CHAPTER II FROM PRESCHOOL CHILD TO SCHOOL CHILD: A PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. CATEGORICAL CLARIFICATION OF "A PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE"

To make the claim of a scientifically accountable approach and pronouncements, at the outset a sketch is provided of the concept "psychopedagogical perspective".

Since it is not possible to acquire a complete overview of a child's entire lifeworld, a specific slice of it is taken to be probed, penetrated, and described more closely. According to Van der Merwe, "to project or take a perspective" means "... to see through, in order to see into clearly, to penetrate, to learn to know fundamentally, to view with understanding, to investigate, to confirm". (1) By projecting a particular perspective and, in the present case, a psychopedagogical one, there then is an attempt to disclose and verbalize the universally valid essences of the slice of life reality of interest.

To reveal the essences of something, one must begin with that original reality itself. Thus, a phenomenological approach is obvious. Van der Stoep notes that "... whoever will not think fundamentally can engage in authentic scientific practice with difficulty". (2)

When a perspective is taken in accord with the phenomenological method, not only are essences disclosed but their sense and mutual coherence also are disclosed.

1.1 The relationship between pedagogics and psychopedagogics

Until relatively recently, pedagogics was practiced as an applied and not as an autonomous science. Thanks to the thinking of authors such as Perquin and Langeveld (3) and, in South Africa, Landman,

Van der Stoep, Sonnekus, and others,⁽⁴⁾ the autonomy of pedagogics is confirmed beyond any doubt. Thus, Landman writes: "Pedagogics is an autonomous science grounded in universal life reality itself" (5)

In addition, pedagogics has the reality of educating as its field of study. This slice from life reality, however, is so extensive and complicated that it requires the projection of part-perspectives. The delimiting function of part-perspectives promotes greater clarity. One such part-perspective of the overarching autonomous mother science of pedagogics is psychopedagogics. Not only does it function as a part-perspective of pedagogics, but it claims independence because its disclosing, ordering, illuminating, and describing its object of study occurs in terms of its own categories, which appear later in this study.

1.2 The psychopdagogical object of study

Where pedagogics extends over the phenomenon of educating as it appears in life reality, psychopedagogics takes the actualization of the psychic life of a child-in-education as its object of study.

By projecting its own part-perspective, it then tries to disclose the essentials, the sense and mutual coherence of the psychic life of a child-in-education and, indeed, to do this in terms of the essences of the psychic life of such a child.

1.3 Ways in which the realization of the potentialities of a Child's psychic life is actualized

"Psychopedagogics, as a science, is involved in the totality of everything which appears regarding the psychic life of a child, as it is actualized in a pedagogical situation". (6)

A child possesses psychic life *potentialities* which must be realized or actualized in his/her being on the way to adulthood. Thus, a child must transform his/her potentialities into realities.

By applying the phenomenological method of thinking, Sonnekus and others have disclosed this reality itself, and find that the mentioned realization of the potentialities of his/her psychic life appear in a child's learning in becoming, and becoming in learning,

to the extent that he/she continually undergoes an elevation in level, and approaches adulthood. Hence, they postulate *becoming* and *learning* as "equi-primordial structures" of the psychic life of a child. (7) The reciprocal relationships and coherence are such that these two structures are differentiated only for the sake of greater clarity, but can never be separated, and the one always implies the other. Indeed, the one is a precondition for the other, from which the name "equi-primordial". The one does not occur before the other, and any pronouncement in terms of either learning or becoming necessarily implies the other.

1.3.1 Essences *of becoming in connection with learning*To penetrate the nature of the phenomenon "childlike becoming", one must disclose its essences. In the Department of Psycho-, Socio-, and Orthopedagogics at the University of Pretoria, the following essential characteristics of becoming have been disclosed:

a) Actualizing:

In his/her ability to realize his/her potentialities, a child shows him/herself as openness, intentionality, and choice-possibility. Hence, he/she him/herself has a role in his/her own becoming. For this self-actualizing to progress adequately, an adult's support and direction are necessary.

