

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

#### 1. THE PEDAGOGIC: A SCIENCE OF EXPERIENCE

A human being is born incomplete.<sup>1)</sup> He comes into the world as a being who is entirely dependent and who is committed to the help and support needed from other persons for his survival.<sup>2)</sup> No human being is ever born an adult. Each person enters this world as a child who, from the beginning, is the subject of parental intervention. The parents are well aware that their child's involvement with reality, even if in due time it is a conscious "being-involved" with things, is not yet a meaningful event for him. For attributing meaning, he is still committed to the support, help and guidance of those adults who accept responsibility for his "being-there". Being learned is not required to arrive at this insight and even the most "primitive" persons are aware that for his becoming to adulthood a child must receive help from adults. If we view this help in becoming as educating, we can assert without the possibility of contradiction that this activity (of educating) is given with being human. Thus, educating belongs to the most original experiences at a human being's disposal. Where there are humans, the activity known as educating appears. Thus, it is not surprising that through the ages educating as a terrain of study has interested people. By the nature of things, the disclosure of the meaning of his being-there is rooted in these educative activities. Therefore, educating must be a matter of interpreting meanings: The Dasein of a child and his futurity are indeed meaningful matters. The question is always: In what does their meaning manifest itself as such if there is mention of interpretations? The practice of educating very clearly shows that it is a matter of activity—not only in so far as it involves adult activities. A child must himself also act within the limits of propriety. Because in his involvement with persons and things he acquires experience, because he assimilates those lived experiences that have addressed his feelings he slowly contributes to his becoming. Thus, a child is involved in reality as an acting being. In so far as the study of education describes these activities it is

involved in interpreting that piece of experience that all persons have experienced, do experience and will yet experience, i.e., the help to become a grown-up oneself. Educating is not an activity that humans have invented but an activity that **is**. This activity is not equally complex everywhere but it becomes more intricate to the extent that the life situation becomes more intricate. It increases in tempo to the extent that the tempo of life of people increases. Therefore, the help is really **help to a child to himself enter into the world**. As an active being he necessarily participates in the world and in life. This entering of a child into reality, by which he enters the world, and the accompaniment that the adults offer in this, are constitutive of **the most original** [primordial] **experience at a human being's disposal**.

A child does not merely have a lifeworld from the beginning. He is totally dependent for his survival on the caring of his parents. The child's first experiences, lived experiences and encounters with reality especially arise in his being-with his mother.<sup>3)</sup> It is from this ground situation that a child goes out to meet the world, a world that is extremely dangerous to him and at times is also even menacing. Should a parent turn his back on this dependent being, this means that the child is delivered to this dangerous and unfriendly world. A parent's primary activity with respect to his child is centered on his educative **acting**. It is an activity by which he plans to broaden his child's **experiencing**—experiencing of everything that is important for his (the child's) becoming adult. Thus, Van Dyk<sup>4)</sup> indicates that there is a close connection between learning and experiencing and that the child's field of experience must be extended as far as possible. The educator must even make use of secondary sources of experience to involve the child in life so that his activities are continually brought more into harmony with the demands of an adult's lifeworld. As he goes into the world, a child constitutes a lifeworld and the sense and meanings he learns to confer proclaim the relief of that lifeworld. With this there is then mention of a profile of the landscape that he dwells in.

This entry-into-the-world by a grown-up with a child is an experiential fact. It is original [primordial] and is given with being-human. As a science, pedagogics describes the essences of this experience and makes inferences about how it is functionally

implemented in a child's becoming. Thus, a pedagogician describes **what** is performed, **how** it is performed and **why** it is **performed**. He describes a piece of human experience that cannot be thought away from the lifeworld of persons. The pedagogic is a matter of experience—original experience.

To learn to know this aspect of experiencing in its essences, the thinker (researcher), in his analyses, must penetrate to the categories or illuminative means of thinking that describe these essences of his experiencing. In order to indicate to what extent this point of view was already found in Western thought for ages (at least since Aristotle), four views of the matter “experience” are briefly summarized. The aim is not to reproduce these standpoints as such but to indicate that the relationship person-world cannot be reflected on without implicitly or explicitly involving the problem of experience.

## FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON EXPERIENCE

### a) Immanuel Kant

The problematic of experience conspicuously deals with the evident and non-evident (what is conspicuous, presumptions, expectations, anticipations, what are cherished, etc.) about what **is**. Thus, there is no doubt that next to its directedness to the physical (evident) there also is mention of its directedness to the metaphysical (non-evident but indeed real) aspects of what **is**. This aspect of the problematic of experience is clearly evident in the thoughts and pronouncements of Immanuel Kant by which a particular perspective on the question of “experience” comes to view.

Beforehand, however, the brief question: why does this deal in the metaphysical, i.e., in metaphysical conceptions? Metaphysics is that aspect of science that expresses itself about the problems that have reference to the ultimate destiny of persons in that sphere that extends itself above all experiencing.<sup>5)</sup> Thus, metaphysical insights are those insights that are apparently independent of all experience. For example, when a person expresses himself about God then he does this in terms of insights and ideas that do not depend on any experience. In this connection, the standpoint of Leibniz and Hume

is that the source of the metaphysical is non-empirical.<sup>6)</sup> With the sciences of experience, this is necessarily stated differently. Insights and ideas about the pedagogic should contain knowledge that Kant calls “*a posteriori* knowledge”. This he describes as empirical knowledge that is **factual** and that speaks from a person’s experiencing. For this reason it is important to investigate Kant’s standpoint on human experience.

