

of further ordering by which the matter itself, in its essential nature, is clearly brought to light.

It is important to keep in mind that perceiving, as a gnostic/cognitive mode of learning, is inseparably connected with language and that language is the medium by which the generally valid meaning of the perceived is brought to the fore. Further, it is obvious that perceiving, as a mode of learning, is intertwined with thinking, remembering, imagining, and fantasizing — all of which are gnostic/cognitive modes of learning. Perceiving is, as it were, the beginning of thinking while thinking, to a great extent, completes perceiving. Our possessed experience which, among other things, is the sedimentation of memory, influences our perceiving. If we already know something, it facilitates our perceiving, while a defective possessed experience (knowledge) slows down and obstructs effective perceiving.

### 3.2.2 Thinking

A person's relationship to the world is characterized by a question-answer-activity. It is peculiar to the child that, from an early age, he already asks questions and seeks answers to these questions. Such a questioning attitude shows that the child, early in his life, is already acquainted with the problematic in reality.

Straus calls this questioning attitude the origin of thinking since it is a search for answers and solutions. He says, "The ability to question, to speak, and, it should be added, to think, point to a common source. An investigation of the act of questioning necessarily leads to an investigation of the thought and speech. The act of questioning is the beginning and the origin of thought."

Thinking is pre-eminently a gnostic/cognitive mode of learning which is complementary to perceiving and all of the other modes of learning and which is directed to ordering, to the conceptual, and to the attainment of solutions. The activity of thought by the child is initiated by a problem. This thinking confrontation with the problematic in reality (learning content) compels the child to seek solutions by actions such as, e.g., planning, analysing, comparing, and ordering. It is a gnostic/cognitive activity which is interspersed with aspects of exertion, struggle, resistance, reversal, and overcoming, each of which, separately and jointly, the

child must carry to a better understanding and solution of the problem.

Sommerkus states that the thinking child is directed from his perceiving of reality, as objective reality, to the world of thought — a world in which the objective, the conceptual, insight and understanding are in the foreground. Also, Straus emphasizes thinking as a mode of living directed to the knowledge of and knowing things as they are. Thought has the character of breaking-through (Straus) which involves a distantiating from my original sensing to a level where I attentively try to master the learning content.

To have a good understanding of the breakthrough character of thinking as a mode of learning, it is necessary to direct attention to the inseparable connections between thinking and language. Längweald and Nel indicate by the so-called "genetic (developmental) parallelism" between language and thought that language really serves as the stepping-stone or channel for thought in spite of the fact that thought is genetically (developmentally) prior to the course of language acquisition. If a child's acquisition of language does not progress as desired, his thought is accordingly handicapped. Conversely, the effective acquisition of language promotes the course of thought. For the course of thought, the acquisition of language means the bringing about of a gnostic/cognitive means to the conceptual (Bollinger, Dufrenne). By means of language, the child is in a position to distance himself from the sensory world and, by thinking, to enter the world of the abstract, of thoughts and concepts.

Against the background of these introductory thoughts, we will look further at some of the important modalities of thinking:

#### 3.2.2.1 THINKING IS ABSTRACTING

The leap from concrete reality to the world of the abstract is possible on the basis of the active function of thinking as a mode of learning. Although thinking as a mode of learning cannot be separated from perceiving, still it is to a great extent complementary and is a further analysis, ordering, synthesizing, and, especially, abstracting of the data which become available during perceiving. During thinking, the concrete data which, e.g., come forward during perceiving are exceeded and are handled in terms of concepts and thoughts. Also, the objectivity peculiar to perceiving is not possible without an active support from thinking.



Abstracting is essentially distantiating. This means that the child in his thought separates himself from the concrete and that the concrete only remains in existence in terms of symbols and thoughts.

### 3.2.2.2 THINKING IS CONCEPTUALIZING

To abstract means in reality to think on the level of the conceptual. To understand this modality of thinking, we must again attend to the connection between thinking and language.

Dufrenne puts the connection between language and thinking as follows: "We cannot think without speaking, and the way in which we use language reveals the way in which we think, and ultimately it is the measure of our intelligence." By means of language, we distance ourselves from the immediately perceivable while this distance is also partly abolished by the meaningful concept. The concept becomes, as it were, a substitute for the concrete object while the latter, in its turn, provides the origin for the meaning-filled concept.

Thought transforms the world of the concrete-visible to a world of concepts and this implies abstracting from reality which, at the same time, means a distantiating from it.

By thinking, we also order reality, and this happens via language, since language is for us the "means" (concepts) for establishing the basis on which a meaningful ordering is possible. Thought by the child is thus the handling of reality (learning material, content) on a conceptual level, and it is pre-eminently a gnostic/cognitive affair.

### 3.2.2.3 THINKING IS ORDERING

Although ordering is a modality of perceiving, it can also be viewed as an inherent function of thinking since perceiving is already the beginning of thinking and since the activity of thinking itself brings about ordering.

