THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO PEDAGOGY

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1. The Problem of the Connotation of the Concepts “Pedagogy” and “Education”.

When writing an article for any journal on the upbringing of, or the imparting of knowledge to, a child, one is immediately confronted with the problem of using the term education or pedagogy. The seriousness of this problem depends on one’s study background, and, in this respect, also on the country from which one hails. On the continent of Europe the tendency is to use the term pedagogy for the science or theory of upbringing and schooling of the child, and the term education for the practical activities in the school as teaching, school and class organization etc. The more one has studied modern philosophical anthropology, and therefore also existential philosophy and phenomenology, the more one feels the need to circumscribe these terms and to use them in their correct connotations.

What I want to stress is the fact that during the past centuries—and even today—confusion prevailed as to what is exactly meant by “education” and “pedagogy”. This confusion exists not only among those who have studied “education” and/or “pedagogy”, but also in all circles of life. In general the university is considered to be an “educational” institution, but even a faculty of “education” and a training college for teachers is considered as
such. It is especially the Anglo-American countries which are inclined to use the term "education" in its widest connotations. Superficially this might seem to be a very trivial problem, but more profoundly looked at, it reveals the fact that the situation, in which upbringing and schooling of the child takes place, has never during the past centuries been analyzed, and consequently that no actual theory, that can stand the test of being a science, has ever been formulated, and finally, that this vagueness in regard to this upbringing and educational situation and apparent inability to formulate an acceptable theory concerning this situation, is the main cause why universities in the past, were unwilling to accept "education" as an independent science on the same level as psychology, sociology, philosophy etc. Such reluctance and unwillingness one notices even today. During the past twenty-five years a change has however been noticeable in this respect: There are clear indications that a science of pedagogy as a clearly formulated theory of the act of upbringing and schooling of children is being evolved, which, according to my conviction is exclusively due to the rise of modern philosophical anthropology, in the framework of which phenomenology, and especially the phenomenological method, is inseparably bound.

In order to realize the significance of phenomenology as such and of the phenomenological approach in analyzing the situation of upbringing and schooling of the child, it is necessary to give a very brief exposition of the historical background of a few facts which caused "education" (or pedagogy) to be unacceptable as a recognized science, and to be considered as a conglomerate of applied sciences and even skills.

2. Historical Background of the Unacceptability of "Education" as a Science.

It is certainly not an exaggeration or a misrepresentation of the situation when stating that the main reason for the unacceptability of "education" as a science and the superficial and confusing use of terms in this connection, is primarily due to the fact that the situation of upbringing and/or school education of the child has never been looked upon as a particular and significant phenomenon which is worthwhile to be analyzed, even pre-scientifically, and consequently the so-called "pure" human sci-