For Kant experience implies empirical knowledge.<sup>7)</sup> Hence, it is knowledge by which an object is determined by means of perceiving, it is the assimilation of impressions in consciousness. Thus, he asserts that everything that **is** evident or knowable is through experience. “Erfahrung ist dass einzige Erkenntnis worin Gegenstände gegeben werden”.<sup>8)</sup> Experiencing makes a **synthesis** of perceiving possible. This synthesis is not concealed in perceiving itself, but consciousness possesses a combining character that links together many types of perceiving into a unity. These unities constitute the core of our knowledge of objects—this is from our experiencing. Kant asserts “dass alle unsere Erkenntnis mit der Erfahrung anfangt, daran ist gar keine Zweifel”.<sup>9)</sup> Thus, for him, all knowledge begins with experience. How else can our possibilities of knowing (understanding) be activated if they are not aroused by objects that impinge on our sense organs? These sensory impressions must be elaborated into knowledge of objects that then are called experience.

As far as Kant is concerned, the combining (synthesizing) character of experiencing must be seen clearly. In our understanding, perceptions are joined together into a unity and knowledge is thus induced from existing or available experiences. For example, someone who for the first time excavates under the foundation of his house knows from another experience that the house is going to collapse. Therefore, one can claim that the experience, although not direct, has given rise to this knowledge. As long as understanding is influenced merely by representations this knowledge cannot achieve objective reality and thus insight is lacking. Thus, Kant asserts: “Jeder Gegenstand steht unter den notwendigen Bedingungen der synthetischen Einheit des Mannigfaltigen der Anschauung in einer möglichen Erfahrung”.<sup>10)</sup>

How can one have the needed experience? Experience is the knowledge of objects through perception, a synthesis of perceptions that gradually increases one's understanding by means of perceptions".<sup>11)</sup> Experiencing is only possible through a necessary connecting together (synthesis) of perceptions. Actually Kant asserts that experience is empirical knowledge that flows out of a synthesis of perceptions, i.e., a joining together of perceptions. Hence, all human knowing begins with observations (perceptions) that through the course or act of synthesis become a concept. This synthesis manifests itself in human understanding as an idea. Experiencing necessarily leads to insight by which it becomes possible to name and formalize objects, i.e., to become involved with things.

Experiencing is possible only in so far as there **are** things; experiencing refers to understanding objects in terms of practical concepts. A person acquires his experience in so far as he is himself active in a world that for him is real and meaningful.<sup>12)</sup> This life experience is closely related to teleology, i.e., to the doctrine of purposefulness in creation. From this also follows the Kantian deduction that experiencing is **comparative** in nature. It does not have true, general validity since it says what **is there** but not that it necessarily can be so and not otherwise. Hence, it possesses a comparative character but cannot make the claim of universal truth.<sup>13)</sup>

**Summary:** According to Kant, experience manifest itself in a three-fold manner of:

- immanence—immanent sense or meaning of things;
- consequence—relations of cause and effect;
- combination—relationship between things that combines into a unity.<sup>14)</sup>

## **b) Edmund Husserl**

One of the most important contributions to our insight into experience comes from Edmund Husserl. He offers what he calls a genetic analysis of experiencing in which he explains that anticipation plays a decisive role in our understanding of

experiencing particularly because it can be disclosed and grasped only in accordance with the idea of intentionality.<sup>15)</sup>

According to his view, this anticipating belongs to the *a priori* structure of experiencing.<sup>16)</sup> Husserl's explication differs greatly from the traditional views in that he sees experiencing as an original way of being in the world, i.e., as a primordial knowing (mobility) in reality out of which flows additional and further relationships between person and world. With this Husserl discloses a definite connection between the *a priori* and *a posteriori* of the concept of experience, namely that of a definite relationship between person and reality on the basis of experiencing.<sup>17)</sup>

Understandably, this view also means that experiencing is a matter of knowing reality. Although Kant had already emphasized this, Husserl does not view this as knowledge in itself but as an achievement of the subject (the knowing person) on the basis of which the existing, i.e., the extant relationship between person and reality continually is expanded and exceeded in the experiencing.

The genetic aspect of his view of experiencing is in agreement with Kant's findings about the significance of beholding (sensory perceiving) but with the difference that the **categorical functionality** of things is synthetically bound together in experiencing. In this way Husserl really explains that experiencing belongs to a person's understanding of the world (Weltverstehen), and this implies that in experiencing itself there is an ascending line to be observed in which the achievement effects of this are manifested. Because of this, experience acquires an actuality-meaning that previously had not yet been attached to it, namely that in the context of experiencing all things (objects of knowledge, matters, etc.) speak functionally. For Husserl the relationship between perceiving (observing) and experiencing lies in this.

According to Husserl, the concept "experience" has a two-fold interpretation, namely

- (i) that the givenness of a matter is squeezed into a person's field of vision, and
- (ii) that a synthesis (unity) arises that in thinking becomes sedimented as function (achievement).

For Husserl, the understanding of reality flows from the coherence of these two aspects in the sense of the achievement of consciousness. In this way, sensory impressions are joined into a conceptual unity and this understanding forms the basis of a person's cognizance of reality that is observable as a mobility in reality. Briefly, a person learns through experiencing but in a particular way.

Taking into account the whole of Husserl's view, it follows (understandably) that Husserl asserts that experiencing is continually transcended. By this he means it is elevated to a **life sphere** for a person by which something such as a **life horizon** (also see **lifeworld**) becomes possible.<sup>18)</sup>

Thus, experiencing always **functions** from a particular **framework of meaning**. This framework of meaning makes itself visible in the original, i.e., primordial, anticipations that arise with him (e.g., attributing meaning, naming, etc.). Practically speaking, this implies that anticipations function (are functionalized) on the basis of the fact that a person is open to experiencing.<sup>19)</sup>

Because of this, the inductive aspect of experiencing to which Husserl refers acquires the meaning of pre-interpreting on the basis that the intentionality behind the experience determines its course. Thus, this inductive aspect leads experiencing on—as being **in motion in the world**.<sup>20)</sup> Heidegger later indicates that the effect of this is establishing new relationships with reality.

