



EDUCATION FROM A POST-POST-FOUNDATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE AND FOR POST-POST-FOUNDATIONALIST CONDITIONS

Author:

JL van der Walt

Affiliation:

Faculty of Education
Sciences, North-West
University, Potchefstroom
Campus

Correspondence to:

JL van der Walt

Email:

hannesv290@gmail.com

Postal address:

Private Bag X6001,
Potchefstroom Campus,
North-West University,
Potchefstroom, 2520,
South Africa

Dates:

Accepted: 01 Jun. 2015

Published: 01 Sep. 2015

How to cite this article:

Van der Walt, J. L., 2015,
'Education from a post-
post-foundationalist
perspective and for
post-post-foundationalist
conditions' KOERS
— Bulletin for Christian
Scholarship 80(1), Art.
#2211, 8 pages. [http://
dx.doi.org/10.19108/
koers.80.1.2211](http://dx.doi.org/10.19108/koers.80.1.2211)

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Viewed from a Western historical-philosophical perspective, there seem to be at least three broad philosophical orientations on the basis of which Christian educators could approach their pedagogical task. The first is to approach it from a modernist (foundationalist, rationalist) perspective in terms of which the principles and guidelines gleaned from the Bible are cast into a coherent and all-embracing theory that is deterministically applied to ensure certain pedagogical outcomes. The second is just the opposite, namely to operate post-foundationalistically on the basis of a loose collection of Biblical principles and values, and hence to expect the child or young person to muddle through in the postmodern maze in which they are growing up nowadays. The third, referred to in this article as a post-post-foundationalist orientation, an orientation that arguably also can respond appropriately to post-modern conditions, allows the educator to effectively steer through between these two extremes.

Keywords: Christian educators, foundationalist, post(post) foundationalism, postmodern conditions

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Daar is, gesien vanuit Westerse histories-filosofiese perspektief, ten minste drie breë filosofiese oriëntasies op grondslag waarvan die Christenopvoeder sy or haar pedagogiese taak kan uitvoer. Die eerste is om vanuit 'n modernistiese (foundationalistiese, rasionalistiese) perspektief die beginsels en riglyne wat uit die Skrif verkry word te giet in 'n samehangende en alomvattende teorie wat deterministies toegepas kan word ten einde sekere uitkomst met die opvoedingshandeling te verseker. Die tweede is presies die teenoorgestelde hiervan, naamlik om post-foundationalisties op te voed aan die hand van 'n losse versameling Bybelse beginsels en waardes, en in werklikheid te verwag dat die kind of die jongmens maar deur die hedendaagse postmoderne doolhof moet voortstroom. Die derde oriëntasie, waarna in hierdie artikel verwys word as post-post-foundationalisties en wat dalk ook gepas is vir die huidige postmoderne omstandighede, laat die opvoeder toe om effektief tussen hierdie twee uiterstes deur te stuur.

Sleutelterm: Christelike opvoeders, foundationalisties, post(post) foundationalisme, post-moderne toestande





SHORTCOMINGS OF BOTH A FOUNDATIONALIST AND A POST-FOUNDATIONALIST ORIENTATION WITH REFERENCE TO A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION

The phrase “Biblical approach to education” simply means that an educator such as a parent or a teacher approaches his or her pedagogical interactions with another person, usually a child or a young adult, on the basis of certain principles and perspectives that have been gleaned from the Bible. The straightforwardness of this statement can be deceptive, however, because the explanatory phrase “on the basis of certain perspectives that have been gleaned from the Bible” elicits a number of further questions. Only one of those questions concerns us here, namely: on the basis of which philosophical orientation does an educator (or: should an educator) glean perspectives on education from the Bible, and from which philosophical orientation does (or should) he or she process and systematise such perspectives into an entirety or “whole” that makes sense to the educator and all other parties involved in the pedagogical experience? The question can also be phrased as follows: does the educator just select, in eclectic fashion, a number of loose perspectives and apply them as conditions dictate, or does she attempt to fuse all the different perspectives into a single cohesive pedagogical approach or view that can be systematically applied so that certain predictable outcomes can be reached? And if she fuses them into a systematic approach, on the basis of what fundamental or worldview perspective does she do this, or should she do this?

