

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD AS A PERSON

1. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

From the previous chapter, it is clear that the orthopedagogue should adequately know and understand the child restrained in becoming adult in his problematic educative situation before help can be provided. He thus has the task of searching for such knowledge.

This particular type of search has generally been known as **diagnostication***. The concept **diagnose** is linked to the activity of identifying illnesses in the medical profession, and currently **diagnosis** means "to identify, differentiate an illness according to its characteristics, symptoms" (224, 113) or the "determination of the nature of an abnormality, disorder or disease" (53, 66) or also "the art or act of discriminating between diseases and distinguishing them by their characteristic symptoms" or the "summary of symptoms and the conclusion arrived at" (69, 366).

The word **diagnose** is composed of **dia** which means **through, between** and **gnosis** (Greek: gignosko) which means **know or knowledge** (see 69, 366). The verb form **diagnoskein** means to **differentiate** and this implies that there are distinctions among various similar and relevant phenomena or matters.

In diagnosis, the medical profession enjoys significant success in determining the nature and cause of different diseases and analogously there is a search for easily attributable causes regarding children with "problems".

Notwithstanding medical diagnosis, nowadays there also are a variety of different sorts of diagnoses, e.g., psychiatric, psychological, pedological and pedagogical. In these scientific diagnoses use is made, e.g., of conversation, observation, projective techniques and a variety of so-called tests or media. Currently,

* Since the word "diagnostication" has an awkward ring to the ears of speakers of American English, for the most part I have translated "diagnostication" and related terms in the text as "evaluation".

psychodiagnosis can be described as "The attempt to assess personal characteristics through the observation of external features, as in **physiognomy, craniology, graphology**, study of voice, gait, etc." (53, 230).

It is generally known that the success of the methods of the natural sciences, also with respect to their use to study persons, have given rise to a naturalistic anthropology (see 170) by which a person is viewed as a psycho-physical organism, or at best a higher animal.

The following briefly considers how this view attempts to arrive at an understanding of a person.

2. AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND A PERSON FROM A NATURALISTIC POINT OF VIEW

The naturalistic view of a person has led to an equally naturalistic "diagnosis". The symptoms that are related to educative problems have existed for a very long time as is clearly illustrated by Cain slaying his brother. Adam and Eve had certainly asked what now can be done to get over the problem.

An attempt to answer such a question on scientific grounds has linked its search to the methods of the natural sciences. With reference to the success of the method of analysis-synthesis regarding the physical world, especially during the last 100 years since the establishment in 1875 of the first psychology laboratory, there has been an attempt to clarify the entwined relationships of the psychic life of a person according to particular laws of behavior.

There is an attempt to isolate "developmental deficiencies" under the hypothesis that a person is but a compilation of abilities, aptitudes, functions, capacities, drives, impulses, habits and behavioral patterns. There is a search for significant deviations in the process of adaptation that eventually will automatically play themselves out in a person.

With the help of particular tests the causes of malfunctioning factors are sought (see 299, 18 et seq.). There is a search for and measurement of basic stimulus-response factors that are correlated with particular deviations. Knowledge regarding the unique individual is acquired by measuring the elementary factors and it is assumed that persons only differ from each other in the degree to

which the relative strengths of these quantitative factors differ. Since the profile of the elementary functions is determined only once, everything one needs to know about the individual is able to be read-off from this profile.

Especially in American there is an attempt to perfect the measurement method without first asking penetrating questions about whether a person can be known in this way and although, in connection with different schools of thought (see 299, 22-24), gradual renovations come about with regard to a so-called individual "personality diagnosis", the **role** of the person himself in his development and change is still partly or entirely neglected, and the point of departure does not take into consideration **what** and **who** a person is as a **person**.

In psychological diagnosis, psychological tests are developed as special tests to acquire as far as possible data about the person (see 302, 106). The word "test" really means a **test sample** (174, 108). By means of a test, as in a natural science experiment, there is an attempt to let the person "react" to particular problems by means of particular behaviors or written answers.