Thinking is a gnostic/cognitive activity directed to the ordering of reality from a multiplicity to a unity. However, the ordering of reality during thinking rests on the implementation of language because language serves as the means for ordering. Thought achievements, such as analysing, schematizing, synthesizing, comparing, generalizing, etc., are possible on the basis of the possibilities for ordering which lie in language itself.

The ordering of reality from a multiplicity to a unity means that the thinking child is busy analysing, reasoning about, comparing, etc. reality with the view to a *synthesis* or an *understanding* of the essential nature of reality itself.

Child thought is directed to the order which lies in reality itself. By thinking, the child will disclose this and give order to it to strengthen his grip (understanding) on it. Without such ordering, the child stagnates on the level of the concrete, and the symbolic world remains inaccessible to him.

### 3.2.2.4 THINKING IS SOLUTION-DIRECTED

It has already been said that the child's thinking activity is directed to reality as a problem. During thinking, the child searches for a solution to the problem. This implies a pathic/affective readiness to overcome specific gnostic/cognitive resistances and stumbling blocks. This activity is carried by a strong willing that makes it possible for the child to have and to show the perseverance and cognitive effort necessary to solve the problem.

However, it must be clearly understood that the whole of the child's psychic life is functioning during this thinking activity, thus the total of his learning possibilities are in function. In his *thinking* search for a solution, the child calls on his possessed experience (memory), that is, on all relevant knowledge, means, and skills at his disposal as well as on his immediate perceiving, imagining, and fantasizing, all of which place the child in a position to clarify the problem.

By means of a synthesis, it appears obvious that thinking, as a gnostic/cognitive mode of learning, is not only abstracting, conceptualizing, ordering, and solution-directed, but it also strongly supports and supplements the other modes of learning.

### 3.2.3 Imagining and fantasizing

When there is an attempt to understand imagining as a gnostic/cognitive mode of learning, it is first necessary to show the difference and connection between imagining and perceiving. Lersch, Sartre, and Sonnekus have shown that perceiving is a mode by which the person is directed to the *real* world. The perceived object is self-present and directs an appeal to the perceiving person. On the contrary, imagining means an entirely different relationship to reality in the sense that the imagined object is not



really present but is, by an act of imagining, *represented*. Lersch puts it as follows: "In contrast to the reality character of perceiving is the copying character of imagining." By this "copying" character peculiar to imagining, Lersch means that the vividness of perceiving, with its richer differentiations, sharper outlines, and superior detail, is never realised in the act of imagining. Perceiving assumes an involvement with the real world while imagining constitutes an unreal world (Sartre) or a "reality-in-distance". It thus appears that imagining stands in a special relationship to perceiving and, as such, represents a more distantiated relationship to reality. On the other hand, no matter how "unreal" imagining might be, it is necessary connected with previous perceptions since someone imagines *something* himself (Minkowski) and this imagining finds its original basis (fully or partly) in reality. This implies that the "content" of that which is imagined, in one way or another, leads back to reality. This latter statement, however, doesn't mean that imagining always needs to be merely "reproductive", but it can also contain creative moments (aspects).

In this respect, imagining can pass beyond the data of perception since something new or additional is added which does not exist in the original perception. However, the possibility exists that such imagining can be true to or foreign to reality, the latter when strongly connected to one's fantasy-life. By means of imagining, the child can thus pass beyond reality and place himself in the world of the unreal. As such, the act of imagining is a means by which the child can break through reality and, consequently, is free to enter an unreal world, also on a gnostic/cognitive level. Imagining not only contains the possibility of distantiating from and passing beyond reality, but it also makes room for creative intercourse with it. In addition, it is also clear that although imagining in essence is not thinking, it makes thinking possible (Sonnekus), and it can give rise to and even initiate it.

Concerning fantasizing as a mode of learning, it is, in comparison with imagining, an even more distantiated relationship with reality. Fantasizing or fancying, is, however, an important dimension of the unreal imaginary world of the person (Sonnekus). In this connection, there is often talk of *imaginative fantasy* because of the affinity between imagination and fantasy.

According to Lersch, fantasizing means an activity by which someone distances himself toward the *unknown*, to the future, to

that which is not real and which may never become reality. For Lersch, fantasizing is a "free play of images" which has significance and is meaningful to the person concerned. In this way, the fantasy world is a "productive" world which can have a strong pathic/affective flavour but still makes gnostic/cognitive creation possible. On this basis, fantasizing is an activity by which the child can "escape" reality and "lose" himself in a world in which pathic/affective feelings, wishes or desires are rampant. On the other hand, this also embodies the possibility for a predominantly gnostic/cognitive creative level, to creatively think, understand, penetrate, etc. Evidence for this is found in the fact that science, to a large extent, is served by original and creative fantasy dreams.