The questions above demonstrate that there are at least two avenues open to educators. On the one hand, an educator could avail herself of a plethora of disparate Biblical pointers with respect to education, act upon them, and hope for the desired pedagogical outcome. On the other hand, she could attempt to fuse them all together into a coherent framework, thought system or what has become known as a grand narrative, and apply this system systematically and conscientiously for the purpose of attaining certain predictable pedagogical outcomes. As will be argued below, the first approach could be seen as post-modernistic or post-foundationalist, and the second as modernistic or foundationalist. These terms will be explained in more detail as the argument unfolds.

There is a third possibility, however, and that is the main thrust of this article, namely an attempt could be made on the part of the educator who wishes to educate on the basis of Biblical principles to steer a course between these alternatives, a third way which we will refer to below as a post-post-foundationalist approach to education theory and practice based on Biblical principles. We live in times that are characterised by the co-existence of all three of these perspectives; it has therefore become necessary for educators working on the basis of Biblical principles to reflect on the viability of these possible orientations and to decide upon the one that would best suit an attempt to educate from a Biblical perspective.

The purpose of this article is to help with such reflection. In order to reach its goal, the remainder of this article is structured

as follows. The next section contains an analysis of a recent contribution towards post-post-foundationalism in which two points are raised: the need to develop an approach appropriate for post-post-foundationalist times, and the need to develop a post-post-foundationalist Biblical worldview *per se*. The sections thereafter are devoted to discussions of foundationalism, post-foundationalism and post-post-foundationalism and their implications for education on Biblical grounds. The article concludes with a recommendation about the way forward for education from a Biblical perspective.

OLTHUIS' BOLD GAMBIT

Olthuis (2012) recently made a noteworthy attempt to move the notion of a Biblical worldview into the arena of 21st century (postmodern) thought. He firstly asserted that there seems to be general agreement that “there are no innocent, unbiased ways of looking at the world, that everyone wears glasses and looks at the world through a particular lens, window or frame, the idea of worldview has become common currency” (Olthuis 2012:1). Postmodernism has vindicated the notion among Christian scholars that “all knowledge is perspectival, worldview-ish, rooted in a particular historical and cultural setting, rather than universal or absolute” (Olthuis 2012:1). None of us, he claims, begins from a position of innocence; prejudices are not all bad – they are the frames (worldviews) from which we see the world and make sense of it. We all begin and end in the surrender of faith. We all work from a certain spiritual vantage point (cf. Olthuis 2012:5). Postmodernism, he continues (Olthuis 2012:2), does not need to be seen as the enemy; he substantiates this by saying that in his article he “will be arguing that, in a number of important aspects, Postmodernism is more a boon than a bane to the cause of Christ. Indeed, as [he sees] it, there are a number of cardinal features of Postmodernism that deserve to be recognised, honoured and accounted for in a Christian worldview – even if, in terms of the Gospel, they will be revised, even radicalised, in what [he] calls a post-postmodern biblical worldview” (Olthuis 2012:2). In view of this, Olthuis (2012:1-2) made the bold move to seek for an alternative, which he formulates as follows: “How best do we advocate – and if necessary, rework or recalibrate – a biblical worldview in our postmodern world of the 21st century? Indeed, I will be working towards the formation of what I will be calling a post-postmodern Christian worldview.”

Analysis of this intention shows that Olthuis has touched on two different problems. He firstly speaks of a Biblical worldview IN and FOR our postmodern world of the 21st century, and secondly, of the formulation of a post-postmodern worldview *per se*. These two formulations have implications for the future of a Biblical worldview in the modern world: (a) A biblical worldview IN and FOR a postmodern cultural dispensation may remain unchanged in itself; we only need to find ways to make it plausible and acceptable in order to stem the tide of secularism; the Biblical worldview itself remains in essence untouched. (b) The formulation of a post-postmodern Biblical worldview *per se*, on the other hand, would entail a change in and of the Biblical worldview itself; the Biblical worldview itself will be changed or adapted to postmodern conditions. The question then arises whether a Biblical worldview could be reworked in





such a manner. Will it not lose its intrinsic Biblical character? Olthuis (2012:2) seems to think that such a change or adaptation is possible, hence his claim that “there are certain cardinal features of Postmodernism that deserve to be recognised, honoured and accounted for in a Christian worldview...” He then devotes the rest of the argument in his article to his effort to show how such recognition of postmodernism could be accounted for in a Christian worldview.

