

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, AIM AND PLAN OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1.1 The breakthrough of educating and teaching in intervening with the autistic child

The mistaken idea that autistic children are uneducable, unteachable, and unreachable and, therefore, are referred to lifelong *institutional care*, today is quickly disappearing. From a psychopedagogical perspective, autism is viewed as a handicap with far-reaching educative implication, while from a psychiatric point of view, it is designated as a state of disease, a syndrome—a complex of outwardly manifested symptoms. The opinion that autism, as a phenomenon, is the study-, work-, and interest-terrain of only psychiatry is quickly disappearing these days because of the realization that the basic need of such a child is for *educative teaching*.

Since 1945, the psychoanalytic view that autism is the result of extraordinary affective neglect has enjoyed almost worldwide recognition in psychiatric circles (when Leo Kanner described it in an article, and tried to offer an explanation of its cause). For years, it was believed that the “emotional disturbances” of autistic children could only be eliminated by long- term psychotherapeutic intervention, on a psychoanalytic foundation. This notion is still held in certain professional circles (1 p 234). Until the 1960’s, there also was the belief that psychiatric treatment was an undeniable precondition for teaching these children (2 p 7). Intervening with autistic children, in whatever form, in some circles still has a strong medical, psychiatric, psychological, and therapeutic flavor, and often there is still talk of a *patient* who must be *treated*, and not of a *handicapped child* who has a need for *orthopedagogic-orthodidactic intervention*. It is often viewed as a mental deviation, which clearly requires psychiatric treatment of one type or another and, following

from this assumption, an autistic child must be treated in one or another hospital, clinic, or institution. Orthopedagogic-orthodidactic intervention was even held in contempt, and viewed as an inferior form of therapy, or treatment in certain psychiatric and medical circles. Especially, there was the belief that only a trained psychotherapist can achieve any success worth mentioning in helping such children. During the 1960's, several journal articles appeared about the so-called success achieved in "treating" autistic children, but according to Wing (3 p 7), there was not yet an established tradition of special education for them. To the extent that it seemed that psychotherapeutic treatment of autistic children had few fruitful effects, and that the parents became more dissatisfied with the accusation of psychoanalytically oriented psychiatrists which, because of their affective neglect, they are responsible for their children's autism, the need for organized educative teaching for these children became more obvious. During the previous fifteen years (with an accelerated increase since 1970) more schools for autistic children were established overseas, and an important breakthrough occurred regarding the continuous intervention with these children. Since 1970, the continued intervention with autistic children in countries such as the USA, England, and even in the Republic of South Africa, became the responsibility of education authorities. The necessity for educative teaching is finally realized, and various organizations began their campaigns for the foundation of schools for these children. Several schools for autistic children, consequently, have already been established throughout most of the world.

1.1.2 The concept "autism" and the name "autistic child"

Autism is certainly one of the most enigmatic, most disconcerting, and most serious handicaps a child can have. The word "autism" is derived from the Greek word "autos", which means "self" (4 p 231). Regarding its definition, Kaufman notes the following: "Autism is an illness not defined by origin or cause, but by a collection of associated symptoms, or behavior" (5 p 15). It is also obvious that its most conspicuous characteristics, i.e., the persistent, excessive, and almost constant self-involvement, or an existing only for him/herself form the starting point of practically all descriptions of autism, as a type of handicap. Prick and Calon (6 p 154) explain

this conspicuous characteristic of an autistic child as follows: “Het geheel op het eigenzelf betrokken zijn, het leven in een eigen wereldje, waar zij niet uit te halen zijn en waarin een buitenstander haast niet binnen kan dringen; dit op-het-eigen-zelf-betrokken-zijn verklaart ook de naam van dit ziektebeeld (autos=zelf)”. Definitions and descriptions usually have a connection with such a child’s extreme ways of behaving and, therefore, especially refer to what such a child is able or not able to do; what he/she is or isn’t, and how he/dje continually distinguishes him/herself from normal children with respect to these qualities and inabilities. Chaplin describes an autistic child as follow: “Autistic children show symptoms of their handicaps from the beginning of life. These symptoms include extreme isolation, and a strong desire to avoid change. In all such children, there is a disability, from their earliest days, to relate to people, or to situations. There is a rejection of reality, and a tendency to indulge in repetitious activities, and to brood” (7 p 26). In the foreword to the Murray report on autistic children, preference is given to the term “early child autism”, which is defined as follows: “Early child autism forms a recognizable syndrome that begins before the age of three, and is characterized by self-involvement and preoccupied behavior, language disturbances and ritualistic, compulsive phenomena” (8 p viii). Since the particular ways of existing, characteristic attributes, and unusual ways of behaving are explicated more fully in this study, for the sake of conceptual clarity, the following preliminary description suffices: The autistic child is described as a not-yet adult, completely involved in him/herself and, therefore, does not encounter his/her fellow persons, does not stand open to the appeal from the surrounding reality, is not directed to giving meaning to reality and, thus, does not step up to reality in an exploratory way. Thus, such a child answers “no” to the appeal from the surrounding reality to him/herself proceed to establish a world full of confidence and, in doing so, to make him/herself at home in a joint or communal world. As a dweller in an anxiety provoking, incomprehensible, chaotic world, such a child is not only insecure and uncertain, but generally lacks adequate speech and language, is thrown back on and imprisoned in his/her own body, but he/she also holds fast to a familiar little world, and shows an order and persistence, often with stereotypic, compulsive, and ritualistic behaviors. A later fathoming of the psychic life of the autistic child-

in-educating can open possible perspectives which can modify this preliminary description.

1.1.3 Criteria for identifying autism in children, and the recognition of autism in practice

a) General

Autism is such a comprehensive handicap which, in general, is identified by means of lists of criteria. Leo Kanner, an American psychiatrist, in 1943 attributes the term “autism” to this phenomenon and is the first compiler of a list of criteria for identifying autistic children. This first identification list has previously been qualified by several investigators, described differently, and expanded, but the core idea remains unscathed. Since then, researchers have not succeeded in adding important improvements to Kanner’s original list (9 p 16).

When using any group criteria, it must always be kept in mind that the degree of being handicapped *differs from child to child*, and a specific child is not necessarily burdened by all aspects of autism. Thus, each child has his/her own characteristic pattern of handicaps (10 p 23).

