother's first calling is to care for, and educate her children, but after her day's work away from home, often, she doesn't have the desire and time to also give adequate attention to her children. The possible result is insufficient attention. For example, here one thinks of the serious lack of the child who, after his/her day at school, readily wants to share his/her experience, and achievements, as well as his/her failures, and disappointments with his/her mother. The expected interest and care which give a deeper sense and meaning to his/her life at home must be done without. The concept **latchkey child** indicates that the child brings the housekey to school because, in the afternoon when school is out, he/she must unlock the front door alone, and enter the cold, lonely atmosphere of the house. The child is not done justice as far as love, and care are concerned, and feels insecure, lonely, and discontented. A mother who, indeed, is at home, but who, on account of a home-based occupation, or a busy social life, is present for the child, but not available, also has an annoying effect on the child, which leads to frustration. Circumstantial obligations make the mother flustered, too meddling, over-burdened, irritable, and impatient. Considering his/her need, the child experiences this negative attitude as indifference, insensitiveness, and non-acceptance.

Or the mother tries to compensate for the lack of genuine pedagogical care by spoiling, indulging, and materially showering her child, or she applies un-pedagogical means to the child to reduce the inadequate particulars of the case, i.e., by commanding, making angry, calling names, giving unreasonable punishment.

#### **2.2.4.3 The child's position in the family**

Some passing phenomena are noted with reference to the place a child occupies in the family:

Anxiety about personal development often characterizes an **only child**. The parents direct their wishes and ideals on the only child by which he/she is excessively burdened, and he/she runs the risk of having to be a model child. He/she also misses the contact with brothers and sisters and receives little chance to him/herself practice living together with others. Also, there is a danger that the only child receives too much help, and attention, or even is over-protected, spoiled, and over-indulged and, in doing so, is bound to be dependent. Then, he/she feels inferior when he/she must hold his/her own against a child who has more "life practice" than he/she does. Then, he/she loses heart too easily, and seeks help too quickly. He/she is somewhat without initiative, and easily stands apart, timid, and lonesome in the group of agemates. His/her excessive contact with adult conversation can lead to "precocious understanding". The other extreme is that he/she, as a spoiled only child, is bossy and stubborn when in the group, and his/her desires cannot be controlled. Anxiety can block his/her will to self-development. His/her failing drives him/her precisely back to the easy security with the parents, which he/she doesn't need to share with anyone.

The **oldest child** had, for a time, exercised absolute power, and received undivided love. Much attention is given to his/her progress. The parents also are more attentive to the first child than to the following children. His/her caring, and growth are new to them and, therefore, often is accompanied with anxiety. When a following child arrives, the oldest is dethroned, as it were, which can be a painful, and disappointing experience, especially if the oldest child is not prepared for the arrival of the newcomer, or if he/she now suddenly receives noticeably less attention. Often, the parents have threatened to "buy" another child, if he/she doesn't behave him/herself, and now with the new baby, he/she experiences the actualization of this threat. With this, usually higher demands are made of the oldest. He/she must endure the pressure of additional tasks, and responsibility (also for the younger ones).

The **youngest child** has too many family members who help, and shelter him/her, and he/she gravitates toward dependence, faulty becoming independent, and lack of responsibility. His/her easy life leads to laziness, lack of willfulness, and deficient initiative. He/she continually is treated as younger than his/her age in comparison with other children. For example, at ten-years of age, the oldest child is "our big child"; the youngest child at ten-years still is "our baby". Parents' who desire to keep their child little, and to possess him/her longer, also holds here.

The **boy in a family of sisters** (only son among several sisters) often is burdened with high ideals, and expectations. He is the "progenitor", and the parents and grandfather

make a big fuss over him. He carries the family name, and apparently will inherit the most. He either is highly regarded because of his family position, and not by anything achieved elsewhere, or a high achievement-expectation is fostered in him, as the only son. He has no other choice than to achieve better than his sisters, and failure in this regard is difficult to assimilate. In each case, his chances are good that there will be unfavorable comparisons with his sisters because girls develop faster physically and psychically than boys. Often, his extremely questionable position means for him feelings of guilt and anxiety.

### 2.3 The multi-disciplinary point of view regarding the PES

From the foregoing etiology of the PES, a manifold totality of complex factors, which vary from the physical handicap of a child to societal-structural conditions, can give rise to a PES. In treatment of each of the six groups of educatively obstructing factors, it also is indicated which disciplines (experts), by means of providing professional help, are involved in eliminating each of the group factors.

Thus, there is multiple-"causality" and multiple-"treatability" of the PES. The multi-disciplinary point of view regarding the PES does not make orthopedagogics a multi-disciplinary science, e.g., as Ter Horst contends. The complexity of the PES implies that a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive approach is required to eliminate the educative obstructing factors in the PES. Complex problems surrounding the distress, and confusion of persons are not solvable from one single perspective.

The orthopedagogue acknowledges this multi-disciplinary view and will not on his/her own subordinate other sciences when he/she views their task, and discipline as central, and him/herself as responsible for designing a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary plan of treatment/action. Because other experts (physician, social worker, sociologist, etc.) might only be involved in **one aspect** of the PES, the orthopedagogue is the only expert who always has a task in **every** PES. For the physician, this involves the perspective of ill/healthy; he/she wants to bring about a **cure**. For the social worker, the criteria of social orientation/disorientation hold; he/she wants to bring about **creative sociality**. For the psychiatrist, the focus is on personal integration/disintegration; he/she wants to bring about **mental health**. Similarly, the sociologist, economist, and theologian, e.g., respectively, are directed to a person's (child's) social, material, and spiritual wellbeing.

However, the orthopedagogue has the entire child as a physical-psychic-social-spiritual entity, as well as his/her total life, and educative situation as his/her focus. Viewed from a pedagogical perspective, it is the child's educating which is restrained, and the orthopedagogue wants to bring about **educating**. Roughly, there are no child problems, of whatever nature, which do not restrain the child in reaching proper adulthood and, therefore, the orthopedagogue is always involved when the child's educative situation becomes problematic. He/she is directed to help the educator and educand who find themselves in a difficult situation.

Thus, the orthopedagogue must identify the **changeable, influenceable, and controllable** factors of each child problem and PES and, in that light, to design a comprehensive, multidisciplinary plan of action/treatment with the aim of **compensating** for, **modifying**,

or **neutralizing** these factors. This plan amounts to the pedagogues (orthopedagogue, orthodidactician, pedotherapist), and non-pedagogues (physician, social worker, sociologist, etc.) working together to eliminate the educative obstructing factors and, thus, also the PES of the child through correcting his/her physical and psychic mis-attunements, and through directing the human and non-human situation of the child so that optimal opportunity is created for his/her unobstructed passage to full-fledged adulthood.

The great variety of non-pedagogical experts each has a place in the comprehensive plan of action/treatment. For example, where the diagnosis and handling of a child lies outside his/her field of work regarding his/her physical or psychic attunement, the orthopedagogue does not hesitate to refer this child to one or another specialist for general or specific medical, psychiatric, or neurological study and treatment.

Finally, it is emphasized that the dependency of the PES on a multi-disciplinary structure of treatment/handling makes it necessary that multi-disciplinary, or interdisciplinary communication take place among the experts.

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