AN EVEN EARLIER ATTEMPT TO CIRCUMNAVIGATE BOTH FOUNDATIONALISM AND POST-FOUNDATIONALISM

Although, as far as could be established, Olthuis (2012) has made a breakthrough with his effort to revisit the Christian worldview in order to move beyond foundationalism (modernism) and post-foundationalism (postmodernism), he was not the first to attempt such a move. As far back as the 1990s, certain scholars felt that something might be amiss with the current philosophical orientation, namely the choice that people had between two equally unacceptable coexistent orientations: foundationalism (modernism) and post-foundationalism (postmodernism) (Talin & Ellis 2002:36). In reaction, cultural philosopher Frederick Turner (1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b, 1995), for instance, came up with the idea of a radical centre of values, a stance that according to him evades both the rigid formalism and moralism of foundationalism and the relativism of post-foundationalism.

Turner (2000: *passim*) was convinced that in postmodern circumstances people find it difficult to share the same value system, and he came up with the idea of a solvent in the form of a radical centre of values that could help people come to an understanding of a common medium for all kinds of cultural information, a set of values that all people potentially could agree to, and on which they could base their future interactions with one another (Turner 1990a:85, 97). He argued that as the human race recognised itself as a “we” it will be more and more surprised by the otherness of the other. Turner made this claim in the hope that moral values may one day be less arbitrary and thus more negotiable than they are today. In brief, Turner (1990b:745) hoped that it might be possible to develop some universal norms from an understanding of human nature. In his own way, according to Talen and Ellis (2002:36), Turner defined a position that “rejects ... the acute relativism of postmodernists and the rigid moralism of traditional conservatives” (i.e. modernists or foundationists, as we would refer to them today).

Turner’s thesis of a radical centre of values has echoed in the thoughts of others (from a variety of religious, philosophical and life view perspectives), such as Hampshire (2003:133, 137-139) who contended that the problem of different and frequently conflicting values can be resolved through arbitration in a rational and logical way by people intent on peacefully living together. Bower (2005: 225) also argued that values were largely universal, and Grayling (2002:8) that an informed mind will come out in favour of the truth. Harris (2010:70) searched for a structure that reflects and enforces our deeper understanding of human well-being. Wright (2009: 424-426) and Rée and Urmson

(2005:125) depend on intuition to bring us to general moral principles. The core of the radical centre of values, according to Talen and Ellis (2002:36, 37), is the thesis that there are durable, lasting and time-tested truths, values and discoveries that might be gleaned from the value systems that all individuals hold. Needleman’s (2008: 108-109) “ethics of the threshold” theory and Makrides’ (2013:264, 266) trans-confessional theory are also akin to Turner’s radical centre of values thesis. In Talen and Ellis’ (2002:37) opinion, there is a need for such normative theorising in a world stripped of meaning by postmodernism and reductionist views of nature and society. Our view of the world, Needleman (2008:107) insists, should be based on our answers to the question who one is, what one ought to be and how one ought to behave. People need a society that is relatively free from unpredictability (Parekh 2000:145), something that is impossible in the fluid conditions of postmodernism.

A comparison of the post-post-modern approaches of Olthuis (see previous section) and Turner *cum suis* reveals that whereas the latter aimed at discovering a radical centre of values in a secular (non-religious, non-spiritual, non-faith) sense, Olthuis aimed at getting around the value fluidity of postmodernism by suggesting an overhaul of the Christian or Biblical worldview or at least a reinterpretation of certain basic tenets of the Christian worldview in terms that would make sense in postmodern conditions. Turner *cum suis* seemed to search for common ground in a set of shared secular values, which according to Swartz (2006), Zecha (2007) and Nieuwenhuis (2010) must unavoidably be minimalistic. This does not mean, however, that Christians cannot participate in a search for common ground in terms of shared values. Van der Walt (2007: 156), for instance, mentions the possibility of searching for common values through interactive dialogue, Powlinson (2003: 242) sought for a unifying perspective and Lategan (2010:152) suggests that “certain intellectual judgements” could perform this task.