In addition, it must also be kept in mind that positive changes occur in most autistic children after a period of genuine orthopedagogic intervention. In this respect, Wing (11 p 23) writes the following: “A child who was mute, withdrawn and extremely difficult in behaviour at the age of four may, by the age of ten, be affectionate, competent in self-care, able to talk in a simple fashion, and reasonably well behaved in familiar situations. Thus, general statements about the severity of the syndrome are likely to be wrong, and they can be harmful”. Applying thoughtless generalizations, and absolute pronouncements with respect to an autistic child’s handicaps and potentialities must be avoided, especially with preschool autistic children.

b) Criteria for identifying autism as compiled by Kanner

Wing (12 p 15) refers to the following criteria of Kanner which must be considered whenever autism is diagnosed in a child:

- “1. A profound lack of affective contact with other people.
2. An anxiously obsessive desire for the preservation of sameness.
3. A fascination of objects, which are handled with skill in fine motor movements.
4. Mutism, or a kind of language which does not seem to be intended to serve interpersonal communication.
5. The retention of an intelligent and pensive physiognomy and good potential, manifested, in those who can speak, by feats of memory and, in the mute children, by their skill on performance tests, especially the Sequin form board.”

c. The fourteen diagnostic criteria of Clancy

An Australian, Clancy, has compiled a particularly useful schema for diagnosing autism which, without much modification, can be transformed into a questionnaire. Indeed, this schema is used by child psychiatrists in the Republic of South Africa. The fourteen ‘core’ symptoms, as espoused by Clancy, are (13 p 13):

- “1. Great difficulty in mixing and playing with other children.
2. Acts as deaf. No reaction to speech or noise.
3. Strong resistance to any learning, either new behaviour or new skills.
4. Lack of fear about realistic dangers, e.g., may play with fire, climb dangerous heights, run into busy road or into the sea.
5. Resists change in routine. Change in the smallest thing may result in acute, excessive or seemingly illogical anxiety – e.g., child rejects new, or all but a few foods.
6. Prefers to indicate needs by gestures. Speech may or may not be present.
7. Laughing and giggling for no apparent reason.
8. Not cuddly as a baby. Either holds himself still or clings limply.

9. Marked physical overactivity. Child may stay wake and play for hours in the night, and yet be full of energy the next day.
10. No eye contact. Persistent tendency to look past or turn away from people, especially when spoken to.
11. Unusual attachment to a specific object or objects. Easily preoccupied with details, or special features of this object and has no regard for its real use.
12. Spins objects, especially round ones. Can become totally absorbed in his activities and distressed if interrupted.
13. Repetitive and sustained odd play, e.g., flicking pieces of string, rattling stones in a tin, tearing paper.
14. Standoffish manner. Communicates very little with other people. Treats them as objects rather than people”.

d) Some observations about the different criteria for diagnosing autism

The first conclusion arrived at when the different criteria are listed is that autism is recognized specific symptoms, especially in the extreme behavior of such a child. That is, this has to do with the activities which such a child cannot carry out and peculiar, unusual activities, and the manifestation of *giving inadequate meanings* to and defective order to his/her lifeworld. This child's inability to encounter and establish affective bonds with fellow persons are certainly the most conspicuous characteristics of autism. The fact that he/she is not directed to giving meaning “normally”, and does not associate meaningfully with reality, also explain his/her attachment to the unchangeable, his/her resistance to change, and peculiar ways of handling objects, and ways of behaving, which are extremely unstable, displays an unordered emotional life, as well as a handicap in adequately actualizing his/her cognitive potentialities.

The most debatable criterion for identifying autism is Kanner's notion that, as a rule, he/she has good intellectual potentialities. It appears that such a position largely amounts to a thoughtless generalization based on misleading and isolated cases of achievement in the intellectual domain which such children

sometimes show (14 p 18). As a counterargument, it is mentioned that a number of autistic children, despite many years of educative teaching still show the image of a genuine mental handicap, although they can be very dexterous with jigsaw puzzles, form boards, or other simple construction work, and work assignments which merely require mechanical memory, and manual dexterity (15 p 53). As a rule, such autistic children do not have a good intelligence characterized by transferrable insights. It is important to keep in mind that autism can arise in a child irrespective of the nature and degree of his/her innate and actualized intellectual potentialities (16 p 289). Therefore, to contend that *all* autistic children have [good] intellectual potentialities does not appear to be true. Because, even to this day, meaningful changes have not been able to be made to Kanner's schema for identifying autism, it still enjoys worldwide acceptance.

e) Identifying autism in practice

Since 1960, knowledge about autism has increased greatly, and this phenomenon has become known to increasingly more physicians, psychiatrists, teachers, and educational planners. However, it is obvious that today there still is lots of ignorance and many errors of judgment made about autism by many physicians, which arise from neglecting to acquaint themselves with the latest literature on autism, and specialized intervention with such children (18 p 273). Schopler mentions that he often runs across parents who have already taken their child to various clinics, family doctors, hospitals, and specialists for examinations, only to become confused and more anxious about their child's future because of inconsistent findings and conclusions. Inappropriate advice given to the parent and errors of judgment about the outlook of their autistic child in the Republic of South Africa are especially given by such physicians. Physicians are sometimes of the opinion that an autistic child is mentally disturbed, or has brain damage, or that such a child ought to be summarily placed in an institution (19 p 274). According to Murray, (20 p 70) such diagnosis requires specific knowledge of, e.g., child psychiatry, the ways autism manifests itself, the preconditions for harmoniously becoming adult, as characterized by a normal flourishing of the affective and intellectual life of a child, and of the influence of neurological and physiological defects, as

well as broad knowledge of the child's physical development, and becoming adult (21 p 70).

In the Republic of South Africa, autism is diagnosed by qualified child psychiatrists at the Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town, and at the Transvaal Memorial Hospital for Children in Johannesburg. Children are usually referred, by a general practitioner, pediatrician, or the head of a school for autistic children, to one of these two examination centers for diagnosis and a final qualification as autistic.

Child psychiatrists have the task of carrying out a diagnostic examination in which the child and his/her parents are involved. Because such a child is usually unable to participate in an interview, an auto-anamnesis is not practicable. However, the child's appearance and ways of behaving are closely observed. During such an examination, the child psychiatrist is in an excellent position to compile the interview data about the child provided by his/her parents (heteroanamnesis). With the help of this conversation, and especially the use of Clancy's fourteen diagnostic criteria, the essence of the child's manifested psychic-spiritual activities are described, analyzed, and explicated and, in this way, a person image of such a child is formed.

To supplement and confirm the child psychiatrist's findings, use also is made of medical reports from neurological, pediatric, as well as audiological, ophthalmological, orthopedagogical-orthodidactical reports from school personnel, as provided after a period of observing such a child in a school for autistic children. After completing such a comprehensive examination, the child psychiatrist compiles a complete person image of the child, and when he no longer has any doubt about the presence of autism, the child is formally qualified as "autistic". After consulting with the parents, as well as the head of the school for autistic children, the child is admitted to such a school to receive specialized educating and teaching.

1.1.4 The causes of autism

Today autism is still as much a mystery as in 1943, when Kanner described this phenomenon in children. There is still no generally acceptable explanation for the emergence, or origin of autism and, therefore, there are widely diverging, contradictory opinions about this (22 p 424). “Discrepancies are great among the opinions of what causes autism, and of whether, or what the parents contribute”.

First is the so-called psychogenic hypothesis, according to which autism is viewed as the manifestation of unusual emotional disturbances. The proponents of this theory contend that the autistic child’s emotional flatness, aloofness, and inability to enter social bonds are attributed to extreme affective neglect by so-called “cold”, unloving parents.

Second, there are those theories which espouse biological deviation as a causative factor for autism. Such theories attribute this handicap to genetically inherited factors, metabolic disturbances, trauma, damage, or the malfunctioning of one or another area of the brain, or central nervous system, or an unusual intellectual deviation, and its correlated consequences (23a p 130; 23b pp 77-78; 23c p 25; 23d p 272).