Since the basic assumption is that the person is impeded in his (automatic) "development" there are attempts to "measure" the progression of development with the help of generally known developmental tests. The aim is to "tests" as many aspects of "development" as possible, on that basis to determine a developmental quotient, **isolate** the **factors** impeding the **development** and then **doctor** them.

There also is an attempt to test as many **factors** as possible regarding the person's psychic state and then describe it in terms of a summary of quantitative test results.

Specific "factors" are concentrated on that should lead to particular **behavioral deviations**, e.g., sensory defects, negative environmental influences, etc. Regarding sensory defects, many tests have been designed that are based on the laws of classical Gestalt psychology.

Especially the person's **being a person** is misunderstood because only a naturalistic anthropology is in place. Tournier says [in English]: "Science knows nothing of the person" (266, 41) meaning

that by measuring and testing one does not come close to the core of a person and remains only on the periphery". Tournier concludes with: "Through information I **can** understand a case; only through communication shall I be able to understand a person" (266, 25).

3. AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND A PERSON FROM A PERSONOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

To be able to arrive at essential knowledge about a human being, it is necessary that he first be known as a **person** based on an accountable anthropology. Phenomenology provides a way to such an accountable view of being a person because it is **situation-directed** and aims at disclosing a person's being-in-the-world (see 84; 299, 24-26).

The anthropology accepted by the orthopedagogue will give a particular color to his evaluation and largely will be reflected in his approach and methods ((see 243, 84). The orthopedagogic evaluator also is faced with the question: "What is a child as a **person**? What is he as a **particular** person? What **should** he be as a person? How far from the **norm** is this child? How does a child develop into a complete person? About these, Nel (174, 83) says the orthopedagogic evaluator has to have an understanding of what a complete person means, which is an anthropological question (see 12, 10 and 19).

In gauging a child restrained in becoming adult as a **person-in-education**, he has to be considered as a **person** by continually proceeding from an accountable anthropology.

4. PERSON-EXPLORATORY CONVERSATION

Phenomenologically it is clearly shown that the best approach to another person's experiential world is a **conversation** and not a test. In this regard, Van Strien says [in Dutch]: "As far as one has a 'theory' of another, it has to preserve the 'theme' of a conversation. One can show many motives central to the way one projects oneself. However, one should not attribute these to thing-like complexes and powers because one's own life is guided out of free personal decisions" (302, 163).

In an authentic conversation, "our" world is created and gradually structured further. According to Strasser (248, 140) there is a going from two isolated, subjective worlds that develop into a shared intersubjective world.

Van den Berg (269, 136-154) indicates that a conversation is determined by the nature of **being with** the conversational partner. In being with, a common world is created and the conversational partner is **there with** things. **Being-with** means being-there-together, there with the matter or event ... thus, being together in a landscape, or also creating a joint world. According to Van den Berg (269, 146), jointly being-there with things with a conversational partner assumes a give-and-take that preserves the fidelity of the world image as this has unfolded through communicating with all persons who in our life have directed a word to us. In truth, being-with means that we are understood because it refers to a going together into one world, to creating a common world. Conversation thus is **communicating** (participating) in a mainly common world even though the conversational partners continue to remain aware that the other is there next to him.

Conversation is moreover not only a participation in a commonly designed world but also a participation in each other's interiority and thus a communicating of being-with. Each communication includes in itself an appeal for mutual understanding, an understanding that the communicated word itself cannot guarantee. Thus, conversing is much more than reporting and it communicates the latent, that which is communicated without words.

Van den Berg (269) shows clearly that what is unknown about the conversational partner, the differences between the two persons speaking, the asymmetry of the conversational partners, is a precondition for a conversation.

A successful conversation really includes a relationship of **encounter** and a variety of writers unambiguously indicate that an **encounter** is the only way to authentically know another person.

Strasser says [inDutch] "Psychological research has to do with an **encounter** between persons who are animated by differing intentionalities" (248, 138). According to Van Lennep a person lets himself be known only in an "existential encounter" of two subjects,

and that ... "a personality portrait without an encounter remains a summary of external appearances" (293 [in Dutch]). With reference to Buytendijk, he stresses that another is respected as a subject only in an "encounter" and then no longer is viewed as "an object in a chain of material for a useful aim but as a subject who wants to gain clarity about his own existence and answers to concrete questions of life contained in it" (293).