While radical Christian thinkers such as Van der Walt, Powlinson and Lategan, including educationists such as the author of this article, understand the value of searching for a radical centre of values where people of different religious and worldview persuasion could meet and interact for the sake of peaceful coexistence, they find this solution to the problem of getting around both foundationalism and post-foundationalism unsatisfactory because of the thinness or minimalistic nature of the values in the radical value centre. The way shown by Olthuis is more satisfactory in that it conforms to Christians’ calling as children of the Lord. The remainder of this article is, therefore, devoted to a tentative search for a *post-post-foundationalist* approach to education based on Biblical principles.

FOUNDATIONALISM AND POST-FOUNDATIONALISM NOT THE ANSWER

Foundationalism, in the “classical” sense, was part of the Enlightenment project: human reason was supposed to be able to attain certain knowledge based on self-evident foundational experiences or a priori propositions from which necessary and universal conclusions could be reached. Absolutism guided the definition of Reason (with a capital “R”). In some cases, foundationalists saw scientific language as attempting to





re-present a meta-narrative System (with a capital “S”) that corresponds precisely to reality, while others settled for a local-narrative system (with a lower case “s”) that is merely internally coherent (Schults 1999:2). A modernist or foundationalist approach to life is characterised by the assumption that there are certain fixed and firm foundations in the form of widely accepted norms, principles or values, usually embodied in life and world views or in philosophical systems (Makrides 2013:253). It is also characterised by a systematic appeal to human reasoning to gain an understanding of reality (Makrides 2013:255, 271, 272). It assumes that we have foundational beliefs that are independent of the support of other beliefs (Schults 1999:2). In its quest for a totalizing knowledge of the truth, foundationalism privileges epistemology as the primary enterprise of philosophy (Schults 1999:8).

While Christian educationists reject the foundationalist deification of reason and the certainty sought within the modern project, *inter alia* in its positivistic guise (Makrides 2013:271-2), they also question, together with the postmodernists (post-foundationalists), the validity of all-encompassing narratives and absolute claims for capturing and understanding reality in an objective way. They do not, however, go as far as some post-, anti- or non-foundationalists as to take total leave of firm foundations in the form of the norms, principles or values that they glean or derive from the Bible and which are embodied in a Biblical life and worldview.

Generally speaking, post-foundationalists (postmodernists) tend to hold the belief that reality is more complex and multi-layered than one might at first glance think, and hence requires a more flexible and open attitude that allows for the existence of even contradictory perspectives (Makrides 2013:271-2). As mentioned, post-foundationalism has generally moved away from all-encompassing narratives and absolute claims for capturing and understanding reality in an objective way. Since humans are seen as forming an integral part of reality, intending to understand it not as outside or neutral observers but as involved persons, the attainment of final, precise, objective and perennial knowledge about things may be seen as rather illusory, undermining the optimism about correct knowledge, the necessity to control the world, the dream of absolute certainty and the making of universal claims that are supported in one or the other form in the modern context. Postmodernism as post-foundationalism stands rather for the relativity and the partiality of all human discourses, a pluralism of methods and approaches, the multidimensionality of reality, and the potential of mixing seemingly incompatible perspectives (Makrides 2013:273).

Postmodernists – post-foundationalists, as they will henceforth be referred to – see the world as multi-layered, plural and tolerant, allowing many, even mutually contradictory standpoints in their ranks. Post-foundationalism also has a relativising character that rejects notions of exclusivity, absoluteness (in the sense of thinking on the basis of firm and solid norms or life view foundations) (Makrides 2013: 253). Post-foundationalists not only question but also reject the systematic appeal to human reasoning but also relativise a systematic appeal to human reasoning and recognise the

contingency and limitations of human discursive (verbal and non-verbal) potential and practices when attempting to gain an understanding of reality (Makrides 2013:255, 271, 272). They have relinquished the dream of controlling the world, of absolute certainty and the making of universal claims. They rather stand for the relativity and the partiality of all human discourse, a pluralism of methods and approaches, the multidimensionality of reality, and the potential of mixing seemingly incompatible perspectives (Makrides 2013:273). Post-foundationalists believe, says Schults (1999:3, 8), that we cannot get “behind” or “under” our beliefs to justify them; all we have are the criteria of coherence with other beliefs within our culturally conditioned web.