With respect to the influence of serious affective neglect on the child’s becoming a person, it is mentioned that it often can give rise to a restraint in becoming, which can create the appearance of autism. However, this state, known as pseudo- or apparent-autism can be successfully eliminated when such a child is removed from his/her family home, and is placed in foster care where favorable educative situations exist (24 p 45). If serious affective neglect does indelible damage to the child’s personal becoming, and results in an almost permanent handicap such as autism, the quick improvement seen in foster children is not possible. Because most investigators today hold the view that autism, as a handicap, is too comprehensive and complicated to be designated as the result of affective neglect, there can be agreement with Wing (25 p 34) when she calls the so-called psychogenic hypothesis as “unlimited speculation”.

Although the cause of autism so far cannot be indisputably shown, it seems that the origins in biological and neurological brain abnormalities appear to be most credible and likely (26 p 47). Children who qualify as brain damaged usually do not show the typical ways of behaving and associating with reality that are peculiar to autistic children. Here one especially thinks of the autistic child's inability to encounter a fellow person, or be directed in a meaning-giving way to reality, and to establish a stable lifeworld, an extremely inadequate realization of the modes of learning, problems regarding the acquisition of spoken language, peculiar, stereotypic and ritualistic behaving, as well as inappropriate bodily movements. On the other hand, it is obvious that several autistic children, in addition to their typical autistic behaviors, to a greater or lesser degree, manifest lived experiences, motor and neurological-physiological deviations similar to those usually associated with brain damaged children. Thus, there is often an overlap in the symptoms of these groups of handicapped children. That is, autistic children also show behavioral and/or bodily deviations which are peculiar to brain damaged children (27a p 60; 27b p 292; 27c pp 66-69). In the previously mentioned context, the following are often obvious: excessive fluctuation in attending, a short attention span, defective concentration, excessive distractibility in attending, perseverations (attachment to, or possessiveness of objects which are of personal interest), dominance [laterality] disturbances, weak gross and fine motor skills (respectively with respect to bodily/physical control and hand- and finger-use), hyperactivity ("Hyperkinesis") or unusual passivity ("Hypokinesis") or in a few cases, spasticity (uncontrolled muscle movements, and extremely flexible joints) or epileptic and abnormal cortical activity as shown by electro-encephalogram examinations. In addition to the fact that, in certain cases, brain damage can clearly be shown, a number of autistic children, as babies, and toddlers show unusual problems sleeping, problems with eating because they suckle with difficulty, as well as cry almost continuously, all phenomena which can point to some kind of brain damage (28 p 24).

Although the theories that propose one or another form of brain damage, still cannot be irrefutably shown experimentally it, indeed,

appears that this is the direction in which an explanation of the phenomenon of autism must be sought.

1.1.5 Prognosis

Because autism is still not completely understood, and explained, it seems that today it is still not possible to “cure” it, in one way or another. Success in treating autistic children has not yet been found in the fields of neurosurgery, pharmacology, and psychotherapy (29a p 7; 29b pp 5 81). Just as little as what can be useful to medical science for children with nerve deafness, now, just as little can this be of service for autistic children. Special educative teaching is the only way in which the autistic child can be supported to a way of existing more worthy of a human being, and characterized by socialization, the acquisition of spoken language, and the mastery of cultural systems. Because each individual autistic child has his/her own unique nature, and degree of handicap, and intellectual potentialities, and is burdened by a distinctive combination of handicaps, it is very irresponsible to draw general conclusions about the extent to which an autistic child will succeed in making progress in any terrain (30a p 24; 30b p 67).

Several researchers are unanimous that an autistic child’s spontaneous readiness and ability to acquire language before the age of five is a very important indication of his/her slumbering potentialities to eventually learn to adequately master language, to have interhuman encounters, and be able to make scholastic progress (31a p47; 31b p277; 31c pp 121 132). Wing views the nature and degree of the intellectual potentialities of autistic children as a very important prerequisite for acquiring language, and also as an indication of the expected level of scholastic progress which they ought to reach, and she states this matter as follows(32 p 300): “Autistic children with normal intelligence can learn academic skills, and a few may eventually become independent. The mildly or moderately retarded autistic children are likely to be able to learn practical and domestic skills to a reasonable level, and some reading, writing, and number work for very simple practical purposes. They will, however, need sheltered work and accommodation, but can be usefully employed within these limits. For the severely retarded autistic children, the aims are to improve

self-care, and to capitalize on any other isolated skills that may be present”.

From the research of Rutter, De Meyer, Lotter, and Kanner, it appears that about half of the autistic children have had an unfavorable prognosis at later ages (12-18 years) (33 p 276). Specialized educative teaching, where the autistic child receives a great deal of individual attention from a trustful teacher, appears to make the best results possible regarding scholastic progress.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1 Preliminary statement of the problem

The teaching of autistic pupils in the Republic of South Africa, as well as in countries such as England, and the USA, today [1979] is still in its infancy. In contrast to the case, e.g., of teaching the deaf and the blind, today there is still no established teaching tradition for autistic children. Although many works on the autistic child have appeared, especially from a medical, psychiatric, and psychological perspective, there still is a need for pedagogically founded works on the *psychic life, educating*, as well as the *theory and practice of teaching* this child. The literature on the autistic child is characterized by the fact that psychiatrists often appear as authors or editors of such works. Generally, they contain detailed explanations of the “psychic life” of the autistic child in which the concentration is on his/her outwardly perceivable behaviors. The educative situatedness of the child is not centrally placed, and there is no explication of his/her psychic life and its actualization within the educative situation. The existing literature on autism reveals an undeniable stamp of psychoanalytic and behaviorist views of the nature of “psychic life”, “educating”, and “teaching” of this child. Often, the author is blinded by the outwardly observable, symptomatic behavior of such a child, and the interdependence of a person’s (child’s) emotional, willing, and intellectual life is not properly understood. The influence of emotional, willing, cognitive, and normative accompaniment (educating) on the actualization of the child’s psychic life, e.g., is seldom broached. Besides this, the deeper significance of a stabilized emotional life, and the mastery of

language in the autistic child's becoming adult clearly are not understood and explicated.

Because these authors are often adherents of psychological directions of thinking, such as psychoanalysis and behaviorism, it is not at all surprising that behaviorist principles, such as "behavior modification", and instrumental conditioning ("operant conditioning") are even applied in the practice of this teaching. In a publication titled, "The Autistic Child: Language Development through Behavior Modification", Lovaas (34) provides a detailed explication of a language teaching program in which use is made primarily of instrumental or learned conditioning ("operant conditioning") as a method. By means of extensively making use of rewarding and confirming, the autistic child is enticed and prompted to positive behavioral change, and the acquisition of language.

From the above, it is concluded that there is a pressing need for findings with a psychopedagogical perspective on the autistic child to be able to provide the reader a better understanding of the actualization of the psychic life of the autistic child-in-educating.

1.2.2 More precise statement of the problem

- a) A description of the psychic life of the autistic child-in-educating as a task for psychopedagogics

1 General

In the previous sections, a need for a [phenomenological] fathoming of the psychic life of the autistic child is indicated. At this stage, a reflection on the concepts "psychic life", and "child-in-educating" seems necessary.

To accomplish this, it is necessary to choose an area of science which is specifically concerned with the *psychic life of the child-in-educating*. If this only involved the psychic life of the child, [phenomenological] psychology would be the appropriate area of science, but the qualification "child-in-educating" necessitates entering pedagogics as a science and, as far as this study is

concerned, it seems to be unavoidable to select psychopedagogics, a part-perspective of pedagogics, as the terrain of study.

