

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

5.1.1 Introductory orientation, statement of the problem, aim and plan of study

(a) The breakthrough of educating and teaching in intervening with autistic children

The earlier view that autistic children are uneducable and unreachable and, therefore, are to be committed to lifelong institutional care is quickly disappearing. The view that autism, as a phenomenon, is the area of study, work and interest only of psychiatry also is waning nowadays because of the awareness that a basic need of such a child is educative teaching. Until the 1960's it was thought that psychiatric, psychic treatment was indispensable for autistic children in order to eliminate their "emotional disturbances". However, during the subsequent fifteen years (with a substantial increase since 1970) increasingly more schools have been established for autistic children overseas and in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) that are an important breakthrough with respect to the nature of the continuous intervention with such children.

In certain circles intervention with an autistic child, irrespective of its form, still has a very strong medical, psychiatric, psychological and therapeutic flavor and often there still is mention of a *patient* who must be *treated* and not of a restrained child who has a need for *orthopedagogic-orthodidactic* intervention.

(b) The concept "autism" and the name "autistic child"

The word "autism" is derived from the Greek word "autos" meaning "self" (1 p 231). The most conspicuous characteristic of such a child is a persistent, excessive and almost unceasing turning into

himself [introversion] or existing only for himself and it is the point of departure for practically all descriptions of autism as a handicap.

An autistic child is a non-adult person who is completely and entirely turned inward, shows no interpersonal affection or attraction and, therefore, does not really encounter fellow persons, is not open to the appeal of the surrounding reality as an invitation to explore it, is not directed to the world in a meaning-seeking way and consequently does not enter it in an exploratory manner. Also, such a child dwells in a frightening, incomprehensible, chaotic world, is not only insecure, unsure, is generally inarticulate and has language problems, is thrown back on and caught up in his own body, but he also clings firmly to a trustworthy little world and maintains a particular order by often persisting with stereotypic, compulsive and ritualistic behaviors.

(c) The causes of autism

Autism today is still largely a mystery, as Leo Kenner described this phenomenon in children in 1943. There is still not a generally acceptable explanation for the onset and causes of autism and, although causes can still not be incontestably proven, it seems that those related to biological and neurological brain abnormalities are the most acceptable and probable (2 p 47).

(d) Prognosis

Because autism is still not fully understood or explained, it seems to be impossible to “cure” it. Successful treatment of children with autism is not yet claimed in the areas of neurosurgery, pharmacology and psychotherapy (3 p 7). Special educative teaching is the only way in which an autistic child can be supported to a way of existence more worthy of a human being that is characterized by socializing, speech-language acquisition and communication and the mastery of cultural systems.

(e) Statement of the problem

(i) Preliminary statement of the problem

Throughout the world teaching and working with autistic children is one of the newest branches of special education and it tends to follow medical, psychiatric and psychological perspectives. Thus there is a need for a pedagogically grounded involvement with the *psychic life, educating*, as well as a *theory and practice of teaching* these children. In working with autistic children there is a particular focus on their extremely conspicuous behaviors without their educative situatedness being central. Thus, there is no mention of an explication of the psychic life of an autistic child and its actualization in an educative situation. The influence of emotional-, volitional-, cognitive- and normative-accompaniment (educating to the actualization of a child's psychic life) is seldom considered. In addition, the deeper significance of a stabilized emotional life and the mastery of language for such a child's becoming adult clearly are not grasped or explicated.

From the above, it is concluded that there is a pressing need for a psychopedagogic perspective on an autistic child-in-education in order to provide a better understanding of the actualization of his psychic life.

(ii) A more precise statement of the problem

In the previous sections the need for an educational fathoming of the psychic life of an autistic child was pointed out. The science committed to such a study is pedagogics, and, in particular, its part-perspective psychopedagogics.

Psychopedagogics is involved with everything regarding the psyche of a child as it becomes actualized in a pedagogical situation. It studies a child's psychic life in terms of experiencing, lived-experiencing, willing, knowing and behaving as realized in educative situations (4 p 28).

Sonnekus (5 p 11) does not view the psychic life as a static entity but as a potentiality that a child has been given and that he must begin to *actualize* at once. Then the question immediately arises regarding how the psychic life of a child-in-education becomes visible and is actualized. It is embodied in two equally original, inseparably connected structures within an educative situation, i.e.,

learning and becoming that qualify as modes by which the psychic life manifests itself (6 p 43).

According to Sonnekus and Ferreira (7 pp 142-145, 192-219) an essence-analysis of childlike learning and becoming reveals that:

1. learning and becoming are actualized as a unitary event in a child's becoming adult;
2. adequate accompaniment (educating and teaching) by adults is a precondition for a good quality of learning and becoming;
3. learning and becoming are normative in nature;
4. particular modes of becoming such as exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating and objectifying manifest themselves within the actualization of a child's psychic life;
5. the actualization of the psychic life can be realized in terms of different levels of behaving (senso-pathic, senso-gnostic, pathic or pathic-gnostic as well as also on affective-cognitive levels);
6. effective learning can only occur when there is adequate affective, cognitive and normative accompaniment (guidance) in pedagogic situations in which the pedagogic relationship structures are realized;
7. childlike learning is grounded in emotional stability, a positive willingness and intellectual effort; and
8. learning is basically a phenomenon of becoming in that it is a precondition for it.