Essentially, a conversation has to do with the fact that it is one **person** who wants to learn to know another **person** and what is primary is that it is an **interpersonal** matter. There is a subjective **merging into** the world of the other. The evaluator also tries in his conversation to eliminate the distance between himself and his conversational partner and allow an intersubjective "our" world to arise. Strasser (248, 149) indicates that this "intersubjective" relationship of understanding on an intuitive foundation is a precondition for any psychological investigation. Nel (170, 3) says whoever wants to understand a person as a whole has to merge himself into the other's lived experiences and be able to co-experience them and that such co-experiencing is a precondition for understanding. The one who "merges" has to be able to see, experience and lived experience the world as the other does. This involves understanding the other's personal meanings within a subject-subject relationship.

With respect to one person gauging the meanings that another person gives to life contents, Lubbers (150, 33), in reference to Buytendijk (31), indicates that much meaning is implicit in the situation within which it functions and is not the person's property. Consequently, a person can behave meaningfully in different situations without being able to explain to another what he is doing or even know this himself. This implicit meaning functions along side of his attributing open and personal meanings. In this regard, Lubbers (150, 33) refers to Langeveld (127) and says that by attributing open meaning, a person participates in reality as it holds true for other persons. By attributing personal meaning he makes the uniqueness of his world into his own spiritual possession.

Attributing open meaning makes an objective world possible and in it the word functions as a concept. It is the world of truth and reality. Attributing personal meaning makes a subjective world possible in which the word is loaded. It is the world by which my truth and my reality are known to me and by which it is possible for

me to classify flowers, understand disappointments, fears, joys and in other ways have particular feelings about a matter (150, 34).

Attributing personal meaning is related to the implicit and yet clearly differentiates itself from the implicit because the former experiences find their embodiment in images within which the world-for-me is my own possession and by which another can participate in that world.

The results of giving personal meaning in evaluation, generally are understood symbolically which in various ways are bound to a meaning that is conceptually anchored (150, 34).

Langeveld says [in Dutch] whoever encounters another "proceeds to link together and overcome a foreign perception and expressive understanding in a dual interiority of 'I-am-with-you' and 'you are with me'" (128, 243).

According to Binswanger (see 302, 97) this encounter is only possible in a high point of loving surrender in which an I opens himself to a **you**, and Van den Berg (269, 149) says there is a participation in each other's interiority. Buytendijk thinks: "And rightly so, whatever one says, one needs first to have a matter to talk about with someone before one can know him. Then it can be said that one first shows his interiority, first unmask himself in his deeds, choices in extreme, surprising, incidents but especially in the quiet ordinariness of life itself with its countless simple everyday tasks" (29, 23 [in Dutch]).

5. THE ORTHOPEDAGOGIC EVALUATIVE CONVERSATION

5.1 Subjective merging

Since a successful educative event clearly assumes a **relationship of encounter**, it is obvious that actualizing an educative event is the proper way to learn to know, as a person, the child restrained in becoming adult.

The orthopedagogue is in search of the meanings the child attributes to life contents, i.e., in gauging his dialogue with reality. Van der Haan (275) indicates that the evaluator is confronted with "... a child-in-distress, not only a thing with characteristics or a bundle of functions. He has to acquire as complete an image as

possible of the meaning of his dialogue with the world, the modes of existence he enters in his associations but also how he is met in the course of child development" (275 [in Dutch]).

There is a personal encounter between orthopedagogue and the child during which the orthopedagogic evaluator as educator comes to an understanding of the child's human existence as an educand, thus an understanding that is entirely embedded in the reality of educating itself (see 170, 70).

There is a subjective shifting or merging into the child's world during which two I-worlds (my-world-as-adult and your-world-as-child-restrained-in-becoming-adult) are changed into an intersubjective our-world from which I-as-adult no longer stand aloof but try to eliminate that aloofness.

This is an **entry** into another's humanity, which is related to our own understanding and with which ... we already are primordially acquainted ... According to Nel (174, 77 [in Afrikaans]), entry "means ... being **present** in the child's world".