### c) Martin Heidegger

For Martin Heidegger **Dasein** is the first ontological category. From this first ontological category, experiencing is understandable for him, indeed it is really the precondition for experiencing.<sup>21)</sup> The **being** of the being-there, i.e., in the emphasis of the “**Sein**” of **Dasein**, experiencing is presented as a first, subjective, unique, non-transferrable matter. “Erfahrung überhaupt” [experiencing in general] is only to be considered on the basis of this personal, subjective characteristic. The first emphasis with experiencing falls not on **that** which is experienced but on the fact **that** something such as experiencing indeed is possible. This is a definite expansion

of the view of thinkers from Plato to Kant, namely that all knowing begins with experiencing. Heidegger really identifies experience as a category of **being in the world**. The emphasis of the “**Sein**” in Dasein really postulates the uniqueness of experiencing. On this basis he views the “**Sein**” as a precondition for experiencing.

However, Dasein has **temporality** as a category, i.e., a beginning and an end.<sup>22)</sup> Thus Dasein is restricted and bound to time. The time of experiencing is the time of the present—not that of the future or past. Therefore, experiencing is a matter of **now**. According to Heidegger, experiencing is momentary because it is determined temporally. The actuality of experiencing lies in the moment that is present, in what is happening. A person experiences when he is busy undergoing something. Hence experiencing is actual in the realization of Dasein.<sup>23)</sup>

**Now the task of the experiencing person is in the fact that ways of disclosing reality speak to him that make his entry into that reality meaningful.** This sense of reality directs itself such that a person enters into a relationship with that reality. More explicitly, by entering reality a person understands the sense of reality. This entering reality (**going** to reality) manifests itself as unveiling, disclosing and illuminating what are given and by which the meaning of things arise.

The meaning of things understandably is inseparably connected with the intention[ality] of the one who **goes**, i.e., of the one who **experiences**. But the things, i.e., reality, are not organized apart or in isolation. The things form a collective “Gestalt”.<sup>24)</sup> Thus, the meaning of things shows a mutual relationship on the basis of which a relationship between person and reality is possible. Heidegger calls this intended relationship that a person arrives at **primordial experience**, and this means the disclosure of the above-mentioned collective “Gestalt”. This disclosure makes things (contents) experience-able, i.e., makes them present as a field of play for experiencing.

Viewed in this way, for Heidegger, experiencing involves in the first place a relationship with reality on the basis of the fact that the things are meaning-disclosing.<sup>26)</sup> Because experiencing creates a



relationship, for Heidegger it has a functional significance that leads to judgments with perspective as the result (the creation of a personal lifeworld). Thus, experiencing makes a person mobile in reality because:

- (i) the things are unlocked by experiencing, and
- (ii) the interpretation of meaning on the basis of experiencing can be put into words. With this the things stop being concealed and qualify as life contents in a functionally experience-able sense.

Thus, for Heidegger experiencing is a way of being in the world, i.e., a modus of Dasein.

#### d) S. Strasser

Following Strasser's views, a person's conduct and activities in the world are carried by insights that are rooted in thinking as well as intuition. Thus, Strasser distinguishes between "evidences of thinking" and "intuitive evidences". It is impossible to draw a clear boundary between the two since experiencing plays an important role in both. However, experiencing must not be seen here empirically as a sequence of sensory impressions since this is a too mechanistic view of experience—a mechanism on the basis of which the outside world is assimilated into an organism.<sup>26)</sup>

As a phenomenologist, by experiencing Strasser means a person's **original** (primordial) turning to what is, in so far as this leads to knowing. (In Dutch) "In the following, we shall understand experiencing as the original turning of a person to the beings in so far as this turning to leads to a knowing presence".<sup>27)</sup> Thus experiencing is the necessary **beginning of becoming conscious**; thinking as concepts and categories is a continuation of this primary turning to but on a higher level. The question arises about what Strasser means by "...to the beings"? (In Dutch) "We understand by experiencing the form of involvement with the **to be known reality** that leads to a more or less concrete presence of this reality to the knower".<sup>28)</sup> Thus, experiencing is not a meaningless event but assures the first **orientation** of a knowing being in his surrounding world. Each obviousness (evidence) is the result of particular experiences, i.e., "evidences of thought" by means of thinking but

also “intuitive evidences” obtained in a more direct way. Thinking has an abstract character—it blossoms out of experiencing but differs essentially from it.<sup>29)</sup>

Not all experiences lead to evident knowledge. Human experience has a **dialectic character**. There is mention of a clear **result** only when the various knowing intention[alities] have led to a harmonious **synthesis**. As long as a person still has doubt about a certain aspect of an object, his urge to know is not yet satisfied and his exploratory trip is not yet finished. His experiencing must lead him to an **unimpeded insight**.<sup>30)</sup> Partial experiences can lead to data that are in mutually agreement and that are united into insights. **Thus experiencing has a fundamental character in so far as it provides the foundation for insights and ideas (concepts) that arise in persons.**

### 3. ESSENCES OF EXPERIENCING

With reference to the four briefly summarized views and other contemporary pronouncements about experiencing, it certainly is necessary to make an effort to try to describe experiencing in its essences.