Although imagining and fantasizing, as modes of learning, have a strong pathic/affective side, as far as the course of learning is concerned, both are actualized on a predominantly gnostic/cognitive level. This means that the actualization of these two modes of learning, in the course of learning, is primarily directed to knowing, planning, creating, etc. Thus, fantasizing also places the child in a position to distance himself from reality, to go beyond it to a "new" reality for him to understand, but especially in which to productively and creatively think and work. All of the preceding activities have primarily a cognitive flavour and stand in direct or indirect "service" to the child's course of learning.

Below we will look briefly at some modalities of imagining and fantasizing:

### 3.2.3.1 IMAGINING AND FANTASIZING SURPASS REALITY

When it is stated that imagining and fantasizing make the surpassing of reality possible, this does not mean they have nothing to do with reality. Besides, the content of imagining and fantasizing is itself, to a great extent, borrowed from reality. It is, however, possible that the forms which imagining and fantasizing assume can be unreal, realistic, or even will not or can never really be. Such imagining and fantasizing usually has a strong emotional or affective flavour recognizable in particular human strivings, desires, wishes, expectations, etc. Although such image – and fantasy moments are not always in step with reality, this is not necessarily a negative connotation. This often gives rise to original or new thoughts, ideas, projects, creations, etc. each of which not only has particular relevance for learning but which is also *culture creating* in nature.



Especially as far as learning is concerned, imagining and fantasizing are on a gnostic/cognitive level by which the child distances himself from reality and surpasses it. It is especially imagining which enables the child both to represent reality for himself and to transform it to a "new" reality. By means of imagining and fantasizing, the child surpasses the immediately perceivable world and finds himself in a world of the abstract with its primary gnostic/cognitive flavour.

### 3.2.3.2 IMAGINING IS REPRESENTATIVE

It was already stated that imagining is an activity by which the child can represent reality (objects, learning content, etc.). This implies the creating of something on a gnostic/cognitive level without the object or content being concretely – visible present. Such representative imagining is stripped of concrete – visible elements while it is also based on the child's possessed experience being represented anew on an abstract, non-perceptible level. This act of imagining rests first on previous perceiving while the possibility of representation is based on the active support and actualization of thinking and remembering as modes of learning. Whether this imagining of objects, content, or events is to an inferior or superior degree faithful to reality depends among other things on the quality of the child's previous perceptions, on the significance and meaning which he has attached to it, on whether he has effectively integrated this into his existing possessed experience, etc. In other words, the quality of the child's possessed experience, being the outcome of his experiencing, willing, lived-experiencing, knowing-life, and behaviours, is a decisive factor for whether or not imagining is faithful to reality.

### 3.2.3.3 IMAGINING AND FANTASIZING ARE CREATIVE

It is peculiar to imagining and fantasizing, as modes of learning, that both can contain a creative aspect. Thus, the child is able, by means of imagining, not only to represent reality but also to transform it into a "new" reality. In this respect, the child surpasses the data of his previous perceptions, since he adds something "new" to the original perceptions. Such imagining, then, is a combination of existing and new data. It is evident that this creative aspect peculiar to imagining, from a gnostic/cognitive point of view, can be extremely fruitful.

When fantasizing is examined, it is seen as a life- and learning-mode which pre-eminently lends itself to creativity on a gnostic/cognitive level. It is a means by which the child can give expression to original thoughts and with that, a new reality can be created. By fantasizing, the child is supported by his possessed experience but he also surpasses it since he is busy creating.

### 3.2.4. Remembering (*memorizing*)

In fathoming remembering as a child's mode of *living and learning*, the latter qualification points to the fact that we are not dealing here with the obsolete notion of memory as a function of consciousness but rather with a genuinely human phenomenon.

In contrast to the notion of the psychology of consciousness that remembering is a cognitive function along with others such as perceiving, thinking, etc. and that it has the functions of imprinting, of retention, and of reproduction of impressions registered in the past, Straus describes remembering as a human mode of learning which is inseparably intertwined with one's situatedness in time.

By an analysis of remembering as a phenomenon in the life-world of the child as human being, Straus shows that remembering is, first, a being conscious of the *past*. Thus, the person remembers the past (e.g., memorised learning materials) in the *present*. Things, occurrences, and persons that are remembered are, therefore, not present, but they are *represented* and are "present in absentia" (Sonnekus, Straus).

Second, remembering is a description of events in the *past tense*. It is a temporal relationship (time relationship) describing events in the past in relation to the present and future. Past and future meet each other in the present during the act of remembering.

Third, Straus shows that remembering is an activity of someone who lives the *present* in contrast to the past and future. Basically, remembering thus means self-awareness; i.e., the person is aware of his *actual present* and reflects on himself as someone who has done this or that in the past, or to whom particular things happened in the past. Otherwise stated, in the words of Sonnekus, remembering means a reflecting, viewing, or thinking by the person as seeing himself as he was, *from a*