Thus, the two I-worlds are changed into an intersubjective our-world where the orthopedagogic evaluator as adult no longer stands at a distance but now penetrates and co-experiences the experiential world of the child restrained in becoming adult.

According to Gouws (76, 8), the exploring pedagogue primarily has to be an understanding person who listens to fellow persons as co-subjects in order to respond to their appeal.

Kwakkel-Scheffer asserts that "In his living-with and feeling-with, he is at one with the child, while as an adult and an educator he also differs from the child, he lived experiences things differently by which a new possibility is passed on to the child and a new perspective is able to arise" (114, 83 [in Dutch]).

The orthopedagogue has to lead the child to "narrate", to "represent", to "reveal" what he cannot assimilate (150, 9). He has to look "through the eyes of the child" but at the same time remain **adult** and also continue to educate as an **educator** (see 114, 84).

This subjective merging is a precondition for the orthopedagogic evaluator to arrive at a meaningful interpretation. In this

interpretation he also is involved in his totality that includes his emotionality and affectivity, according to Gouws (76, 31). However, as Strasser says, this does not involve a "feeling-with" but a "feeling-toward"; that is, it involves "the emotional or also the affective grasp of values and purposes which are defined in encountering **another**. It is true that this act of encountering is personal but not arbitrary. It allows us to understand the behaviors of our fellow persons" (248, 140 [in Dutch]). According to Gouws (76, 31), the child's affects, disturbances, anxieties, passions, etc. have to be understood with feeling. The orthopedagogic evaluator has to make the child's actual experiences his own (see 154, 132; 286, 57).

In an orthopedagogic evaluative conversation the quality of the **conversation** is extremely important in gauging the child's communication with things and others. However, where there is a merging of the worlds of the orthopedagogue and the child restrained in becoming adult, this does not mean that they are **identical** as conversational partners because their being together is not only a **communicating** but also a **participating** (see 269, 147; 174, 91) in each other's interiority which especially is made possible by mutual acceptance.

This **merging** into the child's world, however, is not as straightforward as some adults assume because they can readily forget that the restrained child lives in an entirely different world from the adult for whom life has assumed particular fixed forms and it is assumed that the child also adopts those forms as they exist for the adult. It is too easy to assume that everything that has fixed meanings for the adult also has the same meanings for the child. The adult's recollections are vague and besides they are colored with interpretations from an adulthood to which a child is still on the way.

For this conversation to be able to thrive, first the orthopedagogue has to try to establish an affective relationship with the restrained child. Thus, the appropriate emotional climate has to be created before an authentic encounter can be reached.

5.2 Implementing the fundamental pedagogic structures

According to Redl and Wineman there is one foolproof method for learning to know children who are somewhat difficult to know and

that is "to live with them in an 'action' rather than a mere relationship of 'discussion'" (206, 30 [in English]). In this way, the educator can be effectively **present** in the child's world.

Nel (174, 77), following Langeveld (128) indicates ... "to be present one also must be welcome ... the child also has to allow the adult to be present" [in Afrikaans].

The successful development of this conversation above all is also dependent on the quality with which the fundamental pedagogic structures are implemented. Thus, e.g., there should be mutual trust and especially the restrained child should have trust in the orthopedagogue as an adult. Sonnekus (235, 34) indicates that an encounter between the child and the orthopedagogic evaluator occurs on a pathic-affective level as well as on an ethical-normative foundation. Therefore, the evaluator has to continually insure that the pedagogic relationship of authority is implemented in the orthopedagogic evaluative situation. Authority is actualized in a sympathetic way with respect to the not-yet-responsible, helpless, restrained child. Because this child also looks up to the orthopedagogue, who represents the normative to him, he gladly submits himself to his authority. Moreover, the orthopedagogue has to continually be accountable for the pedagogic **admissibility** of the events in the educative situation, and a "free expression where everything might and usually does occur is no longer educating because the adult encourages inappropriate development" says Lubbers (150, 12 [in Dutch]). Therefore, the orthopedagogic evaluator continually gives pedagogic guidance according to the pedagogic criteria of responsibility, sympathetic authoritative guidance, normativeness, security, acceptance, etc.