Because the origin and nature of experiencing, as they are given primordially with being human, are so closely related, it is extremely difficult to describe them separately. The origin (there where experiencing begins) and its nature (the ways in which it appears) often show such a close connection that the two can be set apart only with difficulty. It's origin often refers to it's nature, and the other way. If there is an inquiry into the origin of experiencing there is really only one possibility for an explication of the entire problem and that is to proclaim that one finds its origin only in the fact that the [experiencing] person is in the world.<sup>31)</sup> Therefore, the person as Dasein proclaims the problematic of experiencing. To properly understand this, the meaning of the word “experiencing” must be examined. Experiencing literally means to **enter**, to **reach** or to **endure** [something]. Thus, when we talk of human experiencing, this proclaims a person in motion; one who goes into, reaches the world or who endures in it. In his involvement with the world as a surrounding reality, a person is continually involved in

establishing relationships, arriving at new concepts, shifting the horizon of his lifeworld, changing the relief [profile] of his landscape, etc. As an acting being, a person is necessarily involved in participating in the world and in life; he is involved in **entering** the world. The meaning of this **entering into** the world lies in the **doing** as a way of encountering the world.<sup>32)</sup> In the deed, experiencing embraces being through activity, as a way of being in the world.

The original meaning of experiencing lies in **doing**, i.e., in the way the world is **encountered**.<sup>33)</sup> Thus, here there is prominent mention of experiencing as an event that realizes itself (see Heidegger) and experiencing as a condition (see Husserl). To distinguish, one can talk of the first as **happening to** and the second as experiencing. It must be clear that such an artificial distinction is for the sake of clear argument because the dynamic movement (happening to) and its results are not different modes of Dasein. The one without the other is unthinkable and they **essentially** constitute the same conception. For explanation and clarification, the following is offered: the new encounters with the world (what we can call happening to) become elaborated into experiences. The results [residues] of the experiences appear as the possession of the living person in what can be called memory. Thus, memory creates the possibility to know again on the basis of an earlier experience. One of the wonders of experiencing is in this possibility that memory establishes. A consciousness (of I), the **something** undergone [happened to] and the elaboration into experience of what was undergone belong to experiencing. This leads to a better understanding of reality because a wealth of experience is built up by which each person establishes for himself a particular framework of meaning. Thence, experiencing always functions out of this framework of meaning<sup>34)</sup> by which a person acquires a better grasp of reality and by which he attains more mobility.

The question arises of how the first experiences that a person goes through are possible. In this regard, Langeveld<sup>35)</sup> refers to the view of Kant in which the position is held that certain knowledge (a *priori*) belongs to the constellation of the human intellect from which all experiencing can take its beginning. Concepts such as

magnitude, causality, etc. that are not supported by experience belong to this constellation of human intellect. For Kant these are concepts of pure reason. A human being's intellect already has at its disposal the pure preconditions for each possible experience. Being human thus implies the possibility of experiencing.

The universality of experiencing speaks from the first ontological category, namely Dasein.<sup>36)</sup> The "Being" [Sein] of Dasein [Being-there] creates the preconditions for experiencing in the sense that as Dasein, a person, among other things, is there as an acting being. Each activity, whether carried through successfully or not, means a new experiencing<sup>37)</sup> that manifests itself in the possibility of formulating, re-orienting and learning. With an adult person, where the "conversation" with reality occurs on a higher level, this experiencing is thoughtfully and appreciatively assimilated and thus this leads to improved and more appropriate activities. Thus an adult person learns more quickly from his experiences because they exercise a controlling function by which he more systematically and confidently is able to make distinctions among his activities.

A person does not have innate patterns of behavior or instincts at his disposal that guarantee or determine his mobility in reality, i.e., his course in the world is not determined. Although a person is predisposed to experience it is clear that the possibility of actualizing these predispositions does not indicate particular patterns or built in (innate) variations in style. The experiences of a person are always realizations of possibilities and not instinctive or driven reactions. By this it is not contended that his ways (modes) of being in the world do not also contribute to his ways (modes) and, therefore, also to the nature of his experiences. Indeed, this implies that the totality of his experiencing cannot be genetically interpreted and/or explained. Therefore, it is appropriate to understand that a person, by virtue of his being-there, will necessarily experience but on the other hand that his experiencing is not a constant, complete magnitude. His experiencing indeed represents his movement, his course in and through reality. Although experiences congeal (i.e., there is mention of being experienced—a condition), experiencing is really movement, as already indicated. The implications of this have been raised and further elucidated by Gehlen<sup>38)</sup> who interprets the concept

“expansion of experience” as verbalizing the moving, accumulating course of a matter. These ideas are explained later.

Experiencing is a necessity for each person because no one can set the world aside. Because he is a human being he must necessarily go forward to meet the world, attribute meaning to things (and matters), become involved meaningfully and accountably with things (matters) and thus enter into the world. He must go forward to meet reality such as other persons, endure and, as it were, undergo it. A person is also only aware of the world in so far as this entering the world is a matter of consciousness for him and an accumulative matter of being-conscious. That is, certain aspects of his entering the world congeal. These congealed aspects or residues then really proclaim his experiential knowledge of the world and of life, **as such**.