Only through accompaniment (by an adult) to self-actualization (by a child) is a child able to elevate and intensify his/her dialogue with his/her surrounding lifeworld. The fact that such an elevation in dialogue occurs implies that a child has become "different"; he/she has learned something he/she had not possessed before. Hence, actualizing potentialities of the psychic life necessarily results in learning and becoming.

b) Exploring:

A child who actualizes the potentialities of his/her psychic life goes out to the world, explores, investigates, and discovers. In doing so, he/she continually expands his/her life horizon and uncovers new landscapes on his/her path of life. New life terrains are disclosed and uncovered. In their turn, they again create starting points for further exploring. Thus, through exploring, a child continually creates new possibilities for learning.

c) Emancipating:

Because a child becomes adult, he/she breaks through his/her dependency, lack in responsibility, unforcedness, and lack of independence, and eventually becomes a morally independent adult. Langeveld, as cited by Sonnekus, says a child is "someone who wants to be someone him/herself". (8) Thus, he/she emancipates from being a child to being an adult by realizing his/her potentialities under the guidance of his/her educators. To become adult, he/she must broaden his/her radius of contact with reality and acquire, as adequately as possible, the cultural heritage which is his/her due. This is only possible if he/she learns. The knowledge possessed by an adult exceeds that of a child.

d) Distancing:

In this context, distancing means loosening from and creating distance. Thus, a child leaves his/her previous position and acquires a new, more advanced, higher level of becoming. This is possible only if he/she understands and masters the new, i.e., if, by learning, he/she has acquired greater insight and breaks away from his/her previously inadequate signifying of reality.

e) Differentiating:

When distancing and emancipating are actualized on a higher level, differentiating occurs. This includes refining various modes of intentionality. These ways of becoming involve a child directing him/herself with respect to bodily, pathic-affective, gnostic-cognitive becoming via sensing, perceiving, imagining, fantasizing, thinking, remembering, attending, and observing (known as modes of learning). These modes also are ways in which a child gives meaning, gains insight, and understanding.

f) Objectifying:

Initially, a child lived experiences reality as global-diffuse. To the extent that becoming is realized, he/she actualizes his/her existential potentialities and "thus, must 'step out of him/herself' and enter a particular slice of reality to be able to objectively consider it as it is". (9) A separating of "child" from "world" is not possible, (10) but a child can, in a less involved way, cast a glace over him/herself and his/her surrounding reality. This implies a gnostic-

cognitive way of lived experiencing which also is a precondition for actualizing the more gnostic-cognitive modes of learning. A precondition for objectifying, as a way of becoming, is a stable emotional life. If pathic-affective lived experiencing progresses on a favorable level, it is possible for a child to distance him/herself to a more objective signifying of reality.

In addition, only a child who objectifies and has the possibility to view him/herself and his/her world from a distance, which makes an elevation in level possible can learn adequately. Without objectifying, all attribution of meaning remains very particular, and the realization of generally valid concepts is not possible.

For a more refined discussion and specification of these modes of becoming, there is reference to the work, Psychopedagogics: An introductory orientation, under the editorship of M. C, H. Sonnekus, pp. 30 et seq. In a more recent work, Sonnkus indicates that these essences of becoming "... refer to different possible levels of elevation in the becoming of a child-in-education". ⁽¹¹⁾ From this, the essences, or forms of becoming are now coupled with learning. Indeed, they are realized via the modes of learning.

1.3.2 Essentials *of learning in connection with becoming* Learning is a phenomenon which has awakened human interest since times of antiquity. Plato (+/- 400 BC) and Aristotle (+/- 350 BC) concerned themselves with this. (12)

With the establishment of the first psychology laboratory by Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) in Leipzig, learning was investigated more closely. For a long time, pedagogics was an applied area of psychology and, together with its mother science of psychology, it came under the influence, first of philosophy, and later the natural sciences. On the European Continent and in South Africa, and since about the 1960's, mainly because of the use of the phenomenological method, it became delimited as its own autonomous subject area of pedagogics rooted in an accountable child anthropology.