Educationalists and educators who base their pedagogical work on Biblical principles and norms find a radical post-foundationalist approach to education as unacceptable as a foundationalist approach, and indeed for the reasons discussed in the following section (with reference to Richard Rorty’s post-, anti- or non-foundationalist views. Rorty’s views are relevant in pedagogical context because of his ideas about edification. In developing his views regarding this subject, he tends not only towards a post-foundational view but also to an anti- or non-foundationalist stance.).

The need for a firmer “principal”¹ foundation

According to Wright (2010:120-123), Rorty’s views could mean the end of education as we know it because they imply a detachment of knowledge from reality; understanding could be equated with unconstrained imagination, solipsistic experience and interpretation, and education limited to the role of stimulating private desires. Education along the lines proposed by anti- or non-foundationalists such as Rorty could lead to students failing to obtain knowledge of reality because they might be led to believe that there is no such thing as objective reality, no actual order of things, and that the notion of “reality” only exists within the teacher and the students’ conventions, linguistic constructions and personal experience. To educate along these lines, according to Wright (2010:123), is to fall into the epistemic fallacy of confusing reality with knowledge of reality – the fallacy of denying the reality of the universe simply because it is beyond our intellectual powers to fully comprehend it.

To deny the existence of foundations such as principles, norms and firm life and world view suppositions is likewise fallacious. The fallacy of such denial can be illustrated from the work of post-foundationalist Rorty himself, where he appeals to the norms and standards of neo-liberalism, social-democracy, a particular community, practice, experience and effectiveness in practice (does it work? as a norm). In one of his books, Rorty (1999:xxii-xxv) pertinently refers to norms such as “more useful and the less useful,” its effectiveness in attempting “to serve transitory purposes and solve transitory problems,” its efficiency in accomplishing a certain task, its ability to “achieve coordination of behaviour,” its ability to “suit our purposes.”

1 This neologism embodies the idea of a foundation consisting of definite principles or points of departure.





Elsewhere (Rorty 1996b:45) he makes statements that clearly refer to norms such as those referred to above, illustrating that it is indeed impossible for any person to think and argue without appeal to some or other foundation, whether this foundation is only superficial, as in Rorty's case, or deep and profound, as in the case of individuals who appeal to life and world view principles and even religious convictions. Lee (2007:163-164) is therefore correct in concluding that "Rorty drop[ped] the anchor of his epistemology of justification of knowledge not on a foundational proposition, but on society."

Van Niekerk (2005:22, 24, 26, 28, 31, 33, 35, 39) also launched several points of criticism against Rorty's anti- or post-foundationalism: his unwillingness to strive for certain knowledge and grounded facts; his derivation of norms from certain communities and traditions; his search for generally acceptable "truths" (which is reminiscent of Turner's radical value centre theory); his Darwinian-pragmatic view that knowledge claims only make sense in relation to functions and purposes, and that knowledge acquisition is nothing more than a set of coping mechanisms in terms of which we survive; the fact that he seems to say that intellectual discourse should only occur for ethical (utilitarian) and not epistemological reasons; that he does not search for foundations but merely wishes to explain "how things hang together", and also that he avails himself of standard philosophical discourse while denying doing it.

The turn to a post-post-foundationalist orientation to life in general, and to education in particular

Christians in general, and Christian educators in particular, clearly find it difficult, if not impossible, to live and educate in the midst of the values patchwork characteristic of postmodernism (post-foundationalism). They are willing, on Biblical grounds, to examine the possibilities of living and educating on the basis of a radical centre of values which can be universally shared, as Turner suggested (see above). They regard, for instance, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa (the manifest of human rights) as a radical centre of values on the basis of which South Africans have entered into a social contract with one another. However, as indicated, they regard these values as minimalist, needing to be filled with life and worldview content to make them meaningful to the individuals of which South African society is made up.