In light of the above, the question arises regarding how the psychic life of an autistic child-in-educating is actualized (or possibly inadequately actualized) with respect to learning and becoming. In other words, the question concerns an autistic child's own role and how it is realized in the events of learning and becoming as matters of becoming adult. In addition, an answer must be found to the question of what this child's role is in making his own or appropriating, also known as giving meaning to the accompaniment by his educators. A question that must necessarily be answered is how the role of an autistic child appears in the events of learning and becoming and what the educative and teaching tasks ought to be for this "becoming adult" in order to provide him with the

maximum support to adequately (if possible) become adult. These questions are considered in chapters two, three and four.

As far as educatively accompanying an autistic child is concerned, the stumbling blocks on the path and the means for the most successful psychopedagogic accompaniment of this child to an adequate self-actualization of his psychic life potentialities is shown in terms of affective, cognitive and normative accompaniment.

As far as teaching an autistic child is concerned, the most important aims of a meaningful, comprehensive teaching practice are explicated and it is indicated which orthodidactic measures must be taken to be able to ensure the needed teaching and learning effects in a school for autistic children.

(f) Aim of the study

The author's aim is to explicate the problematic regarding the actualization of the psychic life of an autistic child-in-education and to inquire about all this entails. More explicitly, the aim is to investigate the actualization of the psychic life of this child with respect to learning and becoming, to think through and descriptively explicate this actualization in terms of psychopedagogic categories in order to better understanding it. There is also an attempt to determine what tasks this (possibly) different actualization of learning and becoming by such a child holds for teaching so that learning and becoming can occur as adequately as possible. Also there is the prospect of offering guidelines with the aim of establishing measures directed to realizing a more adequate world relationship and becoming adult of an autistic child if they should progress disharmoniously.

5.1.2 The autistic child's actualization of learning

a General

Learning is a genuine human phenomenon of a child that is present from the beginning and is a necessary precondition for becoming. On the basis of his being directed to fellow-persons as well as his meaning-seeking, meaning-revealing and meaning-giving

directedness to reality, a child realizes his learning potentialities by means of sensing, attending, observing, perceiving, imagining and fantasizing, thinking as well as remembering that are all carried by his intelligence and possessed language (8 pp 63-76). A learning initiative implies exertion and is the result of taking a personal position by which he, as a totality-in-function, is present; that is, his learning possesses affective, willing, striving, cognitive, didactic-pedagogic and normative moments that co-define the effectiveness of this initiative; in addition, learning is further actualized in terms of specific learning contents.

A child learns because he participates in a situation (Langeveld) and actively directs himself in his openness to the learning contents that address him by giving sense and meaning to them. However, learning is also a matter of educating in that an adult unlocks [presents] reality to a child.

b Learning and the autistic child

When learning by an autistic child is considered from a psychopedagogic perspective it must be emphasized that, for a variety of reasons, it progresses inadequately. Because of the absence of a manifested, genuine human being aware of himself as a person as well as others, and the lack of the meaningfulness of things in surrounding reality, without which *sensing* is hardly realized, an autistic school beginner seemingly carries out an “unaware” way of existing. Because his emotional life can be described as unawake, labile and even impulsive, his sensing is extremely labilized and this deprives him of the will and initiative to conquer and master reality. Self-initiated, cognitively exerted activities are lacking because his labile and impulsive affective life hinder the leap from sensing, as a pre-conceptual level of experiencing, to observing and listening on a cognitive level of experiencing.

With a normal child sensing initiates learning because it leads to wondering, curiosity and attributing meaning to the content sensed, but characteristic of an autistic child is an uncommon, ineffectual use of the senses of sight and hearing as well as a great attraction to

tactile, olfactory and gustatory impressions merely for the sake of a primitive sensing where this primarily involves bodily satisfaction.

With respect to *attending*, as a precondition for all gnostic-cognitive modes of learning such as perceiving, imagining, fantasizing, thinking and remembering, an autistic child under-actualizes his attending because of an excessive turning into himself and a continual withdrawing from reality. Phenomena such as hyperactivity, heightened distractibility, poor concentration, quickly fluctuating attending, a short attention span along with an inappropriate attending to trivia and a compulsive captivation by only a few aspects of the surrounding reality (perseveration) all not only make it difficult for such a child to enter into understanding or cognitive ways of being but also a regurgitation of meaningfully lived-experienced and now congealed possessed experiences.

Besides inadequate attending, *observing* and *listening*, as intentional totality-acts, are also under-actualized by an autistic child because they in no sense are meaning-searching, meaning-taking and meaning giving as well as exploratory in nature. An autistic child usually does not show a directedness to the face or a positive attunement to the spoken voice of another and thus often shows a so-called empty look, pseudo-blindness and pseudo-deafness.

Perceiving, a gnostic way of lived experiencing on a distanced, cognitive level that is involved with the real, actual, factual, objectively perceivable and is actualized by way of a universal medium (9 p 84), for a variety of reasons is also under-actualized by an autistic child. Such a child's defective speech, language acquisition and mastery, as well as a lack of being directed to fellow persons and reality, spoken language communication, the child question, spontaneous communication of lived experiences to another, i.e., human openness all unquestionably imply an inadequate actualization of perceiving and all other gnostic-cognitive modes of learning.

Imagining and *fantasizing*, gnostic-cognitive modes of learning that are propelled by a child's possessed experiences and intentional directedness and offer possibilities for a more distanced and further surpassing of reality and allow space for a creative involvement with

reality are similarly actualized inadequately by an autistic child. Excessive self-orientation, continual withdrawal from and giving deficient meanings to (interpretive abilities) reality are shown as reasons for this, e.g., as are evident in the following pronouncements by Bettelheim (10 p 81): “The more the person withdraws from reality into autism, the emptier, the more repetitious and stereotyped becomes his fantasy life. Autistic children are not usually interested in what goes on at any distance from them”. Also Wing (11 p 220) holds the same opinion and asserts the following: “Autistic children have little imagination and can rarely be interested in fictional events”.