Owing to this, in 1969, Sonnekus could say "... learning by a child means an act or activity, as an intentional, existential, sense and

meaning giving activity, which, in constituting the learning event, cannot be explained by the various theories of learning."⁽¹³⁾ Correctly, in this connection, Ilg and Ames indicate that: "Education sometimes seems to be interested in everything except the child."⁽¹⁴⁾

As laudable as the works of Van Parreren, (15) Ausubel, (16) Hilgard, (17) and others are, they still cry for an accountable child anthropology. In this regard, there is reference to the works of Landman, (18 Nel, (19) Sonnekus, (20) and Van Wyk. (21)

Regarding the connections between learning and becoming, Van Niekerk says: "The constituents of the psychic life are the totality of personal potentialities with which a child enters the world. This embraces his/her potentialities for becoming and for learning; his/her potentialities for exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating, and objectifying; his/her potentialities for experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing, and behaving; his/her potentialities for sensing, attending, perceiving, imagining, fantasizing, thinking, actualizing intelligence, remembering, and observing." (22)

The ways the psychic life of a child is seen in his/her becoming and learning are so entwined and enmeshed that, at most, they are distinguishable but never separable. Sonnekus⁽²³⁾ and Van Niekerk⁽²⁴⁾ distinguish the following modes of learning and becoming.

a) Accompanying modes of learning

(i) Sensing

Erwin Straus, cited by Sonnekus, (25) calls sensing the "first seeing". It is that first, strongly emotionally colored knowing by a child, by which a specific aspect of reality speaks to him/her. In other words, it is a disclosing knowing. (26) Sensing is repeatedly succeeded by a more gnostic-cognitive way of learning, but sensing itself reveals something and, thus, it has a gnostic-cognitive side.

Sensing is actualized on each of the levels [or modes] of becoming, i.e., exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating, and objectifying. Depending on the quality of sensing, i.e., stable, labile,

or impulsive, it promotes or restrains the further course of a child's becoming.

Sensing, which is a more pathic-affective mode of learning, also is an accompanying mode of learning. It is never replaced by another mode, but rather remains present with the other modes of learning through the learning event. Hence, it is called an accompanying mode of learning.

(ii) Attending

With attending, or paying attention to, is meant a lingering by the slice of reality which speaks to a child via sensing. This not only implies a being concerned with, but a *remaining* concerned with something because of the wondering awakened in a child [by sensing]. Adequate attending is an indication that a child is exploring the specific landscape which he/she is lingering by.

Attentively-being-in-the-world, as learning potentiality, is an additional prerequisite for adequately actualizing the cognitive modes of learning. Not only does attending initiate the other modes, but simultaneously sustains them. Hence, it also is called an accompanying mode of learning.

b) Gnostic-cognitive modes of learning

Initiated by and with the accompaniment of sensing and attending, a becoming child actualizes the following gnostic-cognitive modes of learning: perceiving, imagining, fantasizing, thinking, remembering, and observing. For a description of these modes, there is reference to the work of Sonnekus and Van Niekerk. (28)

It is worth noting that each of these cognitive modes includes an emotional side, which can co-influence the meaning given to the reality which a learning, becoming child comes forward to meet.

This act of giving meaning, or lived experiencing, ⁽²⁹⁾ congeals and accumulates in the form of experiential residues which, in their turn, co-influence a child's subsequent going out to reality via learning and becoming. ⁽³⁰⁾

1.3.3 Accompaniment to self-actualization

No child can reach adulthood alone. For him/her to adequately become adult, he/she must be accompanied, supported, and given direction. He/she has the given *potentialities* to become adult, but he/she can bring this about only in and via an educative event.

No adult can make this event of becoming and unfolding happen; he/she can only create a favorable preformed field [condition] for it to occur. The initiative to become rests exclusively with a child. He/she has the possibility of choice; he/she need not accept an adult's provision of support and direction.

With child-being, he/she also is given as a primordial trusting openness. (31) Because of this, a child trusts that an educator means well by him/her, and he/she lends him/herself to being educated. That is, he/she allows him/herself to be accompanied to the self-unfolding of his/her potentialities.

This accompaniment and support which an adult provides, occurs in a three-fold way:

- a) Affective accompaniment to affective self-actualizing;
- b) cognitive accompaniment to cognitive self-actualizing;
- c) normative accompaniment to normative self-actualizing.