The Christian approach as such differs from a minimalist social contract approach in that the former rests on distinctive Biblical principles such as the recognition of creation by the triune God, the fall into sin by humanity, human depravity, redemption in Jesus Christ and sanctification through the Holy Spirit. These principles are so uniquely Christian that they cannot be shared by non-Christians and hence cannot form part of the radical centre of values. The question that now faces us is how Christians can adhere to these unique Biblical principles in the values-patchwork society in which they live and work in the early 21st century. One solution to this problem, not only for Christians, but for all people who entertain a life and worldview characterised by such unique principles, is to live in accordance with a post-post-foundationalist orientation. This contention

will be substantiated in the remainder of this section. The final section of this article will be devoted to a brief discussion of the pedagogical implications of such a post-post-foundationalist orientation.

Whereas Turner and others experienced problems with the divisions brought about by the grand narratives associated with foundationalism and by the values-patchwork of post-foundationalism and hence resorted to the search for a radical centre of values, and whereas Rorty questioned foundationalism as such and hence resorted to a wholesale rejection of foundations (cf. his anti-, post- or non-foundationalist stance), Wilber (2000:ix-x, 37), Wright (2010:131) and Olthuis (2012:2) went in search of an orientation that would acknowledge the possibility of built-in convictions to play their role in the background and hence enable one to steer through between claims regarding universal and absolute truths and an "anything goes" type of relativism (as embodied in, for instance, ludic postmodernism). A post-post-foundationalist approach will enable a thinker to steer through between modernism (foundationalism) "with its faith in reason, science and technology as the singular, linear, inexorable and progressive forces for health, knowledge, continual growth and success" on the one hand (Olthuis 2012:2), and postmodernism's (post-foundationalism's) desire to embrace difference (mutual recognition, attunement and empowerment), deference for the other, difference, pluralism and love for the other.

In line with a post-post-foundationalist² orientation, Van Huyssteen (2004:10) argues for the abandonment of modernist notions of rationality typically rooted in foundationalism and the quest for secure foundations for the various domains of knowledge while on the other hand he rejects all forms of deconstructive postmodernism and the adoption of relativist forms of non-foundationalism or contextualism as reactions against universalist notions of rationality. His post-post-foundationalist stance is clear: over against the objectivism of foundationalism and the extreme relativism of most forms of non-foundationalism, Van Huyssteen's post-post-foundationalist notion of rationality helps to acknowledge contextuality, the shaping role of tradition and of interpreted experience, while at the same time enabling scholars to reach out beyond their own groups, communities, and cultures, in plausible forms of inter-subjective, cross-contextual, and cross-disciplinary conversations.

Scholars, as rational agents, are always socially and contextually imbedded. On this view, Van Huyssteen (2004:11) claims, rationality is alive and well in *all* the domains of human life. He argues that all the many faces of human rationality relate directly to a pre-theoretical reasonableness, a "common-sense rationality" that informs and is present in our everyday goal-directed actions. From these everyday activities in ordinary time we can identify epistemic values like intelligibility, discernment, responsible judgement, and deliberation, which

² Van Huyssteen himself refers to this orientation as post-foundationalist. Since postmodernism can be regarded as post-foundationalist, we refer to this orientation as post-post-foundationalist, i.e. post-postmodernist.





guide us when on an intellectual level we come to responsible theory choice and commitment. It is in the pursuit of these goals and ideals that we become rational persons as we learn the skills of responsible judgement and discernment, and where we articulate the best available reasons we have for making what we believe to be the right choices, those *reasons we have for holding on to certain beliefs*, and the *strong convictions* we have for acting in certain ways. For this reason we cannot talk abstractly and theoretically about the phenomenon of rationality anymore; it is only as individual human beings, living with other human beings in concrete situations, contexts, and traditions, that we can claim some form of rationality, Van Huyssteen avers. He then correctly argues that a person always relates to his or her world through interpreted experience only (Van Huyssteen 2004:46, 118).