2 Psychopedagogics as part-perspective

(i) The concept “part-perspective”

Because of the complex nature of educating, the area of study of pedagogics (the science of education) requires a sharper illumination of different moments or aspects of the reality of educating, a differentiation and study of a few independent perspective are carried out within the framework of an autonomous pedagogics, as a comprehensive whole. The following are some of the part-perspectives distinguished within pedagogics, and accepted as independent part-disciplines: fundamental pedagogics, didactic pedagogics, psychopedagogics, historical and comparative pedagogics, sociopedagogics, vocational orientation pedagogics, and physical pedagogics.

(ii) Psychopedagogics: its name and area of study

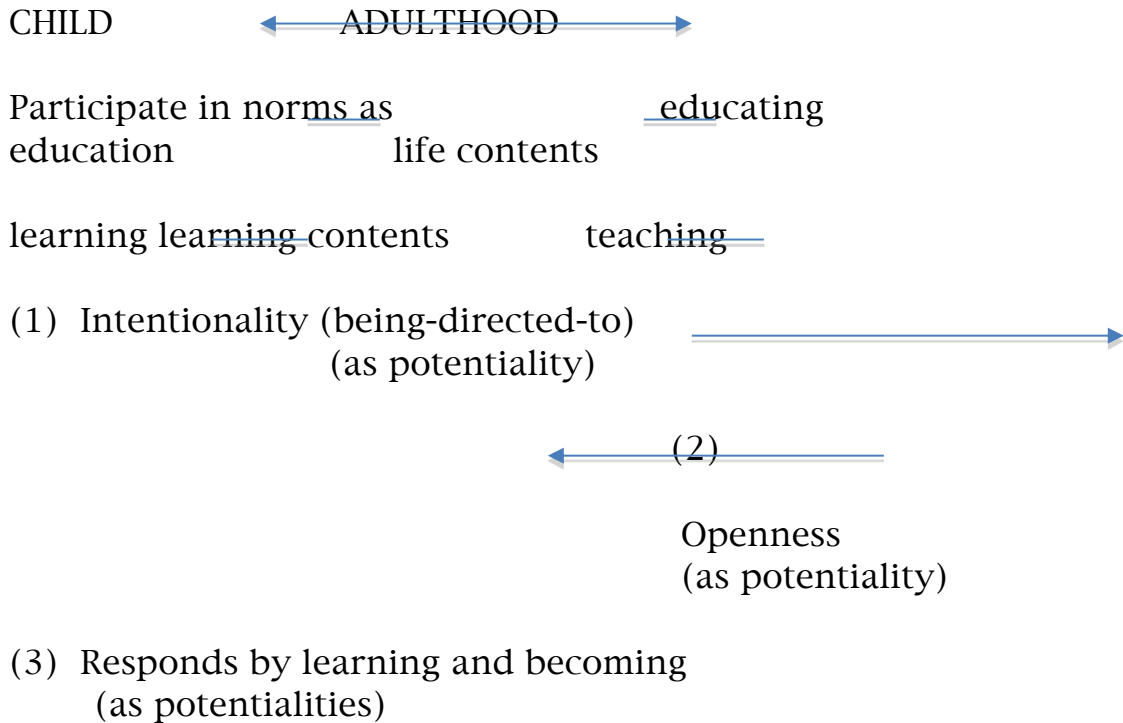
Of all the pedagogical part-disciplines just mentioned, perhaps psychopedagogics has had the most difficult struggle in being able to proclaim its identity. Until recently, this part-perspective was known as educational psychology, a name attributed to this area of study during the 1920's by E. L. Thorndike, a behavioral psychologist (35 p 22). Thorndike and his followers view educational psychology as an area of psychology applied to educating and teaching a child. Although educational psychology and what it contains has already been called untenable and unacceptable by Sonnekus and his co-workers (36), there is still a desperate adherence to this name in certain Afrikaans and English speaking universities in the Republic of South Africa. At the University of Pretoria, preference is given to the name psychopedagogics because of the conviction that the psychic life of a child can best be described as it is manifested in the educative situation. Psychopedagogics is concerned with the psychic life of the child, called psychic moments by some authors (37 p 8). Sonnekus (38 p 27) has traced the concept “psyche” back to its etymological origin and offers the following explication: “In its Old

Indian origin, psyche means "breath which travels". The word "travel" (vaar), which is coupled with "experience" (er-vaar), means to move, to go to and, in moving, to reach something, and to undergo. In its Greek origin, "breath" means life, or psyche as "bearer of lived experiencing as awareness". The word psychic means "belonging to the psyche", and psycho means "of the psyche".

Against the background of the etymological explication of the words *psyche*, *psycho*, and *psychic*, it is now important to emphasize that the name psychology, as a science, shall refer to the totality of everything which appears regarding the psyche, and delimits the terrain of psychology. In psychopedagogics, the concern is with the totality of everything which appears regarding the psyche of a child, *as this becomes actualized in the pedagogical situation*. Thus, psychopedagogics means the *pedagogics of the psychic life of the child, with the psyche as bearer of lived experiencing, as awareness* (39 pp 9-10). The combination "psycho-pedagogics" refers to that science which studies the child's psychic life in terms of ways of experiencing, lived experiencing, willing, knowing, and behaving as realized in the educative situation (40 p 28). Against this background, the area of study of psychopedagogics is indicated below.

As far as the *area of study of psychopedagogics* is concerned, it is first emphasized that a child must always be related to within an educative context and, thus, the actualization of his/her psychic life must also be considered from this perspective. It is precisely in this respect that there is the greatest difference between the ways psychology and pedagogics approach the child. Also, with respect to the manifestation and actualization of the child's psychic life, the pedagogical thinker is continually aware that such matters must progress in the direction of proper adulthood. Viewed from a pedagogical (i.e., psychopedagogical) perspective, the realization of a child's psychic life is a normative matter, a task given with child-being, as well as a task which demands the child's active participation, and which places a special responsibility on the shoulders of his/her educators. In psychopedagogics, this always involves the question: How is the psychic life of a child adequately

or inadequately actualized? This can be presented schematically as follows:
 (41 p 26):



b) Actualization of the psychic life

1 Learning and becoming as ways the psychic life of a child-in-education manifests itself

It is mentioned that the area of study of psychopedagogics is the psychic life of the child, as it figures forth in the pedagogical situation. According to Sonnekus, (42 p 11) this does not have to do with the psychic life, as a static entity, but as a given potentiality which the child has received and, therefore, *must be actualized* from the beginning. The question which immediately arises is in what way and how does the psychic life of the child-in-educating become observable, as well as actualized. The psychic life of a child figures forth in two equally original, inseparably connected structures within the educative situation, i.e., learning and becoming,