Where there is mention of congealed aspects or residues of experience, by implication there also is mention of contents. To experience is to always experience something, which means that it is realized in terms of contents (something) and that experiences take their beginning from previous experiences in form, interpretations, meaning, conceptions, etc. Thus, it must be possible to increase and broaden experience. Gehlen views the expansion of experience as a person’s acquisition of mobility in reality. Ten Have<sup>39)</sup> says that in order to acquire this mobility situations must be created within which it is possible for a person to broaden his experiencing. Viewed in this way, experiencing is also a positive dynamic participative matter of human existence. The essence of the broadening of experience can be seen functionally as perceiving and acting that have the result of transferability (applicability). Among other ways, perceiving functions for example in that it results in attributing meaning. The acting is visible through placing the new meanings in a broader framework of meaning. The expansion of experience, then, amounts to the transfer of insight. Gehlen views this transfer as a particular factor that speaks strongest in various situations. Thus, there is mention of a general factor that will have significance in **various** respects and in a variety of situations. The most important consequence of this is the view that a person anticipates the nature of new situations on the basis of experience. This anticipation is really already a form of abstraction,<sup>40)</sup> i.e.,

conceptual knowing. Gehlen views the following aspects as important for expanding experience:

- (1) A particular reflective learning that often is the result of hit-and-miss (trial and error) experiences.
- (2) Decisive, reflective perception that orders characteristics or symbols.
- (3) Changing a situation to a problem by which a synthesis with other already existing experiences acquires form.
- (4) Expanding the totality of experience by which various aspects are organized under one category.
- (5) Experiences that are directed to once again recalling new experiences, e.g., in an experiment. In such a case the experience itself is the motivating power for the creation of the new experience.<sup>41)</sup>

The expanding of experience ultimately refers to a broadening of the lifeworld because it is always involved in experiencing meanings and particular forms of achievement.

In entering the world, life contents appear before a person to which he must attribute meaning. These contents are not merely available to a person but the lifeworld, with all of its contents, offers him a space that he **can** enter as a person but that he **must** also enter on the basis of his being human. In relation to human openness (being open for reality), these contents (meanings) constitute two matters, namely a particular **attunement of a person** and a **particular established-ness of reality**. Initially the sense and meaning of reality are obscure and concealed because he has not yet become acquainted with them, but in his entering reality he must disclose the sense and meaning of the contents. These contents and meanings might be evident and non-evident.

Before elucidating the concepts evident and non-evident reality it is necessary to examine the whole problematic of the acquisition of knowledge in the context of experiencing. The concept experience has already been used a variety of times in close connection with **becoming, knowing, insight and learning**. Does experience now merely imply the four mentioned concepts or in what mutual relationship are they to each other and to the whole matter of experiencing? A separation among these concepts is difficult to

imagine because experiencing really lies at the foundation of all four.<sup>42)</sup> To make a systematic thinking through of the problem possible, a distinction indeed is made although there cannot be any consideration of the separateness [isolation] of the mentioned matters.

To be able to constitute a personal lifeworld within which a person can create meaningful relationships with reality, objective and grounded **knowing** is of primary importance. Kant asserts, “Die Erfahrung gibt uns die erste Kunde von der Welt”. All of our knowing thus begins with experiencing. A person learns to know his world on the basis of the knowledge accumulated from experiencing. Thus seen, human becoming can be viewed as the continual acquisition of experiences by which the acquisition of knowledge is the primary task and, in this light, becoming mainly represents an elevation in level of knowing. There is only mention of human becoming and learning if opportunities are created for undergoing experiences that are elaborated into knowledge of the objects and matters. The activity of **learning** cannot be considered without experience and thus the latter is a category [essence] of the former. The phenomenon human “learning” cannot be considered without experience because, among other things, the event of learning presumes an increase in experience.

Although one can view learning as an event that springs from experience, they cannot be equated. Indeed a person learns by experiencing, but then in a different way. For example, experiencing also belongs to a person’s intuitive understanding of the world that in one way or another influences his code of behavior—future behaviors must only become richer in meaning.<sup>43)</sup> Experiencing only becomes **learning** if it contributes to increasing a person’s radius of action. Therefore, Weniger speaks of experience as impressions and perceptions that can be of significance for the assignments and tasks that are presented to us. This includes insight into the essences of things that can contribute to the solution of problems that one confronts.<sup>44)</sup> These meanings have their beginning in the first knowledge of reality out of which flow further and additional relationships between person and world. Thus, a definite relationship exists between former and future experiencing and therefore there is a decisive relatedness between

person and reality on the basis of experiencing.<sup>45)</sup> This has a comparative and controlling character from which a synthesis to concepts and insights is possible. An experience is only knowledge if it can be brought into relation with other experiences (reflective) and manifests itself in a grip on the general, e.g., the essences of relationships with things. This grip ensures a mobility that was not previously there. The particular value that Langeveld attributes to experience as fertile soil for the teaching event is expressed clearly in the following [In Dutch}: “First soil must be laid or disclosed on which something can grow and at first one must continually cultivate that matter from these life experiences before a child can possess reality. ... One who succeeds in being involved in situations that the child has constituted for himself has a good chance of speaking about things that can be something meaningful to the child.”<sup>46)</sup> Thus, a person can give meaning to his world on the basis of earlier relationships built up from experiencing and that speak in the present.

In his journey through life and the world, a person is continually involved in trying to determine his own foothold. He does this by means of beacons (contents or meanings) of aspects of reality in terms of which he can orient himself in order to acquire a certain degree of mobility in reality. These contents or meanings can be evident or non-evident. One should be able to interpret their being evident in the sense that they are visible, perceptible and able to be pointed to. At the same time there are also non-evident contents in the sense that they are not visible or perceptible, although they are as real as the evident contents. Both are part of a person’s act-intentionalities, i.e., they direct the **ways** but also the **directions** in which he moves. Thus, both are coordinate, co-determinants of the ways in which a person enters the world, and in experiencing the non-evident contents are given meanings in the same way as are the evident contents.<sup>47)</sup> Experience proclaims these evident and non-evident matters as those aspects of reality that a person eventually experiences. This thus makes the totality of reality present as perceivable **and** non-perceivable. Therefore, this is a matter of the directedness to meaning of a person who enters the world, in that he searches for the interpretation of the meaning of the evident or perceptible things as well as the meaning of the non-evident



matters. Everything that **is** and that appears in a person's lifeworld is the terrain for human "going into the world".