These ways of educating are realized within the reality of educating, and through adequately actualizing the following fundamental pedagogical structures:

- a) The pedagogical relationship structures;
- b) the pedagogical sequence structures;
- c) the pedagogical activity structures; and
- d) the pedagogical aim structures. (32)

In addition, Sonnekus says: "A child basically is someone who himself eagerly *will experience* and *lived experience*." (33) To the extent that a pedagogical situation between educator and child is adequately realized, this creates a preformed field for continually progressive exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating, and objectifying, via a child's readiness to experience, will, lived experience, know, and behave. This creates the possibility for him/her to sense, attend, perceive, think, imagine, fantasize, as well

as remember, and actualize his/her intelligence, by which he/she learns.

The result of adequate affective accompaniment of a becoming child is that he/she will feel safe and secure to such an extent that he/she ventures to explore and, in doing so, will emancipate to a higher level; a stable emotional life also makes it possible for him/her to enter his/her world in a gnostic-cognitive way.

Ordered, systematized, and regular cognitive accompaniment by an adult supports a child to a systematic, ordered, intellectual exploration of his/her world, and a superior actualization of his/her own intellectual potentialities.

Similarly, consistent normative accompaniment by an educator leads to a meaningful ordering of experiential residues with respect to a child attributing meanings and values. (34)

Thus, accompaniment by an educator to self-actualization by a child is indispensible for making adequate learning and becoming possible.

2. EXPERIENCING AS A WAY OF ACTUALIZING THE POTENTIALITIES OF A CHILD'S PSYCHIC LIFE

As indicated above, a child uses his/her psychic life potentialities to adequately *learn* and *become*. To determine HOW this event is realized, a psychopedgogue must illuminate and penetrate the question in terms of a psychopedgogical category or categories.

The present problematic is analyzed and penetrated further in chapters III and IV in terms of the psychopedagogical category of *experiencing*. In this way, an image is disclosed of the experiential world of a child in his/her becoming from a preschool to a school child.

The choice of experiencing as a category is based on the insight to which Sonnekus came in his work "Onderwyser, les en kind" [The teacher, the lesson, and the child], i.e., that there are such close connections among child willing, lived experiencing, and experiencing that they cannot be separated. In addition, Ferrieira

(35) indicates that experiencing embraces other categories. Thus, when there is reference to the *experiential world* of a child, this also implies that child willing, lived experiencing, knowing, and behaving are included, as seen in their mutual coherence.

2.1 Particular essences of experiencing

Before the experiential world of a child in becoming from a preschool to a school child is investigated, some essences of child experiencing [i.e., essences of experiencing] are discussed briefly:

- (1) Experiencing implies knowing. Through experiencing, what is experienced becomes knowable. (36) The radius of contact between person and reality continually broadens because more knowledge is acquired by standing in the world and experiencing it.
- (2) "Experiencing makes a *synthesis* of perceiving possible." (37) Sensory impressions are joined together and synthesized [questionable that this occurs; possibly, there is a pre-conceptual, lived synthesis during which, e.g., an object [apple] is simultaneously [synthetically] seen, touched, tasted, heard and smelled—G.D.Y. translator]

into knowledge regarding a particular slice if reality. This knowing then becomes experiential residues which are integrated with his/her

possessed experience which,

as a frame of reference, influence the acquisition of further knowing. (In this respect, see Sonnekus' cyclic notion: Experiencing, accompanied by willing, congeals in lived experiencing, which then sediments in experiential residues. Such experiential residues again direct the subsequent cycle of experiencing. (38)

According to Kant's view, experiencing is possible "only through a necessary concatenation of perceptions... Thus, experiencing necessarily leads to understanding, by which

it

- it becomes possible to name and formalize objects, i.e., to associate with things". (39)
- (3) Experiencing envelopes lived experiencing because lived experiencing eventuates in giving sense and meaning to

what is experienced. With reference to Kant, Hannah says: "A person acquires his experience in so far as he is himself active in a world which, for him, is real and meaningful". ⁽⁴⁰⁾ Experiencing is realized in connection with giving meaning, whether positive or negative.