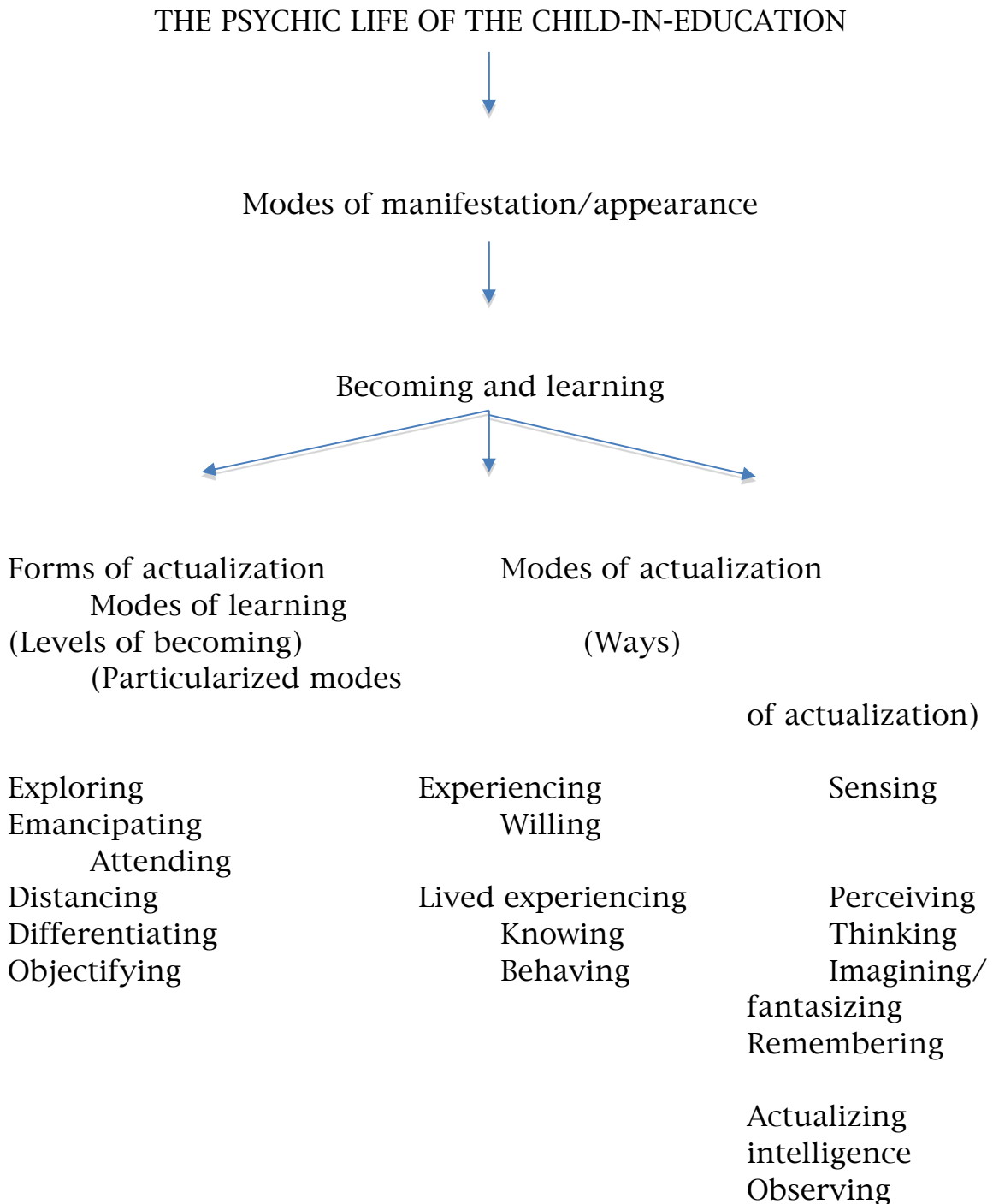
(43a p 11; 43b p 29) which are qualified by Van der Merwe as *modes of manifestation* of the psychic life (44 p 43). It can correctly be stated that the one cannot exist without the other because, as the child learns, he/she becomes and, as he/she becomes, he/she learns. The initiatives to learn and to become are essential characteristics because he/she him/herself wants to (will) learn and become in the direction of adulthood. Because of his/her resolve and initiative to learn, the child actively involves him/herself in his/her becoming. For the proper figuring forth of these initiatives to learn and to become, however, the child is dependent on adequate accompaniment, i.e., educating and teaching. These initiatives, as an active participation of the child in his/her becoming and learning, immediately draws attention to the ways in which his/her learning and becoming are realized.

2 Essences in the childlike psychic life by which his/her learning and becoming are realized within the pedagogical situation

A closer consideration of the actualization of his/her psychic life by the child-in-educating brings to light the fact that this event occurs in certain ways. These ways of realizing (actualizing), i.e., experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing, and behaving are closely interrelated and are essences of learning and becoming (45 pp 14-40). These essences of the psychic life of the child-in-educating are elevated to categories by Sonnekus (46 p 7), i.e., to illuminative means of thinking in terms of which he describes the realization of the child's learning and becoming. The essences in the childlike psychic life, by which learning and becoming are realized, have been worked out in finer detail by Sonnekus, Ferreira, Van der Merwe, Pretorius, and Bondesio. These modes of actualization are applied as categories during the further course of this study to interrogate the actualization of the psychic life of the autistic child in educating, and, indeed, in terms of the actualization of *learning* and *becoming*, as modes of manifestation of psychic life potentialities.

To form a concept of this psychopedagogical perspective and of the later application of the mentioned illuminative categories, a

preliminary synthesized ground-structure, as compiled by Van der Merwe, (47 p 92) is reproduced [slightly modified by G.D.Y.]:



3 An interrogation of the realization of the psychic life of the autistic child-in-educating, with special reference to learning and becoming, as modes of manifestation

To fathom the question of accompanying to the self-actualization of learning and becoming by the autistic child, it is necessary to describe becoming and learning, as ways in which the psychic life is manifested. In addition, it is equally necessary to continually refer to the demands which the adequate actualization of learning and becoming place on the child, with the aim in view of interrogating the adequacy, or inadequacy, the differentness, or possible under actualization of them by the autistic child.

An essence view of a matter such as childlike becoming, a mode of manifestation of the psychic life of the child-in-educating, according to Sonnekus and Ferreira, (48 pp 142-145, 192-219) brings to light that:

- becoming and learning are inseparable from each other, and are realized as a *unitary event* in the child's becoming adult;
- a child has *psychic-spiritual potentialities at his/her disposal* (among which are cognitive, knowing, or intellectual potentialities) *as well as potentialities for becoming*, which must be realized;
- the child is not passive, but is an *active participant* in his/her becoming;
- becoming is also a *matter of willing* by the child, and is propelled by a positive, powerful will;
- a child must be *emotionally stable*, and must live in a genuine emotional bond with a trustworthy adult, by which he/she will *open* him/herself to have a part in his/her becoming;
- adequate *accompaniment* (educating and teaching) by an adult is a requirement for first-rate becoming by a child;
- a child can reject the accompaniment of the educator and then his/her becoming does not get started, or *goes awry*, and

- can lead to a degeneration, or inadequate learning and becoming;
- in realizing his/her becoming and learning, the child is somewhere along the path to *proper adulthood*;
 - becoming is a matter of propriety, i.e., is primarily *normative* in nature;
 - proper adulthood, as indicator of the course of childlike becoming, necessarily implies a striving for and realization of an *educative aim* by the child;
 - becoming implies continual change or *becoming different* and, correspondingly, continually higher demands are placed on the child in realizing his/her becoming;
 - becoming implies an *elevation in meaning*, i.e., to the extent that a child becomes adult, he/she continually attributes additional and higher meaning to reality, and the contents of reality;
 - *modes of becoming*, such as exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating, and objectifying manifest themselves in the actualization of the psychic life of the child;
 - becoming is continually characterized by *cognitive unfolding*, e.g., as evidenced in *increased* ordering by the child;
 - a child's level of becoming is reflected in his/her *behaving*;
 - criteria, or *yardsticks* for becoming adult can be listed, among which are responsibility, moral self-independence, morality, propriety, and stated generally, an adult, humanly dignified way of living); and
 - actualizing the psychic life in terms of becoming can be realized *on different level of behaving* (i.e., senso-pathic, senso-gnostic, pathic, or pathic-gnostic, as well as affective-cognitive levels).