Thinking, a gnostic-cognitive mode of learning that is directed to abstracting, conceptualizing, ordering and solving problems, is supported and supplemented by all of the other modes of learning (12 p 129) and also cannot be fully actualized by an autistic child. Frye (13 p 431) emphasizes the fact that autistic children have difficulty in ordering their thinking because seeing relationships, generalizing and classifying do not appear.

In light of the fact that there is such a close affinity and interdependence between the development of thinking and the progressive mastery of language, it is understandable that a passive, language-deficient autistic child under-actualizes thinking as an active act of understanding. There must also be an awareness that an adherence to a fixed, rigid way of existing not only results in an autistic child’s world remaining unordered but also that his appropriation of knowledge, memory, fantasizing and thinking cannot develop.

What has been said about an autistic child’s deficient seeing relationships, generalizing, integrating new knowledge with existing possessed experience, at the same time stress his inadequate *remembering*, as a gnostic-cognitive mode of learning. A phenomenon such as meaningless parroting (echolalia) unquestionably refers to a deficient attribution of meaning to spoken language and is only one of an autistic child’s obstacles to remembering adequately.

An autistic child often shows a particular competence in being able to recall incidental or less important matters and generally to recall and make present memories without error or change. Things are recalled very precisely and recited as initially learned without one's own interpretation or reformulation of the concerned content, there is no integration of the new knowledge with existing possessed experiences, and varied [flexible] ways of applying knowledge or transferable insights are not shown.

Because the adequate actualization of sensing and attending, the accompanying modes of learning, as well as the cognitive modes of learning of perceiving, etc. do not take place with an autistic child, it is obvious that he also will not be in a position to properly actualize his *intelligence*. Some autistic children create the image to the uninformed that they are particularly "intelligent", especially because they are able to show outstanding achievements in simple construction tasks where the correct handling of building blocks, jigsaw puzzles or form board materials are required during an investigation of intelligence. In sharp contrast to these achievements, as "islands" of intelligence, it is conspicuous that autistic children continually become blocked when they are confronted with intellectually demanding tasks requiring adequate mastery of language, categorical abstraction, abstract thinking and reasoning, integration of knowledge, seeing relationships, varied application of one's own insights, originality, a rich imagination and creativity (14 pp 11, 79, 86, 203, 204; 15 pp 32, 163, 246; 16 p 431).

Hence, it is found that there is an inadequate actualization of learning with an autistic child that includes an under-actualization of his psychic life potentialities and a limitation in the shifting of the horizon of his experiential world.

5.1.3 The becoming [adult] of an autistic child-in-education

a General

Because he is openness and directedness to the world, from the beginning a child is actively involved in actualizing his given

potentialities; this implies that by his conduct, actions and behaviors he takes the initiative in his becoming in the direction of the adult life world. A child has the potentialities to change at his disposal through self-actualization or becoming but their proper realization is clearly a matter of educating. Viewed from a psychopedagogic perspective a child actualizes his becoming through experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving as ways of actualizing learning and becoming. The following is an explication of five essences of becoming, also called modes of actualization of the psychic life of a child-in-education with particular reference to the autistic child.

b Essences of the psychic life of an autistic child-in-education as essences of becoming

(i) Experiencing as an essence of becoming

Ferreira (17 p 53) describes childlike experiencing as follows: “Experiencing is an original, continuous act of turning to and reaching (grasping) reality which leads to knowing. It is the beginning of a becoming aware of reality by which cognitive or conceptual thought is made possible. Experiencing is the first orientation of the subject (person) in his surrounding world and forms the basis for an understanding of the world on a higher level”.

Experiencing is of cardinal importance to a child because it forms the ground for all learning and represents a way of actualizing learning and becoming. Linschoten, as cited by Sonnekus and Ferreira (18 p 47), comments on this as follows: “Experiencing transforms us from moment to moment, it changes us and the way we experience things. One who has experienced has a history behind him that has taught him to see, to think and to lived experience differently”.

Experiencing makes demands of a child: a lived experiencing of safety and security as well as an adequate mastery of language because experiences must be ordered. Where experiencing means a purposeful moving to, an active self-involvement with, a reaching of reality from which experiential knowledge is acquired, it is obvious

that an autistic child, on the basis of a labile affective life, a weak willing, inadequate exploratory attitude, a fear for the unknown, a deficient mastery of language and attribution of meaning, a lack of interest in new things, a convulsive adhesion to the familiar, no active dialogue with reality is carried out and therefore their experiential knowledge is not adequately build up.

(ii) Willing as an essence of becoming

The fact that childlike willing is indissolubly intertwined with the cognitive as well as emotional life especially comes to the fore in an autistic child's deficient potentialities for giving meaning as shown in his urge to preserve the same circumstances and insistence on resisting change in a particular order as well as his deep insecurity and deficient exploratory attitude in encountering the unknown. Willing as the initiator of actualizing an experiential world thus appears weakened with an autistic child. The direction-giving effect of willing is weak and thus an autistic child appears to be aimless. With an autistic child, its propelling power remains directed to the vital level (his intentional directedness is thwarted by his imprisonment in vital-pathic lived experiences) and it is difficult to move to a psychic-spiritual level where there are willful actions, choices and decisions.

