Waarden in Opvoeding en Opvoedingswetenschap, Pleidooi Voor een uitdagende pedagogiek (Values in Education and the Science of Education: A Plea for a Challenging Pedagogy) by Bas Levering, Doctoral Dissertation, The Netherlands: University of Utrecht, 1988 (Leuven: Avco)

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Levering's book contains a multifaceted text, rich in side issues and implications. This is no wonder since it "deals with questions related to the problem of values in education and in the science of education" and is at the same time "an investigation of the potential and limits of Conceptual Analysis in pedagogy" (Wittgenstein, Austin, and Ryle are invoked here).

In the first chapter Levering proposes a model that "distinguishes three levels of thinking with different kinds of relationship between facts and norms": (a) "The level of ordinary life, there is a unity of facts and norms"; (b) The level where "the norms of those interacting are analyzed"; (c) The level of "anthropology in the restricted sense, facts and norms function independently" (p. 161, that is from the English language summary). "The model not only serves as a classification of value problems, it also serves as a framework for the different issues that are tackled in this book" (p. 161).

Chapter 2 is an example of the first level of analysis (Austin's type of speech act analysis) illustrated by an analysis of the different modes of "lying in children." At the end of this chapter Levering compares "analytic philosophy to certain forms of continental philosophy, especially phenomenology" (p. 161). In chapter six he comes back to this issue and finds that Conceptual Analysis "is not deficient when compared to phenomenological analysis" (p. 162).

Chapter 3 analyzes on the third level where Levering concludes that negative pedagogical norms can be inferred from negative facts of developmental problems; that is to say that if psychology shows that a certain demand on a child is impossible to fulfill

there is no obligation to try: Can-not implies a Should-not. But not the other way around; if something is possible from a developmental viewpoint that does not constitute per se an obligation for the educator or the child: Can does *not* imply Should.

Chapter 4 is about moral weakness.

Chapter 5 analyzes "the general scientific concept of educational aim." Overestimated, is his judgment; an educational aim can function as an orientation.

Levering's concluding chapter states that the whole enterprise of science is far more dependent on our sociohistorical situation than formerly believed, and he emphasizes that educational science can be more challenging if it is more aware of its limitations.

Reading the text we are tempted to raise many questions, such as: What is "moral weakness"? Do we ever meet that phenomenon in daily life, or is it just an illusion, a term created by moralistic minds? Or why does the author not call his enterprise a philosophical one? Why that insistence on being an "empirical science" since all his main authorities are philosophers? Why does he not give us an analysis at the second level? Is it because what is worthwhile can be stated by an adequate description at the level of daily life which always implies living with others; ergo interaction including dissent and norm diversity?

We will resist these temptations and restrict ourselves to two central themes, which seem to be of some interest for the reader of *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*. First we will ask, what sense does it make to say that "Conceptual Analysis" as an empirical method is as good as a phenomenological analysis? Second, is the model, the framework for analysis of the relation between norms and facts, an adequate model?

Is "Conceptual Analysis" as good ("not deficient" [p. 162] says the author modestly) as phenomenological analysis? My answer would be: they have very different aims.

Conceptual analysis wants to clarify the concepts that are used in a specific field, be it education itself or the science of education. The way Wittgenstein did this job of clarification is quite different from the way Ryle, Austin, or Steutel (a Dutch author who also supports the thesis that conceptual analysis is about the same as phenomenological analysis) pursue this enterprise. One of the problems I have with Levering's text is that he does not make clear whose side he is on. Certainly sometimes on Wittgenstein's side: "Philosophy, as we use the word, is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us

(*Blue and Brown Books*, p. 27). "In this sense philosophical investigations are conceptual investigations (Zettel, p. 458)" (Brand, 1979, p. 168). Conceptual analysis also has a therapeutic function: A careful analysis of the use of language shows us where our language misleads us. That function is often aptly taken care of by Levering's thoughtful questioning of the too easy positional statements of developmental psychologists. It is one of the most convincing parts of his dissertation/book.

Clearing the way through bushes of misunderstandings is a very useful task that Levering's language analysis performs. He shows us that there is no problem where we thought there was misunderstanding. In other words, conceptual analysis shows us a way out where we were on the wrong track. But does it show us a way in? Does it show us a way into the realities we want to know about?

Hardly. One of the distressing experiences of my life has been that I felt obliged to read some language analysis authors.

Not only did I become bored (in the case of Levering's text, not so bored because of his good sense of humor), but often I had the strange, but strong impression that these people live on another planet—certainly not a planet where children are alive, loud, and dirty, or whatever children can be. Theirs is a planet without real live people. That goes even for Austin. His famous performatives, "I promise" and so forth are an interesting observation as far as their structure goes, but it does not seem to make that much difference if it is a promise to give you a nice meal tomorrow, a loan, or to be with someone for better or worse. And that is partially also true for Levering's treatment of lying and children. We get some insight into some possible structures of lying, but I miss in his accounts the reality of life. The *Sitz im Leben*, how it really is to lie, or to believe your own fantasies and so forth. The dilemmas that children face, the way they work around demanding adults who have such a curious way of putting things in stupid clichés: "You must always tell the truth, but if you do then you get punished, or your friend gets caught, and who wants to do that!" Why does language analysis miss the spirit and soul of real life? One of the possible answers is that language philosophers have not really thought about that fundamental human condition that Heidegger called being-in-the-world, and that goes with *Befindlichkeit*, that fundamental pathic quality that is grounding ourselves with two feet, with our whole bodily being in a real world of all our senses, where we are connected before any reflection can set in. As Gendlin put it very aptly, *sich befinden* [finding oneself] thus

has three allusions: the reflexivity of finding oneself; feeling; and being situated (p. 44).