Human openness (open to reality) makes it possible for a person to step up to or go to meet reality. In this action (stepping up to) with its clearly specifiable "fruitful moments" there is mention of congealment or residuals as acquired knowledge that make it possible for a person to further step up to reality. However, no one can encounter and experience this reality for another person because it is a personal encounter—it is a single, unique non-transferable, thus subjective matter. Indeed the residuals of human experience, as knowledge in the form of information, can be transferred, but the **experiencing itself** cannot be imparted or transferred. Thus it is a life task, a necessity of life for each person to enter the world **himself** and in this way to learn to know the world and life. The fact that this entering the world can also occur under the supervision and guidance of other persons does not put experiencing aside but only makes this entering the world less precarious and time consuming. Otherwise each person would have to undergo each experience anew, also as this has accumulated in science. The guidance makes the intermediate experiences superfluous and leads one to short cuts from one experience to another so that it also becomes possible for a child to more quickly and more assuredly be able to reach his destination [adulthood].

A person experiences whenever he is involved in undergoing something.<sup>48)</sup> From experiences of the past, congealments or residues, as knowledge, are present that continually change and that have the consequence of broadening the intended lifeworld and to which one must continually reorient oneself. Thus, the experiences of the future and their anticipations are also not the experience itself. Indeed they predispose the experiencing. According to Heidegger, experiencing is momentary because it is temporally determined, i.e., it is a matter of the **now**. Out of a specific framework of meaning or situatedness, from moment to moment a person is directed to a particular piece of life content that, as such, is not for him something obvious. One must broach this life content from his particular situatedness and his entry into reality he understands the sense of reality. Thus, experiencing makes it possible for a person to attribute new meanings in order to make

this entry meaning-disclosing, unveiling, illuminating—briefly, to make possible the establishment of a meaning given entry into life contents. In this sense experiencing is essentially a matter of establishing an intended relationship with reality, i.e., entering the world with a purposeful and preconceived aim.

Strasser views experiencing as a person's original [primordial] turning to reality in so far as this leads to knowing.<sup>49)</sup> In the life of a child this refers to the first sensing of that which is. Strictly speaking, this is not yet thinking, perceiving or lived experiencing. This first turning to reality implies that a person turns his face to reality. The thinking, lived experiencing and interpreting show a decisive connection with this primordial sensing that provides the ground from which a person can give direction to his progressing and becoming but that are not equated with experiencing. Perceiving (as an aspect of experiencing) has a strongly dialectic-hermeneutic character because in the experiencing it is involved in establishing, investigating and undergoing particular possibilities of reality. These possibilities are expressed in particular statements and judgments; explanations are given so that comparisons can be found and pronouncements can be made about reality. Without experiencing these pronouncements are not possible because on the basis of his experiencing a person continually interprets aspects of reality and gives an explanation of the meaning of his own existence. Essentially the meaning of experiencing as a mode of being human lies in this.

From what has been said about experiencing thus far, it is clear that especially two aspects strongly arise:

- (a) **Fundamental aspects** of experiencing as a **structure**, i.e., as a mode of Dasein. These aspects elucidate the concept of **experience as such**—they have a descriptive function.
- (b) The **functional aspects** of experiencing. These aspects illuminate the significance of experiencing for a person's going out to the world, i.e., the ways in which one actively and acquiringly steps up to meet reality.

Thus we briefly summarize the matter “experiencing” in order to evaluate its significance for the construction of didactic theory, and

these two aspects are now presented in a particular relationship. In order to push through to what experiencing essentially is (i.e., the *fundamentalia* of experiencing) in light of what has emerged from the descriptions so far, the following are classified as *fundamentalia* of experiencing:

Experiencing is a matter of intentionality. Outside of a person's purposeful entry into reality there is not such a thing as experiencing. Also one gradually steps up to reality because for him it has an inviting character to which each person answers in a unique way by making particular interpretations and by attributing meanings. In the particular ways each person interprets and gives meanings, he is directed to reality and there is mention of intentionality. Fundamental to the question of intentionality is the **relationship** a person establishes with reality on the basis of his entry into it. This relationship is a personal one based on acquired knowledge and meanings already given to reality. Thus a person views the world in a particular relief. Certain things (matters) figure in the foreground and others become shifted to the background because a person enters reality in a very particular way. Thus experiencing reaches to a life perspective.

A human being is the only being who has experiences at his disposal—experiencing is an exclusively human matter. Experiencing, to the extent that it has resulted in residues of knowledge, is accumulative; i.e., experiences of the past do not disappear but remain in a person's consciousness as knowledge on the basis of which he is more mobile in reality and that shows its sedimentation in a particular achievement-effect. Stated more strongly (following the view of Husserl), experiencing is a matter of achievement-consciousness. In experiencing a person really actualizes potentiality because in it, e.g., **becoming** and **learning** are actualized. More importantly: in experiencing, these events lend themselves to **guidance** in their actualization. Thus, actualization means that this entering the world is a dynamic matter in which a person is actively involved such that experiencing, in addition to its presumed being a state, is also a matter of activity. It is a state in the sense that with an experienced person there are clear residues in the form of acquired knowledge-structures but on the other hand this state carries the mobility of a person in reality, i.e., this

knowledge of reality at his disposal allows him to move in reality in a much more assured and safe way. After all, it is also the sense of teaching to create particular securities in the life space by means of **guiding** a child in his entering (actualizing) reality so that he does not become impaired by his own deficient experiences and eventually participate as a person in reality in an inferior way.