The following are some essences of childlike *learning*, as a genuine human phenomenon, as well as a way the psychic life of a child-in-educating is manifested (49 pp 102-109):

- childlike learning is an *original way of living* in which the child finds him/herself as a person in the world;
- learning is a *human potentiality* which is given with the psychic life, and which the child must continually *actualize*;

- learning is a mode of *intentionality*, which is confirmed by the child's openness for and directedness to fellow persons and the things around him/her;
- the phenomenon of learning is rooted in the so-called *principle of emancipation* (Langeveld), which amounts to the fact that the child is someone who wants to be and become someone him/herself (i.e., an *impetus* grounded in his/her *willingness to learn*);
- learning has the *character of a gift* and, thus, requires the child's own *initiative* and *active participation*;
- learning is, indeed, the child taking a *personal position*, which is a totality act;
- learning is a *purposeful activity* of the child, and it is a matter of seeking, giving, and experiencing meaning;
- the proper actualization of learning without adequate *accompaniment* (educating and teaching) by an adult is almost unthinkable;
- effective learning can only occur if there is adequate *affective, cognitive, and normative* (meaning-giving) *accompaniment* in pedagogic situations, within which the pedagogical *relationship structures* are realized;
- childlike learning occurs because of a participation in a *situation* by the child's experience of the meaningfulness of the involved learning content;
- childlike learning is grounded on *emotional stability, positive willfulness, and intellectual effort* (matters which show an interdependence).
- childlike learning is characterized by a *course* which occurs in various *ways*;
- effective learning is reflected in childlike *behaviors* which continually undergo *positive changes*, to the extent that his/her possessed experience expands;
- (Viewed from a psychopedagogic perspective) learning occurs by the *realization of the different essences of the psychic life*, i.e., experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing, and behaving; and, as mentioned.,
- learning is a *phenomenon of becoming*, because it is a precondition for becoming.

From the above, the question can now be asked about *how* the psychic life of an autistic child-in-educating is actualized with respect to *becoming* and *learning*, or possibly inadequately? Stated differently, what is the autistic child's own role in [actualizing his/her psychic life], and how is it realized in the learning and becoming events, as matters of becoming adult? Also, it can be asked what this child's role is in making his/her own, appropriating, or giving meaning to the accompaniment by his/her educators. A question which necessarily must be answered is how the role of the autistic child ought to appear in the becoming and learning events to his/her "becoming adult", as a task by which such a child is offered the maximum support to adequately "become adult" (if possible). These questions are considered in the second, third, and fourth chapters of this study.

c An orthopedagogic perspective

1 General

The fact that specialized intervention with the autistic child has already become the terrain of special education points to the presence of a problematic educative and teaching situation, and to a possible *inadequate course of becoming and learning* by such children, on the one hand, and to the necessity for intensified educating (orthopedagogics), and teaching (orthodidactic intervention) of them, on the other hand. As soon as inadequately realized psychopedagogical, and other pedagogical essences arise, the terrain of orthopedagogics is entered. When the orthopedagogic field of study and of work is entered from a psychopedagogical perspective, there is mention of *psycho-(ortho-) pedagogics*. When this psycho-(ortho-) pedagogical perspective is implemented with respect to the autistic child-in-educating, it has to do with an illumination of the inadequate, different, or under actualization of his/her psychic life in an educative context. Considering the aim of this study, it is now necessary to explicate the terrains of orthopedagogic theory (orthopedagogics), as well as orthopedagogic practice (orthopedagogy).

2 Orthopedagogics and orthopedagogy

The question about the determination of the possible field of study of orthopedagogics, i.e., the delimitation of the terrain of orthopedagogics, within pedagogics, as a comprehensive science, enjoyed considerable attention in previous years. Vliegenthart (50 p 31) describes orthopedagogics as that science which “tot object heft de opvoeding van kinderen wie door zeer verschillende oorzaken blijvend of gedurende lange tijd zo ernstige belemmeringen voor het verloop der opvoeding aanwezig zijn, dat de in een cultuurgemeenschap voor de grote massa van die jeugd gebruikelijke opvoedingsvormen niet tot een voor die kind en/of voor de gemeenschap aanvaardbaar resultaat voeren”.

Orthopedagogics as a science is systematic knowledge of a phenomenon, i.e., the problematic educative situation (53 p 13) and, rhus, is a part-discipline of pedagogics. For Vliegenthart, (54 p 23) this has to do with ... “de leer van het opvoedkundig handelen ten behoeve van het kind, dat op grond van eigen psychische en organische structuur aan de gangbare opvoeding ernstige belemmeringen biedt”.

According to Van Niekerk, (55 p 20) necessarily, the orthopedagogue has to gauge, in their essentials, the *pedagogically achieved and achievable*, so that one can determine with confidence what the *gap in becoming adult* includes, i.e., the nature of a child's problems in becoming adult. More particularly, this amounts to determining, penetrating, or understanding the child-in-educating's inadequate actualization of the potentialities of his/her psychic life, and his/her becoming and, thus, there is a search for the essences of the child's different experiencing, different actualizing willing, different lived experiencing, etc. The question continually remains about how the child has or hasn't progressed in his/her becoming adult, thanks to educating and, with this, his/her being in relationship to that which is achievable by this child. The nature and intensity of the miscarriage of the child's becoming adult, as well as factors which give rise to this must be determined with the aim of linking up with them during providing help in “accelerating his/her becoming adult” (56 p 22).

Children who, because of the inadequate actualization of learning and becoming, come under consideration for specialized orthopedagogic, and orthodidactic intervention, are usually

qualified as either handicapped or impeded. The use of the terms “handicapped” and “impeded” necessarily ask for conceptual clarification. A handicap in a child refers to an *unchangeable defect* with respect to his/her given potentialities (i.e., a physical, cognitive, sensory or neurological defect). Because these handicaps cannot be eliminated by an operation or other means, and the child’s actualization of learning and becoming are kept in check by them, there is mention of *aggravating circumstances* regarding the realization of his/her learning potentialities. However, this does not imply that the child still cannot adequately realize his/her learning potentialities despite these aggravating circumstances. These aggravating moments can qualify as specific learning handicaps because they continually can be pointed out, or are undoubtedly too specific, according to Van Niekerk (57 p 5).

In teaching practice there is special teaching and provision made for specific orthopedagogic, and orthodidactic ways of attack to work against the effects of these handicaps, as aggravating circumstances, and to support the child to adequately realize his/her available learning potentialities. Also, the specific learning handicap always determines what form of special teaching the child is dependent on, and by means of specially designed orthodidactic measures (e.g., Braille, as writing for the blind, and speech- [lip-] reading, in the case of the deaf) the educator tries to avoid or cope with the obstacles which the concerned child experiences in actualizing the learning event.