(iii) Lived experiencing as an essence of becoming

Sonnekus (19 p 23) has describes the concept lived experience "... as the intentionally determined, subjective, personal (pathic-normative) taking a position by a child as a totality-in-function in his communication with reality". According to Sonnekus (20 p 118) lived experiencing is the meaningful completing, refining attribution of meaning that necessarily pushes through to valuing or evaluating what is experienced.

That lived experiencing is an important essence of becoming is expressed by the fact that a child must continually and progressively show an elevation in the level of his lived experiencing. The gradual elevation in childlike lived experiencing from the pathic to the affective and from the gnostic to the

cognitive, etc. indicate that a child continually actualizes his learning and becoming on higher levels.

An autistic child differentiates himself from other children in that, as far as his emotional lived experiencing is concerned, he remains bogged down unusually long in senso-pathic lived experiencing because of an affinity for vital-pathic lived experiences. His emotional lived experiencing also shows an intense and prolonged character of impulsivity and lability.

Concerning the knowing lived experiencing of an autistic child, it is mentioned that such a child usually remains bogged down in extremely primitive senso-gnostic lived experiences and at the same time show an affinity for bodily satisfaction (satisfaction of impulses and desires according to a psychoanalytic view). Thus there is no mention of a progressive ordering in his knowing directedness and a breakthrough to cognitive lived experiencing.

Normative lived experiencing presupposes gnostic-cognitive as well as affective self-actualization and because an autistic child under-actualizes both of these modes, this largely explains the problematic of the normative accompaniment as well as the normative self-actualization of such a child.

(iv) Knowing as an essence of becoming

Knowing is viewed as an activity or action that results in the acquisition of knowledge, insight and understanding. The fact that an autistic child does not live in a connected way with others and manifests a conspicuously confused [obscurant] intentionality, implies an inadequate disposition to know as well as a deficient intuitive knowing. A conspicuous absence of original observations and informative assertions as well as the absence of the child question indicate that with an autistic child, a clarifying and questioning knowing are not fully actualized.

Because language is a child's most important medium for exploring and constituting his own life world it is not surprising that an autistic child, because of a deficient language mastery, has difficulty in arriving at a structuring and understanding knowing.

(v) Behaving as an essence of becoming

As a genuine human phenomenon, behaving is manifested in the various relationships a person establishes with his world. The situational boundness of behaving clearly emerges when Buytendijk (21 p 185) says that behaving is a way of being that corresponds to an attitude, i.e., to a meaningful involvement with something, whether it be an object, fellow persons, living beings, etc. Also a person behaves as a totality in relation to his world (i.e., bodily, emotionally, psychic-spiritually, intellectually, normative-ethically and religiously) and therefore behaving is the meaningful crowning of the totality of a person's involvement in reality.

Where a normal child continually actualizes his behaving on a progressively higher level and has the ability to shift his horizon of the known and familiar, an autistic child not only shows an intense affinity for the familiar but also an unusual need to preserve daily routines and a fixed pattern of living according to which activities are carried out; there are stereotypic, peculiar behaviors, compulsive and ritualistic activities, an affinity for specific objects that apparently are meaningful for him as well as an endless daily fidgeting with a specific object (22 p 153; 23 p 64).

With respect to expressive behavior, a way of being that figures forth as emotional expressions within interpersonal situations of encounter, the conspicuous differentness of an autistic child in this connection is clearly evident from the following assertion by Prick (24 pp 166, 276): “Van echte representatieve bewegingen, die bewuste intenties tot uitdrukking brengen is bij het infantile autisme geen sprake, daar autistische kinderen niet tot bewuste intensies kunnen geraken. Uitdrukkingsbewegingen en representatieve bewegingen vertonen zich pas in een subject-wereld-verhouding, waarbij de twee polen gevormd worden respectievelijk door mij en de anders. Het is juist dese subject-wereld-verhouding, die bij deze kinderen gestoord zijn”.

Thus, an autistic child proceeds inadequately via arbitrary and expressive behavior to actualizing the possibilities of his psychic becoming.

c Modes of actualizing the childlike psychic life, as becoming, within an educative situation with special reference to an autistic child

Positive changes in a child's becoming are manifested by means of a progressive and sustained exploring, signs of becoming emancipated, increased distancing and objectifying in his behaviors and a conspicuous differentiating that also include his possibilities of choosing.

(i) Exploring as childlike becoming

Exploring, a fundamental given in the psychic life, as a way of becoming means a child's intentionally directed going out to and exploring the world. Characteristic of an autistic child in this regard is that the initiative to explore is often lacking. An autistic child is not only unaware of himself and others as persons but also of important things in his environment, shows no appropriate directedness to the things around him, no self-determined, intellectually effortful activity or creativity and does not himself succeed in establishing a meaningful world.

(ii) Emancipating as childlike becoming

According to Langeveld (25 p 49) within the principle of exploration there is another genetic [developmental] principle available, i.e., a child wants to be someone himself—this is the so-called principle of emancipation. This phenomenon, a fundamental given in the psychic life of a child, is manifested as a spontaneous, natural initiative by a child to want to walk, play, dress and undress, use eating utensils, wash, etc. by himself [without help].

It has been emphasized that an autistic child experiences, wills and lived experiences inadequately and therefore he will also have problems in being future-directed and in becoming emancipated.