English translations often talk about "mood," "being tuned": It is that, but at the same time it is also something more fundamental. It is not "internal," but precisely "Being *in* the world," and it comes, for the description of the phenomenologist, with an understanding that this "mood" is basic to every articulation, also to every language articulation, be it in daily life or in the discourses of the human scientist.

As language analysis is "forgetful" of its own "pathic" preconditions, it lacks descriptive power. In his famous Preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1974) says so aptly, "It is a matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing ... we must begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world of which science is the second order expression" (p. viii). This seems to me the main objection to the all too easy equation of language analysis and phenomenology. The former misses this understanding of the worldliness of our experiences; it makes language analysis go out on its own, in a world of its own creation, without touching base; forgetting that the academic rooms of Oxford, Cambridge, or the Uithof in Utrecht are only a small part of the world. And children in those settings are just aliens: Their feelings become wordless qualities. In a later stage of science, these feelings have then to be put back as driving forces, called motivations, and so forth. Almost the same happens to norms—they become abstract entities, eluding our grip, and still they have to be somewhere.

In reality they were there all the time where they belong, at the very heart of our existence. This loss of a sense of reality leads also to a loss of connection with what Wittgenstein called the "forms of life," the doing and acting that is the fabric of our existence. Without a real life connectedness, including sociohistoric, and personal-historic dimensions, without an awareness of that and a description that grows out of it, any analysis, and certainly language analysis, remains at the periphery of the important questions that we should deal with. The reader has certainly noticed that my answer to the first question naturally has led me to the second question: How to analyze norms?

Levering and phenomenologists agree that there should be first a description of the ordinary life world when norms and facts are interconnected and united. Do we need, then, a higher level of reflection where one first discovers conflicts and then analyzes the norms separately from the facts?

First of all one faces on that meta-level insurmountable epistomological paradoxes and riddles. Second, one has to save the confessed "practical" sense of the whole discourse about values, to introduce basic "value" stipulations. But, worse, we find that one takes the life out of reality. But is that not the price we have to pay to construct a general theory? I ask, do we need a general framework?

Maybe we feel a need for that, but there is no ground for such a theory, as Levering himself knows, when he talks about postmodern philosophy.

How can a postmodern phenomenology solve the question: How can we analyze values, norms, and rules if they are always connected with facts? I believe that we can do this by description and reflection, description of not one life form, but of a variety of life forms, norms, and rules. Phenomenological description can open up reality through descriptions where a reality is not only seen in its facticity, but also as one possibility among many. Imagination is a part of the human way of making sense of the world. We construct new realities within the boundaries of a personal-historical and social-historical world. What is given is ground and condition of possibilities. "What is given, what is to be accepted, *leads* us" (Brand, 1979, p. 153).

Let us quote Wittgenstein again since he has a greater credibility value in this context:

> Language is the only language there is. The language in which I speak about language is language itself.
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> I formerly believed that there exists an everyday language in which we all normally speak and a primary language which expresses what we really know, that is, the phenomena. I also spoke about a first and second system.... I now believe that we essentially have only one language, and that is ordinary language. (Brand, 1979, p. 65)

Wittgenstein's solution is that we can, within the space of our everyday language, create partial systems of everyday language: for example, the language of visible space and language of Euclidean space. We can also in real life abstain from some specific value statement: for example, that color is red. I maybe like that color while you do not; but we agreed only to talk about color classification.

That seems a reasonable approach. It circumvents some epistemological problems that will haunt us if we keep thinking about meta level solutions (Levering's position here is not that clear to me), but it does not seem adequate for our discussion.

There are paradoxes here, ambivalences and ambiguities. No "trick" can explain them away! One rather acknowledges as part of our human condition that it is possible to be at the same time observer and participant, but in a reflective attitude; that our job is to look back, rather than from above; from a historical perspective, rather than an abstract, general perspective.

As Merleau-Ponty (1974) said, a complete suspension of our involvement in the world is impossible, but we can suspend some of our beliefs without losing the very involvement in the world that makes even our suspension possible as a real act of wonder in the face of the world. I happen to think that this wonder implies a care for the world that has to precede every philosophy: a care for parents, teachers, and especially children that has to precede every theory of education. Our theory can only be as good as this care is genuine and incorporated into that theory. Our basic lack of engagement may be one of the main reasons most of our theories are not that good at all.

Once this foundation, which is more than a stipulation, is there, we can of course in our reflection temporarily stay outside of specific activities and norms we want to describe, see other possible norm-realizations, and at the same time be connected to our field of inquiry by an intimate and compassionate understanding.

The latter makes it possible to understand what is relevant. The first, as reflective distance, makes it possible to look at some specific norms as special facts that guide or misguide us. In the last case we may realize that they are guiding signs (facts) that have to be changed. The world as I found it does not have to be the same world as I leave it.

As a matter of fact this kind of analysis is often what Levering performs with lucidity and precision. He certainly does not need to become an advocate for phenomenology for that. Maybe he should not have joined the chorus of phenomenology-bashers. At least, he could have referred to phenomenology in his dissertation with a capital letter *P* as he always did with Language Analysis? At a "higher" level I think he should have given both just a plain lower case! His is a thoughtful book that makes the reader think and revise his or her own position. What more can one ask?

References

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