A *restraint, or impediment* in a child does not refer primarily to an aggravation in the realization of his/her personal potentialities, but rather to its delayed, or slower course. Thus, a learning restraint implies that the actualization of learning is disharmonious. and progresses slower than how it can and ought to occur. Moreover, the learning restraint always includes the possibility of its *elimination*, while this is very seldom the case with respect to a learning handicap.

It is precisely the *eliminability of the gap* between the learning a child has achieved and what is achievable which makes orthopedagogic, and orthodidactic intervention necessary with a

learning restrained child, in contrast to sustained special teaching in the case of a learning handicapped child (58 p 6).

Orthopedagogy or orthopedagogic intervention is viewed as scientific, i.e., a specialized approach to coping with concrete problematic educative situations (59 pp 12-13). Thus, orthopedagogic intervention is special educating, characterized by greater *deliberateness* in creating and using more *intense, more condensed, and concentrated pedagogical measures* to adequately realize the concerned child's educability, with which his/her learning and becoming potentialities are implicated.

Orthopedagogic intervention, as an activity, is the accountable provision of help and support, via specialized measures, to all children who are restrained, or who have become derailed from being-on-their-way to adulthood, i.e., to all children in educative distress (60 p 3).

3 The right for a psycho- (ortho-) pedagogical perspective to exist with special reference to the autistic child-in-educating

In linking up with Van Gelder's reflection about the question of orthopedagogics, Pretorius (61 pp 90-93) paves the way for connecting the psychopedagogical question to Van Gelder and gives prominence to the problematic lived experiencing of the children-in-educating under discussion. For Pretorius, orthopedagogics also involves the problematic of the lived experience, and the experiential world of these children whose educability is limited. For him, this implies:

- 1 an analysis and fathoming of the handicapped child's sensory, gnostic, and normative ways of lived experiencing;
- 2 the design and refinement of methods and media for exploring such a child's experiential world to acquire an image of his/her lived experiencing;
- 3 a reflection about the orthopedagogic tasks which this unique child presents, with the aim of an adequate realization of his/her (sometimes defective) potentialities for lived experiencing;

- 4 that the phenomenon of educating itself, and more specifically, the moments of realizing the psychic life must be taken as the point of departure; and,
 - 5 the disclosure of stagnations in the child's actualization of potentialities for lived experiencing, as well as the re-establishment, or correction of them, and a guiding of the child, via his/her lived experiencing, and re-lived experiencing, to full-fledged adulthood (62 pp 91-92).
- Pretorius' views, in the above context, show an emphasis on the *problematic lived experience* of the whole matter, but also the problematic of experiencing, willing, knowing, or exploring, and behaving of the child who is in educative distress, which can be placed within the framework of the problem, area discussed. Thus, it would be advisable to make central a comprehensive concept, i.e., *disturbed world relationships*, of such a child, or the psycho- (ortho-) pedagogic question.

Following Bondesio, (63 pp 28-31 and Van Niekerk, (64), the orthopedagogic field of work, in its totality (which includes a psychopedagogical perspective on the inadequate actualization of the psychic life potentialities of the concerned child), can be designated as a three-fold matter:

- 1 In the first place, this has to do with identifying the problematic educative situation, educative distress, disturbed world relationships (experiencing, lived experiencing, willing, knowing, and behaving) of the child or children of concern;
- 2 Secondly, this involves understanding, clarifying, and reflecting on the identified problematic;
- 3 Thirdly, this has to do with reflecting on and putting into action an accompaniment of, or giving help to the concerned child, or children for the prevention, elevation, or improvement of the child's inadequate becoming adult, as a question of educative distress characterized by various disturbed world relationships.

With respect to the autistic child-in-educating, the psycho- (ortho-) pedagogical question embraces the following sub-questions:

- 1 If present, how are an inadequate educative situation and the educative distress of such a child constituted?
- 2 How does the course of learning and becoming of the autistic child progress such that it can qualify as disharmonious?
- 3 How must the adult (orthopedagogue) support and accompany this child so that, once again, he/she will give positive meaning to his/her disturbed world relationships (experiencing, lived experiencing, willing, knowing, and behaving) on the way to harmoniously becoming adult?

Because, in this study, the spotlight also is on the accompaniment (teaching and educating) of the autistic child, in the following, attention is given to the concept *accompaniment*.

d A pedagogical accompaniment perspective on the present problematic

Because the phenomena of psycho- (ortho-) pedagogical moments are anticipated in the educative situatedness of the autistic child, it is important to elucidate the essences of educative accompaniment, as fundamental structures, and the essences which must be realized in the educative situation of such a child. Regarding the essence of educative accompaniment, or educating, it is necessary to emphasize that the phenomenon of educating is anchored in the fact that a person directs his/her life in terms of aims and, in doing so, gives it a form. Although, because of wonderful gifts, a human being is admirably endowed to be able to realize his/her humanity, he/she is also dependent on others for supplementing and filling out his/her existence. Despite his/her initial helplessness, he/she succeeds in realizing his/her becoming a person because he/she not only is endowed with psychic-spiritual potentialities, but stands open for and directed to the world, can direct him/herself to seek meaning, can actively participate in his/her becoming, is educable, and becomes educated. It is through this openness-for and directedness-to, which a person lives and lived experience, and gives meaning and, in this way, establishes a meaningful world. An additional essence of this human openness is that a person continually establishes relationships with him/herself, things, God, and fellow humans. An inclination for interpersonal involvement,

bonding, and encountering are, thus, fundamental essences of being-human, which also are preconditions for encountering and bonding in living together. Educative accompaniment by the adult, which leads to the child becoming adult, can only occur if the adult and child encounter each other, as well as live and act within a bonded living together.

From the above anthropological-pedagogical reflection, the phenomenon of educating can also be viewed as an essential characteristic of being human. In this context, Langeveld (65 p 158) writes: “Dat de mens een wezen is dat opvoedt, opgevoedt wordt en opvoeding is aangewezen, is een van de fundamenteelste kenmerken van het mensbeeld”.

Thus, the sense of educating is that the educator provides direction-giving support to (accompanies) the child so that the latter acquires a grasp of life reality such that eventually he/she can meaningfully achieve his/her life task [of adulthood]. This implies a skillful grasp, an intellectual grasp, the respectful “living out” of the norms furnished by this, and a philosophy of life in terms of which he/she can contribute to his/her unfolding of meaning (66 p 270). Educating, which essentially is a normative matter, means the educator’s purposeful intervention in the life of the child to support him/her in reaching full-fledged adulthood, which is characterized by human dignity (67 p 26).

Educating not only requires reaching *aims*, but it is also codetermined by the quality of the *relationships* which are established and maintained between child and educator within a pedagogic situation. In addition, educating occurs in accordance with a *course*, or *sequence*, and it is characterized by certain *activities*. Thus, educating is characterized by realizing pedagogical relationship, sequence, aim, and activity structures (68 pp 158-239).

The fundamental pedagogical structures of the pedagogical situation are:

1 The pedagogical relationship structures

- a) The pedagogical relationship of trust.
- b) The pedagogical relationship of understanding.
- c) The pedagogical relationship of authority.

2 The pedagogical sequence structures

- a) Pedagogical association.
- b) Pedagogical encounter.
- c) Pedagogical engagement or taking responsibility for interfering.
- d) Pedagogical interfering: (i) intervening and (ii) agreeing.
- e) Return to pedagogical association.
- f) Periodical breaking away from the pedagogical association.