When a person lived experiences something as meaningless-for-me, the possibility of acquiring meaningful experience is lessened. Not only does previous experiencing influence giving meaning, but lived experience again directs, in its turn, the acquisition of further experiencing.

- (4) According to Husserl, experiencing is the original way of being in the world. Thus, it is given with being-human, and is possible because of a person's intentionality. Hence, each child has the potential to acquire experiences, but he/she might not do so maximally or in a positive way. For adequate experiencing, a child also is committed to being educated. (This matter is discussed more completely in chapter III). A child is disposed to experiencing. It is an inevitable matter of being human, but experiencing does not have a a predetermined, set course.
- (5) As a human matter, experiencing also is temporally bound. The moment of entering reality is when experiencing is realized: "A person experiences when he is undergoing something." (41) Thus, experiencing is a matter of the present moment.
- (6) With reference to Martin Heidegger, Hannah (42) says experiencing is necessary to make judgments. The world-for-me is filled with contents and sense with respect to experiencing. Thus, it also makes it possible for a person to orient him/herself to reality. Experiencing fills a child's world with contents, and decreases its unfamiliarity. Because of the unique position he/she takes, and the meaning he/she gives (lived experiences), his/her unique experiential world arises.

2.2 Some ways of actualizing child experiencing

That a child realizes the potentialities of his/her psychic life by experiencing, as well as by the state of his/her possessed experience, is knowable in the following:

2.2.1 Language

With respect to the connection between language and lifeworld, it is worth mentioning that a child not only makes his/her possessed experience knowable in his/her verbal expressions, but language mastery opens and makes accessible additional possibilities for experiencing.

With reference to Sonnekus' pronouncement about the "lifeworld," (43) Mulder says, "A child's original experiences are rooted in this lifeworld which is continually subjected to the influence of a particular cultural world. A child is born and educated into a particular cultivated experiential world in which he must acquire the language Language discovery leads to giving meaning but also a loosening from the sensory-concrete and entering the world of the symbol as a token symbol with sound and meaning." (44)

The connections among language usage, as a way of actualizing experiencing, lived experiencing, learning, and emancipating, as a mode of becoming, are evident.

Through using language, a person converses with fellow persons, and opens his/her unique experiential world for another to enter. In doing so, a newly shared piece of the experiential world is established.

Ferreira (45) states that "... the act of naming is the completion and crowning of that which a child has experienced." When a child names a piece of reality, this means he/she has distinguished it as an entity, has identified it, and has given a sound symbol to it. This implies that he/she can emotionally distance him/herself to an extent that he/she can associate with things on a more gnostic or cognitive level. Thus, ne/she thus has arrived at an elevation in level; he/she has learned something more about reality and, thus, becoming is actualized.

2.2.2 Movement

When a child *goes to* and *enters* reality, he/she comes into motion. This movement is a form of intentionality [openness for and directedness to reality], and is a spontaneous moving. Moving is necessary to actualize his/her psychic life. Bodily movements, such as touching, grasping, reaching, feeling, seeing, etc., according to Sonnekus, are spontaneous ways which a child, via his/her body, explores, establishes relationships with, gives meaning to his/her world, and experiences. (46) Movement, with respect to actualizing the potentialities of his/her psychic life, and bodily movements are closely related.

The significance of bodily-being-in-the-world of a child becoming from a preschool child to a school child deserves special attention, as is done in the following chapter.

Ferreira (47) differentiates experiencing as movement into the following two modes of actualization:

a) Experiencing as activity

When a child comes into motion, he/she corroborates his/her active being-in-the-world. Thus, he/she participates in his/her becoming by self-actualizing. By exploring, differentiating, and objectifying, a child *looks at, feels, grasps, thinks about* life reality, and continually expands his/her possessed experience to such an extent that, from what he/she has learned, he/she is able to continually give more adequate meaning; he/she, thus, is changed. Hence, experiencing, as an essence of becoming, implies activity.

b) Experiencing as reaching

Not only is experiencing knowable in activity and movement, but also in reaching reality. By this, Ferreira means an understanding of the structures of the lifeworld.