(iii) Distancing as childlike becoming

In order to carry out a dialogue with reality on a continually higher level a child must gradually distance himself from himself and move to the world and also especially from the known to the unknown.

As far as distancing from the parents is concerned, a criterion for school readiness with a normal child, an autistic child differentiates himself from other children in that by school age he usually is still not bonded with cohorts and separating or distancing himself from his parents makes no impression on him. For such a child to carry on dialogues with reality by distancing himself from a senso-pathic lived experiencing via stabilized affective lived experiences to more differentiated levels (i.e., affective-gnostic and gnostic-cognitive levels) is extremely difficult to achieve. Difficulty in distancing from an extremely primitive senso-pathic level of play is also one of the most general phenomena found with an autistic child.

(iv) Differentiating as childlike becoming

Differentiating, the phenomenon that a child directs himself to and becomes involved in reality in differentiated ways, figures forth in extremely inadequate ways by an autistic child because it involves emotional, knowing or understanding effort. According to Prick (26 pp 257-258) with an autistic child there is only mention of very primitive, little differentiated intentional relationships and acts as a consequence of an undifferentiated bodily way of being. According to him, with such a child there is only mention of "... het bemerken en lustvol opgaan in het eigen lichaam ...". He calls this phenomenon "... het stemmingsmatig ervaren van het eigen-zelf en van de wereld, voorzoverre deze laatste het subject gegeven is in lichamelijke toestandsveranderingen, welke door milieu-invloeden zijn opgeroepen". Because an autistic child experiences, wills and lived experiences inadequately, it also is clear that he will differentiate inadequately in order to explore, emancipate and distance in various horizontal ways so he can enter reality to create his own experiential world.

(v) Objectifying as childlike becoming

Here objectifying means a matter-of-fact attunement to reality, taking an objective attitude or lived experiencing on a distanced

gnostic-cognitive level that is directed to the identification and determination of what is essential or generally valid regarding a particular matter or object without one's own subjective opinions prevailing (27 p 194).

One of the greatest impediments in the life of an autistic child to be able to objectify is his deficient spoken language communication in interpersonal encounters. A lonely autistic child who does not succeed in orally communicating also does not succeed in building up his own meaningful world and/or a common one. Thus, such a child is bogged down in attributing subjective meaning and is not able to give objective or generally valid meaning to reality. Because an autistic child has difficulty stepping "outside of himself" (his own bodiliness), does not succeed in encountering others or discuss matters and learn to judge as others do, he cannot purposefully actualize objectifying as a cognitive way of being.

Consequently, autism gives rise to an inadequate experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving such that he under-actualizes his exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating and objectifying as ways of becoming, i.e., his entire psychic life with an inadequate becoming adult as a result.

5.1.4 Educating and teaching as accompanying an autistic child to self-actualize his psychic life potentialities

a General

A child overcomes his initial helplessness and succeeds in thriving as a person because he is not only equipped with psychic-spiritual potentialities (among which are cognitive, knowing or understanding potentialities) but also stands open to the world, can direct himself in search of meaning, can actively collaborate in his becoming, is educable and becomes educated. Thus, a child has possibilities of becoming at his disposal but they must be actualized in the direction of proper adulthood. Viewed psychopedagogically this means that a child must self-actualize his possibilities of becoming and he must be accompanied (educated and taught) by an educator in his self-actualization.

Self-actualization refers to a self-initiated, active involvement and development or figuring forth of one's own human potentialities. This act of giving meaning entails that a child continually gives greater and higher meanings to reality or its contents. This elevation in meaning, elevation in dialogue (also called elevation in level) implies the actualization of his psychic life possibilities that are manifested in the actualization of the two equi-primordial structures of learning and becoming.

However, for becoming adult to progress harmoniously a child is dependent on the support and intervention of an educator. This means that an educator's educative influence has a direct impact and role on the ways becoming is actualized. Psychopedagogically this means that a parent and teacher must accompany a child to a stable, ordered and meaningful actualization of his psychic life which is a precondition for effective learning.

It must be emphasized that when there is mention of educating, teaching is always implemented. The reason is that educating and teaching are complementary sides of each other in a unitary event and each has a common aim, i.e., the eventual adulthood of a child (28 pp 27-33).

b Accompanying an autistic child to self-actualize his psychic life

(i) Affective accompaniment

Affective accompaniment not only lays the ground for the other modes of pedagogic accompaniment (cognitive and normative) but it is of cardinal importance for a child's actualization of all of his becoming. Affective accompaniment results in establishing and maintaining a pedagogical relationship of trust, an emotional relationship between child and educator that is characterized by co-involvement, reciprocity or interaction, communication, conversation or dialogue. This is accomplished because an educator by means of standing open, surrendering and turning lovingly and acceptingly to a child, allows him to feel safe and secure. Also, affective accompaniment is characterized by solidarity and by a genuine emotional bonding because the educator lovingly turns to

the child and this touches the latter emotionally as is evident from his actions.

However, from birth on an autistic child shows a lack in accessibility to, regard for, directedness toward fellow persons and an inability to become involved with them, to encounter them and to live in intimate connection with them. Thus, with an autistic baby, suckling and toddler there is little affective accompaniment because such a child, on the basis of his retarded emotionality, is hardly reachable, impressionable, is untouchable or not addressable and can be influenced with difficulty. In the parental home, affective accompaniment of an autistic child to affective self-actualization is an almost super-human task.