The totality of the fundamental aspect of experiencing, consequently, can be summarized in the concept of **constituting**, i.e., that a person, both in the way and the fact that he comes forward to meet reality creates a personal lifeworld for himself. The human world of meaning is the intentional correlate of his achieving- and appreciating-consciousness.<sup>50)</sup> Orientation in a world that is continually re-created by himself is a creative activity that is closely related to human openness and freedom. A person is continually involved in ordering things differently, making new disclosures, expanding, etc. and in the midst of this dynamic course he must create for himself a meaningful and secure lifeworld. This constituting, as a summary of the *fundamentalia* of experiencing, therefore has an act-character, i.e., a character of activity. The fact that experiencing accumulates also plays an important role since it is a matter of the achievement of consciousness and of a person, as consciousness, planning his way through the world. The fact that a person has at his disposal foreknowledge and residues from experiencing put him in a position to evaluate with greater security the situations that he comes across and by which he constitutes his own lifeworld in a unique, personal and individual way.

The functional aspect of experiencing, because of its accumulating and achieving nature, emerges as syntheses, i.e., in his experiencing a person arrives at compilations.<sup>51)</sup> Experiencing makes a synthesis of perceptions possible, or it makes available a compilation of ideas and concepts that can be described as **judgments**. These judgments push through to new situations but are indeed coupled with previous experiencing on the basis of which one arrives at the very important matter of the **anticipation** of the future in ordering and formulating his activity structures. Husserl asserts that the anticipations from experiencing function on the basis of a person's openness to experiencing. A person's entering and turning to reality are future-directed in the sense that he plans his activities

with respect to the future by which, to a degree, he establishes (constitutes) his own future. Each completed task includes for him the expectation of new **possibilities** that are coming forward so that one expects to be thriving more meaningfully in future situations. Therefore, experiencing is really situation-exceeding. A person is not delivered to a particular piece of reality as it is given. He can always rise above what is given. On the basis of his experiencing he can enlarge his lifeworld by extending its horizon. His interpretations become more precise because he understands the context in which things appear and has mastered relationships intellectually. These interpretations indeed refer to an understanding of reality and of one's own being situated within it. In this light, the functional aspect of experiencing is an event. As an event it is dynamic and one's moving in a particular way is emphasized. Thus, it is not strange that on the basis of meaning interpretations in reality, experiencing creates the possibility that things can be unlocked for a person by which his entry into reality becomes possible. Hence, experiencing is a precondition for a person's becoming human that can be viewed as the progressive figuring forth of adulthood.

The role that language plays in this dynamic event must also be clearly seen. There can be no meaning interpretations before things are verbalized. Hence, in so far as experiencing is a matter of knowing it is also a matter of language; this means that within the sphere of experiencing reality becomes verbalized.

In light of the above findings, the functional aspect of experiencing can really be drawn together under one overarching concept, namely **orienting**. On the basis of experiencing, beacons are established in terms of which one's own foothold in life is determined. Because life and the lifeworld are not static new meanings are continually attributed and there is mention of a repeated profiling of a person's world. There is a continual change and expansion of this integrated world so that it is necessary that one must continually reorient oneself to it. Among other ways, this orientation occurs on the basis of experiencing.

For the sake of systematization, the following essences of experiencing are postulated from this brief discussion. This is done irrespective of the sequence in which they are described.

1. Experience is universal—all human beings experience
2. Experience speaks of a climate of encounter.
3. Experience is an event as well as a state.
4. Experience is achievement consciousness.
5. Experience implies mobility.
6. In experiencing, this involves its activity or act-character.  
Experiencing is a matter of acting.
7. Experience is not determined, i.e., it does not have a predetermined definite course.
8. Experience is predisposed in the sense that a person is encountered in the world actualizing potentialities as an unavoidable task.
9. Experience is accumulating, interpreting, orienting and anticipating.
10. Experience is directed to sense and meaning.
11. Experience is ordering.
12. Experience is constituting.
13. Experiencing is a category of the activity of learning.
14. Experience has a conceptual sedimentation by which a person's grip on reality is indicated.
15. Experience has a comparing and controlling effect with respect to a person's participation in reality.
16. Experience is dialectic-hermeneutic in nature.
17. Experience discloses the original [primordial] life form of a person in its essences.
18. Experience is reflective.
19. Experience always is evidence of a particular attunement or disposition, i.e., that the unlocking of experiential content presumes a particular attunement of a person.
20. Human presumptions or hypotheses are the expectations that a person entertains with respect to experiencing reality.

#### **4. TEACHING AS A PHENOMENON OF EXPERIENCING**

A person's involvement in reality demands of him that he act. The life of which he is an inseparable part is a life of choices,

decisions, confrontations, etc. In brief, because a person **is** there, he must participate in reality and life. He cannot refuse this because he is part of the world; he is co-accountable for the whole of that which **is**. His participation in life expresses the ontological category of “human-being-in-the-world”. A person is called to exercise certain practices or to participate in them in order to give meaning to his being-there. Thus, he can do nothing more than to be involved in administering justice, practicing a religion, a vocation and much more. One also cannot refuse to be co-involved in the practice of educating. Everywhere there are persons there is educating because a person is committed to education for his becoming an adult. Without the practice of educating it is not possible for a person to become what he ought to and can become. Educating is attuned to bringing about changes in the life course of non-adults so that a state is reached whereby the participation of those involved is a meaningful and accountable event. Educating is one of the most important meaning-giving activities of human beings and cannot be thought away from the course of life. Thus, educating belongs to the most original experience at a person’s disposal.