3. SYNTHESIS

From the above, the constituents of a child's psychic life are *not* knowable as separate entities or abilities. That it is present as a given *potentiality* speaks of the fact that a child learns and becomes. Thus, it is only the results of the actualized potentialities of his/her psychic life which are made knowable. The *ways of actualizing*, as well as the *forms of actualizing* (i.e., the level on which this proceeds), are read from the fact that a child continually establishes

relationships with him/herself, others, things, and God, in different ways and on higher levels, as well as from the changed significance of these relationships. The way in which a child associates with things in his/her world show that he/she *learns* and *becomes*. The most obvious ways in which a preschool child, becoming a school child associates and establishes relationships with his/her world are by means of his/her bodily-being-in-the-world, language, and play.

In his/her bodily-being-in-the-world, in his/her languaging, and playing, his/her experiencing is directed to reality. According to Hannah (following Husserl), experiencing is the original way of being in the world. This cannot be reduced to anything else. Thus, it is the first becoming aware of the surrounding reality (sensing). This also implies immediate attending. As soon as reality claims the attention of a child, he/she responds by exploring. He/she can only explore, via further sensing and attending, paired with perceiving, thinking, fantasizing, imagining, remembering, and observing. Sonnekus calls these ways of associating with reality *modes of* learning. The result of learning is the acquisition of knowledge. Reaching knowledge then also is an essence of *experiencing*. Because a child now knows more, has greater possessed knowledge in the form of possessed experience, he/she has become different, and now can further differentiate, distance, objectify, emancipate, and, consequently, explore on a higher level (forms of actualizing becoming).

Attaining (reaching) knowledge, as possessed experience, on still higher levels of becoming influences the actualization of child willing, as a way of giving direction to actualizing intentionality, and lived experiencing, as giving meaning to, and taking a position toward the content. A child is always learning *something*, and that something is content. There are close reciprocal connections among the forms and ways of actualizing becoming and the modes of learning. These mutual connections must always be kept in mind. For a more precise consideration of their mutual relationships, there is reference to the work of Van Niekerk.

It now seems that *experiencing* is a form and way of actualizing becoming and, in addition, implies the modes of learning. To experience means to realize the potentialities of the psychic life.

The choice of experiencing as a psychopedagogical category for penetrating the specific problem of concern seems to be the most practical and feasible approach.

In the following chapter, an image is given of the *experiential world* of the preschool child becoming a school child. The following is an indication of what is meant:

All humans live on the earth and, thus, have the surrounding reality as a common lifeworld. However, each, in unique, individual ways, gives sense and meaning to certain aspects of this lifeworld and, in doing so, establishes a unique, individual lifeworld as a world-forme. A person continually gives sense and meaning to specific contents in his/her world; i.e., he/she continually lived experience it while actualizing his/her personal potential. Lived experiencing, however, is momentary, and changes from one moment to another. Those things to which he/she gives meaning at a particular moment, on whatever level, constitute his/her world of lived experiencing. Thus, the contents and scope of this lived experienced world are continually subject to change.

Lived experiencing occurs in terms of, and is directed by existing possessed experience. Thus, the course of experiencing congeals in the moment of lived experiencing. The meaning imbued contents, as experiential residues, are integrated with his/her possessed experience. The nature of the lived experiencing, whether pathicaffectively labile or stable or impulsive and/or gnostic-cognitively ordered, structured or not, influences the *quality* of his/her eventual possessed experience.

Just as a child always lived experiences *something,* he/she also always experiences something; they both have to do with contents. The eventual mastery and understanding of these meaning imbued contents are his/her possessed experience. To the extent that learning and becoming are actualized, the experiential residues increase in quantity. If they become consolidated into qualitatively favorable possessed experience (cognitively ordered and affectively stable giving meaning), depends on a child's self-actualization of his/her willing, in response to the accompaniment and support of his/her educators.

The broadened possessed experience of a child influences his/her further going out to and giving meaning to his/her world. The experiential world of a child, thus, is those consolidated contents of which he/she, thus far, has knowledge and to which he/she has given meaning in his/her own unique ways, as well as his/her emotions, thoughts, realization of his/her willing, and values.

In chapter III, it is shown how a preschool child becoming a school child actualizes the potentialities of his/her psychic life; i.e., how his/her experiential world shows itself.

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