The teachers who have at their disposal specialized knowledge regarding an autistic child, the full implications of his handicap and the nature of the latter's educating and teaching and who is not so subjectively involved in educating such a child as are his parents, eventually succeeds after a time of sustained affective accompaniment to awaken such a child emotionally and allow him to proceed to affective self-actualization. The teacher's intervention in this connection is to a notable degree focused on realizing a genuine emotional bond between himself and this child so that the latter can break through his excessive indifference and be willing to meaningfully explore the surrounding reality. The teacher must, as it were, play the role of a surrogate mother and intrude himself on the child in awakening his emotional life as part of his attempt to accompany the child on his way to affective self-actualization.

(ii) Cognitive accompaniment

Cognitive accompaniment implies giving support to a child in an educative situation by his educators to help him actualize his knowing-intellectual potentialities. For the parents of an autistic child it is almost impossible to accompany their child to actualize his cognitive potentialities because this child does not encounter his parents or live in connectedness with them, he does not acquire language, shows a deficient knowing directedness to and giving meaning to reality and displays a labilized emotional life.

In lesson situations the teachers must support an autistic child via affective accompaniment to a readiness and willingness to direct himself in a gnostic-cognitive way to the learning material offered since a stabilized emotional life, as a favorable preformed field, serves this child in actualizing his cognitive potentialities. In a lesson practice it is usual for the teachers to begin in their cognitive accompaniment with very elementary constructing-, unwrapping-, inlaying- or assembling-work. Trustworthy [consistent] contact with these activities promotes a child's feeling of cognitive safety and provides him with the necessary impetus to also master more advanced learning assignments and contents.

(iii) Normative accompaniment

According to Landman (29 p 39), "Educating is helping a child with his observing and complying with the normative until proper adulthood is acquired, i.e., until an unconditional identification and appropriation of norms has occurred". Normative self-actualization presupposes cognitive as well as affective self-actualization—matters with which an autistic child experiences particular problems. The fact that a young autistic child is emotionally unresponsive and generally without language largely explains the problematic of his normative accompaniment as well as normative self-actualization in his primary (home) educative situation. An autistic child experiences emotional as well as intellectual problems in meeting the demands of propriety and identifying himself with norms.

Thus, in the secondary educative situation (i.e., the school), the normative accompaniment of an autistic child also has its origin in affective accompaniment. By means of exemplifying the normative and an almost excessive intervention, teachers of autistic school beginners must support them to respect and emulate the demands of propriety. By providing support to stable pathic-affective lived experiences and to ordered, systematic gnostic-cognitive lived experiences, an autistic child must be led to recognize and accept norms, i.e., to normative self-actualization to the extent that this is possible for such a child.

c Educating and teaching an autistic child as the task of a specialized school

(i) General

The task of a teacher can be qualified as educative teaching because effort is simultaneously directed to forming a child's personality and forming him with respect to the cultural systems of the milieu. Teaching autistic pupils especially differs in two aspects from all other teaching; i.e., it is paired to a very great extent with purposeful orthopedagogic intervention with him and the fact that teaching him is begun with extremely elementary assignments.

(ii) Some orthodidactic tasks

Teaching an autistic child is especially characterized by a greater deliberateness, a wider field of intervention, intensified pedagogic measures and specially designed didactic modes of attack and techniques that can be pursued in light of the following aims:

- 1 Awakening of an autistic child's learning readiness, directedness and activities in a teaching situation during which a genuine emotional bond is created between educator and child that serves as the point of departure.
- 2 Awakening an autistic child's facial-, voice- and visual-directedness as well as his attending.
- 3 Filling an autistic child's need for a means of communicating as a precondition for meaningful orthopedagogic and orthodidactic intervention.
- 4 Provision of specialized language instruction and therapy.
- 5 Improving an autistic child's gross and fine motor movements.
- 6 Improving an autistic child's mobility, control of rhythmic bodily movements and play activities.
- 7 Making an autistic child aware of his own body and allowing him to acquire a body scheme, body knowledge and knowledge of body use.
- 8 The promotion of an autistic child's independence including basic self-care skills, table manners and performing tasks independently.
- 9 The promotion of an autistic child's association with others and self-maintenance in a social context (socialization).

d Synthesis

The accompaniment of an autistic child to arrive at an affective, cognitive and normative self-actualization presents teachers with a particular task. From a psychopedagogic perspective it appears clear that an autistic child is inclined to under-actualize learning and becoming and thus his psychic life all of which make accompanying such a child a psychopedagogic as well as an orthopedagogic-orthodidactic task. It is a teacher's task to establish an intensified relationship of trust with this child without which his adequate affective, cognitive and normative self-actualization are not possible.

5.2 FINDINGS

5.2.1 The identification of autism and the course of an autistic child's becoming

With respect to the autistic child's actualization of becoming, the following was found:

- 1 When such a child does not learn to speak and establish situations of inter-human encounter quickly enough, there are indications of an inadequate actualization of becoming.
- 2 The initial inadequate actualization of becoming of an autistic baby or toddler is usually brought to the attention of a general practitioner by the parents after which he is referred to a pediatrician or a child psychiatrist.
- 3 After a child psychiatrist has qualified such a child as autistic the child is sent to a school or unit for autistic children.
- 4 With respect to actualizing his psychic life in terms of actualizing his becoming, it is found that an autistic child manifests phenomena such as excessive indifference, a turning into himself, a bodily imprisonment, a lack of human accessibility, devotedness, involvement and encounter, an "unaware" way of existing, a lack of an active meaning-seeking, meaning-receiving and meaning-giving directedness to reality, a deficient attribution of meaning, problems regarding the acquisition, mastery and communicative use of the spoken language, as well as an extremely labile and

- impulsive emotional life and the full range of his becoming is restrained.
- 5 Autism gives rise to an extremely inadequate experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving and such a child will under-actualize his exploring, emancipating, distancing, differentiating and objectifying, as modes of becoming.
 - 6 Educative accompaniment of an autistic child presents the involved educators with an extremely challenging and specialized task.