How is this practice of educating realized in the course of life of persons? Why is it that a person allows a non-adult to change so that he eventually will show the image of adulthood? There is only one accountable way to be able to obtain a decisive answer to these questions and that is to perceive a person in his involvement in the world, i.e., to allow the original experience to speak. As already indicated,<sup>52)</sup> a child’s initial involvement with reality is not directed to giving meaning and interpreting meaningfully. However, this is a state that cannot endure in the life of a child. His life involvement announces teaching as an implicit matter of life because it is involved in disclosing the meaning of being. Educating involves the activity by which one unlocks meaningful coherencies and meanings for a child such that he will himself discover in them the sense of his being-there. In order to realize this a child must be taught regarding those aspects of reality that are viewed as important and life relative. The meaning of the teaching activity cannot be sought outside of educating. A person must teach because he wants to and must educate and, in so far as educating involves teaching, one has no

choice but to participate in life. All persons teach—thus teaching also belongs to a human being’s original experience.

Experiencing is a uniquely human matter because only a person, as openness, comes forward to meet the world. In its totality, this covers the entire involvement of a person in reality, and thus also his involvement in the activity of teaching. There cannot be thought about [primordial] teaching outside of educating because indeed one cannot exceed one’s own experiencing. This implies that a thinker, should he seek what is essential to teaching, cannot forsake the terrain of experiencing.

Educating involves the support and help to a child so that he can acquire his own foothold in life and the world and can dwell in the world in meaningful and accountable ways. The educator converses **with** the educand **about** life contents that are first directed at speaking to his feelings [gemoed] and that have a lasting effect on his religious and moral life. Here educating announces itself as a teaching intervention that is especially directed to the conscious life of a person and by which the contents of the lifeworld are raised directly. The educator unlocks the [categories of the] lifeworld for the educand in order to make the world inhabitable for him. But then there is also the expectation that he will live as a person ought to live. And in order to succeed at this he must necessarily **learn**. It is not the terrain of this study to try to do a decisive study of how a person learns or to try to investigate the various modes of learning. Of importance is the fact that a person learns. For a person, learning is a way of being. The didactician moves on his rightful terrain as he, in his didactic intervention, applies himself to allowing the child’s learning activity to occur as effectively as possible; this means to help him move from one level of becoming to another, i.e., to an elevation in his dialogue [with reality] on the basis of accountable teaching. Instead of sending a child into the world on his own and exposing him to possible harm, the educator teaches (Afrikaans: “onder-rig”; German: “Unter-richt” both of which mean to **show together**) him about life contents because the child cannot learn **effectively** on his own.



Effective teaching justifies the expectation of effective learning. The teaching ventured into by an educator in his educative intervention with a child might never take a haphazard course because the educator (teacher) seeks for a learning effect that can only be the result of careful planning. In his planning he strives to create a particular harmony between what he will unlock for a child (contents) and the form in which he will cast these contents. (The didactic imperative). If he succeeds in creating this harmony there can be a learning effect that can be evaluated or judged. Only then can there be an application of particular yardsticks in terms of which the event can be evaluated and repeated again, if necessary. But also in his search for essences with evaluative possibilities, the didactician does not allow himself to drive life reality away. These essences must make it possible for a practice to take a particular form in which the change striven for will manifest itself in a child as a perceivable learning effect (changing, becoming, forming).

Where there is educating (teaching) there necessarily is mention of a structure because the event assumes a particular form that is peculiar to the human form of living. Didactic pedagogics must describe, make knowable, evaluate and so refine these structures that they can appear again in a practice that can be plied every day by people. It is precisely in this that the meaning of didactic theory is found. It must make the matter of **teaching** knowable [recognizable], i.e., describe it so that for a thinker it is possible to be able to say, "This is teaching". The fundamental aspects (categories) of this piece of human experience must thus be disclosed. In addition, its functional aspects must be disclosed (criteria) so that a decisive answer can be acquired about how teaching functions in an educative event. The role that life contents play in teaching also must be viewed more closely. The core questions that loom up for the theoretician are:

- (1) **What is teaching?**
- (2) How does teaching function in an educative plan?
- (3) With respect to what does teaching occur?

Didactic theory itself must answer these questions. Since no second-order institution [e.g., schooling] or any other practice

can disclose the essences of teaching, a didactician turns himself to the reality of educating in which the matter of teaching is tightly enmeshed. Here he will search for the fundamental essences (categories) of that piece of human experience called teaching [first question] and it is here that he also must search for and disclose its form and choose contents so that he can answer the last two questions.

[The source of] a person's original [primordial] experience (of educating) must be in the world because a child is never born completely educated. To become educated he must be taught so that a learning effect is manifested, and, therefore, one searches for sources of knowledge about "teaching". This source is human experiencing that, among other things, discloses the form of educating (teaching). This aspect is universally valid because this **form** of living [teaching] is peculiar to being human. The **contents**, i.e., that in terms of which teaching occurs, are universal in so far as there must be contents to be taught but particular with respect to the contents as such. Teaching is a particular piece of experiencing that brings together forms of living and life contents so that a secure lifestyle is crystallized in a child. As one who carries out the practice of teaching, a didactician dare not leave his teaching activities to chance. The grounding of teaching, viewed in the light of the fact that it never occurs outside of human experiencing, must take its point of departure in the reality of educating that speaks from a unique piece of human experiencing.

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