3 The pedagogical aim structures

- a) Meaningful existence.
- b) Self-judgment and understanding.
- c) Respect for human dignity.
- d) Morally independent choosing and responsible acting.
- e) Norm identification.
- f) Philosophy of life.

4 Pedagogical activity structures

- a) *Giving meaning* (the child must be helped to attribute meaning to life reality with increasing responsibility);
- b) *Exerting* (the child must be helped to be willing and prepared to gradually break away from a lack of exertion in the direction of effort that is expected of an adult);
- c) *Exemplifying norms* (the child must be helped to live in accordance with demands of propriety (norms));
- d) *Venturing* (the adult must help the child to venture in trust with him/her on the way which the adult already knows, i.e., proper adulthood);
- e) *Gratitude* (the child must be helped to be thankful for the security which the adult offers him/her);
- f) *Responsibility* (the child must be helped to increasingly be accountable for his/her part in accepting responsibility for educative relationships so that eventually, as an adult

- he/she will be accountable and responsible for all his/her relationships with other persons);
- g) *Hope* (the child is helped to yearn for future adulthood which will then lead to a more proper living of adulthood);
 - h) *Actualization* (the child must be assisted with designing his/her own human potentialities to reach full-fledged adulthood);
 - i) *Realization* (the child is helped with reaching his/her destination, i.e., adulthood as an independent and responsible way of existing);
 - j) *Dignity* (the child is helped to increasingly respect or have regard for his/her own human dignity and that of others until respect for human dignity is independently lived out);
 - k) *Self-knowing* (the child is helped to increasingly understand and judge him/herself so that eventually, as an adult, he/she can choose and act with independent and responsible self-judgment); and
 - l) *Freedom* (that the child is helped to conquer responsible freedom, educative accompaniment implies that he/she must be helped to do, in educative situations, what later he/she ought to do independently and on his/her own responsibility).

Viewed from a psychopedagogical perspective, educative accompaniment implies the active involvement of the adult (educator), as well as the child (becoming adult), and there is mention of a two-fold actualization of the educative event. By this is meant the self-actualization of the potentialities of his/her psychic life, as the child's part, and the accompaniment to this, as the educator's (parent and teacher) role. Accompanied self-actualization of the psychic life of the child implies that the adult will support, accompany, and teach him/her to realize his/her psychic life potentialities continually more adequately. "He must be supported to more adequately experience, will, lived experience, know, and behave such that the quality and scope of his experiencing will also show an increase in level. Then it will become possible for the child to carry on a more comprehensive dialogue with his world such that via sensing, perceiving, thinking, imagining and fantasizing, as well as remembering, he/she will come to a

higher level of exploring, distancing, differentiating, objectifying, and emancipating” (69 p 78).

Viewed from a psychopedagogical perspective, three ways of educating are distinguished, i.e., *affective*, or *emotional*, cognitive, knowing, or *understanding*, and *normative educating* (accompanying), and it is accepted that there is an interdependence among these three ways of accompaniment.

Concerning the educative accompaniment of the autistic child, on the one hand, possible stumbling blocks on his/her path must be reflected on, as well as on appropriate measures for realizing the mentioned fundamental pedagogical structures and, on the other hand, there must be reflection on the successful psychopedagogical accompaniment of this child to the self-actualization of his/her psychic life potentialities, by means of affective, cognitive, and normative accompaniment, with the aim of affective, cognitive and normative self-actualization.

As far as *teaching* the autistic child is concerned, there must especially be reflection on a meaningful, comprehensive *teaching practice*, designed against the background of the mentioned typical characteristics of the autistic child. Mindful of the fact that such a child, indeed, is handicapped by unusual aloofness/indifference, unsociability, and an unwillingness to explore the surrounding reality with interest, and give it meaning, it is obvious that such a teacher can hardly begin with formal teaching, and the intellectual forming of such a child, or even can practice teaching. Other than in the case of a school for normal children where, in many respects, the activities in the school are an extension of those which have already begun in the parental home, in all respects, there must be a start from the beginning regarding the educative teaching of the autistic child in school. Because the autistic school beginner's lifeworld appears to be extremely attenuated, and chaotic, by specialized guiding, his/her teacher must help him/her build up, and master stone by stone, as it were, a lifeworld for him/herself. The problematic for the teacher of the autistic child and, indeed, with teaching the autistic school beginner, is that there must be measures taken for:

- 1 Awakening his/her learning readiness, directedness, and activities.
- 2 Awakening his/her facial-, voice- and visual-directedness, as well as his/her attending.
- 3 Filling his/her need for a means of communicating, as a requirement for meaningful orthopedagogic and orthodidactic intervention.
- 4 Specialized speech instruction, and speech therapy for such a child (during which the classroom teacher and trained speech therapist cooperate closely).
- 5 Measures for promoting his/her gross and fine motor movements. Here, support is given to promoting the autistic child's muscle coordination and control, eye-hand coordination, spatial perception, and sense of balance, etc.
- 6 Measures for promoting his/her mobility, control of rhythmic bodily movement, and play activities.
- 7 Measures for making him/her aware of his/her own body, body scheme, body knowledge, and letting him/her master knowledge of body use.
- 8 Measures for promoting his/her independence (basic self-care, etc.).
- 9 Measures for promoting his/her association with others, and self-maintenance in a social context.

To the extent that the pupils show progress in the mentioned teaching aims, that their affective formedness, and interpersonal involvement are realized, and that they have largely abandoned stereotypic, ritualistic and peculiar behaviors, as well as bodily movements, and have learned to talk, chat, write, calculate (do sums) and read, as far as possible, provision must be made for the teaching of formal school subjects such as the mother tongue, mathematics, social studies, natural science, geography, history, etc.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

Implicitly stated, the present study is concerned with the problematic regarding the actualization of the psychic life of the autistic child-in-educating, and there is an attempt to explicate and to interrogate everything which this includes. Stated more explicitly, the aim of this study is:

- 1 To think through and descriptively analyze the actualization of the psychic life of the autistic child, with respect to learning and becoming, as the modes of its manifestation, in terms of psychopedagogical categories, with the eye to a better understanding of these phenomena.
- 2 To determine if, and to what extent, the actualization of learning and becoming by such a child is different from that of the “normal” child and, if so, to explain why.
- 3 To determine what tasks are included in this possible different actualization of learning and becoming for educating and teaching, these children such that these matters can occur as adequately as possible.
- 4 To provide guidelines with the aim of establishing measures focused on the more adequate realization of a world relationship, and becoming adult of the autistic child, if they are progressing inadequately.

1.4 THE PLAN OF STUDY

In the *second chapter*, the actualization of learning by the autistic child is explicated, and the emphasis, indeed, is on the difference in this matter compared with its course in the normal child.

In *chapter three*, the becoming of the autistic child-in-educating is evaluated from a psychopedagogical perspective in terms of a categorical structure.

In *chapter four*, there is reference to establishing a psychopedagogical perspective on the orthopedagogic, as well as the orthodidactic accompaniment of the autistic child in the educative situation at home and in school.

In the *fifth chapter* are a *summary* of this study, along with findings, recommendations, and the presentation of a perspective on the future.

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