5.2.2 The course of learning of an autistic child

With respect to the learning of an autistic child, the following was found:

- 1 Autism gives rise to an extremely inadequate actualization of the accompanying modes of learning such as sensing and attending as well as to the under-actualization of the gnostic-cognitive modes of learning such as observing, perceiving, imagining and fantasizing, thinking, remembering and the actualization of intelligence.
- 2 The realization of an intensified relationship of trust, characterized by the establishment of a genuine emotional bonding, is the only precondition, and is the foundation for all learning of the child involved.
- 3 In a formal teaching situation, the learning of an autistic child takes place for a long time merely on a concrete-practical and not so much on an advanced gnostic-cognitive level.
- 4 Widely divergent differences in degree of learning potentialities often come to the fore with autistic children and positive changes that they are ready and able to learn settle in as a result of years of specialized educative teaching.

5.2.3 Educating and teaching

As far as educating and teaching autistic children is concerned, the following was found:

- 1 Parents of autistic children experience, perhaps without exception, prodigious problems in caring for and educating the latter and without professional help, they often are not in a position to resist or deal with their feelings of confusion, impotence, rejection, guilt, self-reproach, despair, despondency, frustration, anxiety and tension because of their ostensible failure in educating their autistic children.
- 2 Unlike at a school for normal children where in many respects the activities are an extension of what had already begun at home, with an autistic child at [a special] school, in all respects, i.e., in terms of affective, gnostic-cognitive and normative accompaniment, *one must start with educating and teaching*. Because the life world of an autistic child is unordered, chaotic and even appears to be unsafe his world must be built up for and acquired by him *stone by stone, as it were, by means of specialized educative and teaching accompaniment*.
- 3 Before an autistic child has acquired a stable emotional life, as the basis for all learning activities, by means of an intensive affective accompaniment there is little mention of the forming of his knowing or intellectual life simply because the latter is propelled by the former.
- 4 Psychopedagogic accompaniment also includes a more intensive cognitive accompaniment by means of a teacher ordering (teaching) the cognitive moments of experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving within the actualization of the psychic life of an autistic child.
- 5 Psychopedagogic accompaniment also includes a more intensive normative accompaniment by a teacher giving meaning (by exceedingly careful and almost excessive pedagogic agreement via praise, etc.) to normative moments of experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving, as ways of giving meaning in the actualization of the psychic life of an autistic child.
- 6 Sometimes in teaching an autistic child there is proper as well as improper and almost inhumane use made of the principles of conditioning as an attempt at bringing about a faster progression of the affective, cognitive and normative accompaniment of such a child to self-actualization.

- 7 In teaching an autistic child the services of a speech therapist and school psychologist are necessarily used as auxiliary services.

5.2.4 Teacher preparation

With respect to the preparation of teachers for autistic children, the following was found:

- 1 Up to the present, teachers employed by schools/units for autistic children in most cases at the time of employment had neither experiences with nor qualifications for teaching these children.
- 2 On the one hand use was made of the services of teachers in possession of ordinary teaching diplomas, nursery school diplomas and/or degrees obtained from teachers colleges of provincial departments of education and/or universities and, on the other hand, of teachers who had obtained diplomas in other countries, including the Montessori teaching diploma.
- 3 In service training managed by the head of and experienced teachers in a school or unit for autistic children serves as an emergency measure because newly employed teachers cannot be completely left on their own to carry out their extremely specialized educative and teaching tasks.
- 4 The University of Stellenbosch has taken the lead by offering a diploma course of study for teaching autistic children. The value of this attempt at meeting this pressing need is recognized. However, such a curriculum ought to include a thorough study of the actualization of the psychic life of the autistic child-in-education.
- 5 Educating and teaching autistic children require skill in properly understanding and counteracting all of the problems stemming from their inadequate encountering fellow persons, inappropriate directedness to reality, peculiar activities and lived experiences, inadequate acquisition of speech and language, communication problems, a labile and impulsive emotional life and inadequate cognitive and normative self-actualization.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 The identification of autism and the course of becoming of the autistic child

a Recommendations for identifying the autistic child

Because child psychiatrists are responsible for diagnosing autistic children, it is recommended that:

- 1 the curriculum in child psychiatry be planned and offered in coordination with the Faculty of Education at the concerned university. (Child psychiatrists must continually ask questions about the psychic becoming of the child of concern in conversing with the parents and for this reason a basic knowledge of psychopedagogics ((a study of the actualization of the child's psychic life potentialities within an educative context)) can make a meaningful contribution to enriching any child psychiatry curriculum); and
- 2 where possible child psychiatrists must be given the opportunity to be able to observe autistic children in a school situation where the latter are involved in a safe, familiar surrounding in contrast to a child psychiatrist's examination room that is unfamiliar to them so that in this way a realistic person image of a particular child can be compiled.

b Recommendations for the autistic child's course of becoming

It is recommended that:

- 1 further research on the becoming of the autistic child-in-education be the focus of comprehensive longitudinal studies; and
- 2 education authorities must have knowledge of the essences of a child's actualizing his psychic life and in particular must be familiar with an autistic child's under-actualization of his psychic life potentialities, i.e., the inadequate actualization of becoming and learning.