Olthuis's (2012) arguments in favour of a post-postmodern worldview can similarly be construed to be post-post-foundationalist. Olthuis (2012: 1) says, for instance, that in future worldviews need not be seen, in the first place, as conceptual systems but rather as faith-oriented, sensory expectancy filters operating implicitly and largely beneath our conscious awareness, i.e. somewhere in the background of our consciousness. It is now widely acknowledged that everyone comes outfitted with a wide array of pre-judgements, that everyone has built-in biases, and that all of these built-in convictions et cetera help us to gain our own peculiar perspective on what we experience in life. There are no innocent, unbiased ways of looking at the world; everyone looks at the world through a particular lens, window or frame. There is a limit to knowledge, and knowledge is never disinterested, neutral, a-temporal or a-spatial. There is, on the other hand, no such thing as Universal Reason to which one could authoritatively appeal; reason is always qualified and partial, in the service of wider and broader interests. There are no knock-down, airtight logical arguments that are universally valid, proving a certain position as unassailable. Grand narratives that purport to explain everything do not exist; no theory will ever be able to explain reality in all its facets (Olthuis 2012:3). Rather, Olthuis (2012:4) argues, from a post-post-foundationalist perspective worldview should not be seen as static, explicit and conceptually based but rather as a host of non-rational, unconscious and implicit ways of knowing and understanding that play their respective roles in the formation and function of worldviews. It is these implicit ways of knowing that require more and focused attention in a post-post-foundationalist world: a panoply of senses – an intuitive sensorium – aids our orienting in the world. He correctly observes: "... even if it is implicit, operating largely beneath our conscious awareness, we sense our way through the world as much, if not more, than we think our way through. Thus, what we have called a worldview is as much a matter of the imagination as of the intellect, as much unconscious as conscious, involving world-feeling, world-touching, world-smelling and world-hearing. It is by our implicit, often inarticulate awareness of our intuition ... by our bodily attunement, by our learned physical, emotional and moral reflexes, that we make our way in the world." Post-post-foundationalism "attends to and makes room for the invisible, the unconscious, the emotional, all the non-rational ways of knowing; not as second-rate, subservient, irrational

forces to be repressed, feared or discounted, but as necessary, indispensable co-contributors in the multidimensional process of human development. [...] everything is relational and contextual. The invisible and non-rational, as we have indicated, is just as important as the visible and the rational. What is not said is just as important, if not more so, than what is said" (Olthuis 2012:4-5).

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VALUES PATCHWORK OF POSTMODERNISM

What are the implications of a post-post-foundationalist orientation for Christian education? Olthuis (2012) has given a few, which can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the Christian educator with a post-post-foundationalist orientation should accept that the Christian life and worldview is only one among many. Although we share many of the same values with people of different persuasion, we fill those values with different life and worldview content, namely Biblical content. Although we share certain values with them, we fill them Biblically (Olthuis 2012:3). We secondly recognise the need for the dethronement of reason (with a capital "R"). We henceforth apply reason as common sense rationality and not as a divine principle. Life is more than just thinking and logic (Olthuis 2012:3-4). In the third place, we should adapt to post-modern circumstances, among others by accommodating difference. A post-post-foundationalist Biblical worldview needs to be hospitable to and respectful of difference. That is a Biblical mandate (Lv 19:33), Olthuis (2012:2) says. The main thrust of Olthuis' article is, in the fourth place, that educators should understand that "world-viewing and worldviews are about much more than seeing and vision. All of our senses are involved. We see, but also feel, touch, smell our way through the world. An intuitive ... panoply of senses develops which implicitly aids our orienting. Indeed, even if it is implicit, operating largely beneath our conscious awareness, we sense our way through the world as much, if not more, than we think our way through. Thus, a worldview is as much a matter of the imagination as of the intellect, as much unconscious as conscious, involving world-feeling, world-touching, world-smelling and world-hearing. It is by our implicit, often inarticulate awareness of our intuition ... by our bodily attunement, by our learned physical, emotional and moral reflexes, that we make our way in the world. Recognising the role of all our senses in finding our way in the world suggests that we would do well to talk of world-orienting rather than world-viewing" (Olthuis 2012:4). In view of this, education becomes a process of world-orienting or world-viewing (Olthuis 2012:5).