5.3.2 Recommendations regarding the autistic child's learning

It is recommended that:

- 1 educational authorities, teachers and parents of autistic children and other interested persons must be made aware that there are differences in degree of handicaps found in different autistic children as shown by the phenomenon that a number of autistic children after years of specialized educative teaching *show a positive learning attitude* and as a result of affective self-actualization (the fruit of an established, intensified pedagogical relationship of trust) there is a *progression to cognitive self-actualization*, i.e., cognitively effortful learning of some type; and
- 2 the initial "establishment" of the nature and degree of an autistic child's learning restraint per se must not be used as a means of predicting the eventual learning results of such a child but that *the actualization of his total psychic life* should be used as a criterion regarding this child's learning effects.

5.3.3. Recommendations regarding educating and teaching autistic children

It is recommended that:

- 1 parents of autistic children must receive expert orthopedagogic guidance, advice and accompaniment at home and at appropriate parental guidance clinics at schools regarding the pedagogic needs of these children in order to support them as well as possible to their affective, cognitive and normative self-actualization;
- 2 during the teaching of these pupils special emphasis is given to the psychopedagogic accompaniment of the psychic ways of actualization (affective, cognitive and normative);
- 3 teachers in the teaching situation must not depend on applying conditioning techniques but rather must insure that the pedagogic relationship, sequence, activity and aim structures are actualized when he is guided affectively, cognitively, but especially normatively; and

- 4 school psychologists as well as speech therapists connected with schools or units for autistic children, in addition to advanced academic and professional qualifications, also must make a thorough study of *pedagogics* and must have at their disposal basic knowledge of autistic children and teaching them to be able to provide an *auxiliary educative service*.

5.3.4 Recommendations for preparing teachers for autistic children

It is recommended that:

- 1 because in the past in the RSA there was no diploma offered in teaching autistic pupils, the existing practice of a recognized, ordinary teaching diploma and/or a university degree plus a teaching diploma as a prescribed requirement for teaching autistic pupils must be provisionally maintained;
- 2 the Department of National Education grant a study leave with financial support to teachers for full-time study at the University of Stellenbosch to become qualified to teach autistic children, since this university has taken the initiative with the establishment of a teaching diploma curriculum in this area;
- 3 the preparation curriculum must be a full-time *two year* course of study and not one year as in the case of the courses compiled by the University of Stellenbosch and it must be offered jointly by this university and local school for autistic children;
- 4 the teacher preparation program must be able to show an adequate balance between practical and theoretical preparation, that is to say, a purely academic, i.e., university preparation and practically oriented preparation in the school classroom (theory and application of teaching methodology as well as lesson practice) must both be integrated facets of such a system of preparation;
- 5 the content of such a teacher preparation program, in addition to its existing content, must also be built up from the following subjects:
 - Fundamental pedagogics.
 - Psychopedagogics (with particular emphasis on the psychic life of an autistic child-in-education).

- Sociopedagogics (with special attention to the problem of socializing an autistic child).
- Didactic and subject didactic pedagogics.
- Orthopedagogics (with particular emphasis on teaching methodologies for autistic pupils, including aspects such as reading and arithmetic didactics, preschool didactics, the use of Montessori materials and other suitable teaching media, measures for improving an autistic child's gross and fine motor movement, bodily balance, rhythmic bodily control and inadequate perceiving (perceptual problems), etc).
- Orthopedagogics (with particular emphasis on the specific problematic of educating the autistic child, orthopedagogic diagnosis and determining the state of becoming of autistic children as well as the orthopedagogic accompaniment of the parents of autistic children, etc).
- Communication pedagogics (with particular emphasis on the significance of language and speech in the life of persons, the acquisition and mastery of speech and language in normal and autistic children, the problematic of spoken language communication of the autistic child, the phenomenon of echolalia as well as the methodology for speech and language instruction for the autistic child).
- Physical education (including the problematic of acquiring body knowledge, body image and knowledge of body use of the autistic child).
- Origin of autism, physiological, neurological and other related matters regarding the autistic child.

5.4 PERSPECTIVE

It is acknowledge with gratitude that the Department of National Education has already made serious provision for the special education of autistic children as a result of implementing the recommendations included in the "Report of the research committee on the treatment, education and care of autistic children" (1971) under the chairmanship of Professor Murray. Autistic children are housed at the School for Autistic Children located at Mowbray in Cape Town, the Unit for Autistic Children connected to the New Hope School for Cerebral Handicapped Children in Pretoria, and in a few exceptional cases, autistic children are accommodated on an

experimental basis in regular classes at the Brown School in Pinetown and the Cape Receife School in Port Elizabeth (both schools for cerebrally handicapped pupils).

As far as the quality of the teaching of autistic children at the school in Cape Town is concerned, it is noted that it is outstanding because since its founding in 1970 until the end of 1978 this school had been placed under the able leadership of a world-famous school head. Thus, as far as teaching is concerned, a solid foundation was laid that can be built on in the future. Because at the beginning of 1979 the former head of this school was appointed to the Unit for Autistic Children, connected to the New Hope School for Cerebral Handicapped Children in Pretoria, the future teaching of these children has been placed in secure hands. With the prospect of teachers qualified to teach autistic children being made available because of the newly established curriculum for preparing teachers at the University of Stellenbosch there is the hope that in the future the teaching of these pupils can be markedly improved.

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