A post-post-foundationalist approach to education also has implications for the style of educating. If, in a pedagogical situation, the educator might attempt, in an authoritarian manner, to inculcate his or her values in the child,³ the very characteristics that makes a child unique are bracketed, denied or ignored. The differences between educator and child tend to be denied in this scenario. Reason denies the otherness of the

3 The "banking" approach to education that Paulo Freire so vehemently rejected.





other (in this case, the child). The credo of foundationalism was/is totalised mastery and control: educators tend to pass off their own pedagogical and value agendas on the (powerless) children as the voice of reason and authority (Olthuis 2012:3). A post-foundationalist approach, in contrast, purports not to depart from any a priori assumptions, in extreme cases, the attitude of “anything goes”. An educator with this theoretical attitude might be tempted to allow the child to follow its own head. The educator’s refusal to acknowledge the existence of pedagogical values in his life might lead him or her to let the child have free reign and to follow its own whims.

A post-post-foundationalist approach, as the “new” option for the future, steers a course between these two extremes. A problem is approached with the understanding and realisation that assumptions and convictions indeed play their respective roles in the background, but should not be imposed on any other party, for instance a child. Solutions should be discovered in a socially constructive and interpretive manner during discussions and deliberations with the various parties involved. The pedagogical implications of this “new” approach are clear: pedagogical guidance takes the form of interaction with the child in which both consider the values concerned, and in which the child is allowed to freely adopt those values that make sense to him or her, not only on rational grounds, but also on the basis of intuition, under the guidance and influence of educators, and just plain common sense.

It is clear from the foregoing that from a post-post-foundationalist perspective, all educators do work from some or other philosophical or life and world view foundation. The difference between a foundationalist, a post-foundationalist and a post-post-foundationalist orientation lies in the degree to which the educator allows his or her philosophical or life and world view foundation to determine the course of the pedagogical process. In a foundationalist approach, the foundations will be applied deterministically to the pedagogical process; in a post-foundationalist approach, the pedagogical process will be allowed to play itself out indeterministically, without direction or guidelines, as it were. A post-post-foundationalist pedagogical orientation steers through between these extremes by employing a post-post-foundationalist view of human reasoning, by leaving room for imagination, interpretation, experience, creativity, openness (open conversation), flexibility, inter-subjectivity and a willingness to adapt to circumstances. In terms of Christian education, this means that Biblical principles will be present in the pedagogical process but will play a role in the back of the educator’s mind; they will not be “up front” and “in your face”, as would have been the case in traditional (foundationalist) Christian education. The educator will occasionally deal consciously with the reasons for entertaining certain firm beliefs and strong convictions, but will try to restrict them to playing their role in the background of his or her thinking. Reflection of this nature will help the educator to interact purposefully and intentionally with the child, to act intelligently, wisely and on the basis of moral imagination. It will help him or her to forward reasons for doing things in a certain way.

Instead of authoritatively imposing certain forms of knowledge, understanding and principles on the child, the educator with a post-post-foundationalist orientation will accompany the child in a process of understanding the world on the basis of interpreted experience (on the basis of presuppositions, principles and convictions that subtly play their roles in the background). Through interpreted experience the child will build a life and worldview that is not static but constantly develops and unfolds, able to keep up with a world that is constantly changing and “sliding”. Education then becomes the process of helping the child understand his or her role as a rational agent in a changing world, as a person with the responsibility of dealing with contextuality, tradition, interpreted experience and reaching out to others (of the same and also of different life and world view persuasion).

CONCLUSION

Educators in general and Christian educators in particular, have reached a cross-road. The children that they teach and educate nowadays, both at home, in the church or at school, live in the context of a postmodern or post-foundationalist orientation to life and to personal existence, in particular. The time has gone for educators to educate from an authoritative foundationalist perspective. Since it would not do justice to the education of children and young people to allow them to just muddle through in a world characterised by a patchwork of values, another pedagogical orientation should be considered. A post-post-foundationalist orientation to pedagogy seems to be most likely to succeed at the present juncture since it entails accompaniment of the child or young person through the postmodern maze.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.





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