In the first place, the orthopedagogue then understands the restrained child as such and as a child in **distress** on the basis of his problematic educative situation. Secondly, he searches for a more complete understanding of this **problematic** educative situation.

In this search, it is precisely the adequate actualization of the pedagogic event in terms of the relationship, sequence, aim and activities (see 118) that permits the orthopedagogic evaluative conversation to flourish and it sustains the orthopedagogic evaluative situation.

5.3 Means of conversing

The most important conversational medium is the spoken word but because of a child's inability to verbalize his "problem" this conversation has to be readily implemented by other means such as by play, images and more.

Langeveld states clearly that: "With restrained children there is something wrong with communication" (125, 90 [in Dutch]) and to help such children involves reestablishing personal communication, also through personal communication in the situation of orthopedagogic evaluation.

For the restrained child usually there is an emotional as well as a cognitive conflict which requires that means other than language have to be used to properly gauge this "conflict" because, according to Lubbers, the fact that something is amiss with communication also means "that because a child communicates too little about himself, his lived experiences, etc. or his interior is concealed rather than manifested, this also means that his behavior and expressive life are unreadable to everyday educators" (150, 90 [in Dutch]).

In addition, a child is not directly questioned about his "problem". In this regard, Perquin (189) emphasizes that a child's intimacy should not be damaged in the conversation and he should never experience it as an invasion of his privacy. Therefore, it is important that a child who explores his problematic educative situation with the orthopedagogue know, on the basis of his **trust** in him, that his deepest secrets will not be "fished for" in this conversation. According to Van den Berg (269, 154), the other's secrets are a precondition for a conversation and he states clearly that if another no longer has a secret for us, he also has nothing more to offer us. Also, Van Strien stresses this when he says: "... he no longer lives for us [if he no longer is a secret to us]. We indeed know him through and through. Then trust becomes 'encased' as Jaspers expresses it" (302, 254 [in Dutch]).

For these reasons particular aspects of the problematic educative situation have to be kept **anonymous** and communicated in only indirect ways. If the child feels secure, also in the sense that he knows his deepest secrets are not going to be "fished for", he also will feel ready to disclose much about himself during his being with the evaluator.

Moreover, he has the right that the orthopedagogue pay attention to his **potentialities** and limitations. Here the correct attitude is **respect** for each other's potentialities. Rumke speaks of "a maximum approach while maintaining a distance" (216, 364 [in Dutch]) and Rogers (210, 187) refers to an **empathetic understanding** which includes the evaluator being welcome in the child's world". "It is a moment to moment sensitivity ... a sensing of the (child's) inner world of private personal meanings, as if it were your own, while never forgetting that it is not yours" (210, 187 [in English]).

Unlike **sympathy**, where the necessary distance is missing, where there is an emotional identification with the circumstances and feelings of another, and where the purpose is not to try to understand the other better, with **empathy** the necessary distance is properly kept (see 226, 160).

Notwithstanding the empathetic distance, the orthopedagogue has to purposely distance himself after there is a subjective merging so that he can place his findings "in a meaningful relationship with genuine life situations and occurrences in diverse situations which he has co-experienced and still distances himself from", according to Van der Haan (275).

In this "second phase", the orthopedagogic evaluator takes himself out of the intersubjective world and comes to an **objective** view, to objectivity-in-subjectivity. In the practical orthopedagogic evaluative situation this distancing occurs in various ways, a matter that will be given greater attention.

5.4 Disclosing meaning

Orthopedagogic evaluation entails exploring the child's experiential world. There is a search for the meanings he has given to educative contents as life contents. Ter Horst says "Orthopedagogic evaluation is that orthopedagogic activity directed to finding the changeable, modifiable, controllable factors in a problematic educative situation" (258, 102 [in Dutch]).

Thus, it is clear that orthopedagogic evaluation has to be directed to the total situation of the child restrained in becoming adult. Furthermore, this situation has to be entered without any

preconceptions. All aspects that can be connected with accelerating a child's becoming also need to be taken into account. A penetrating understanding of the restrained child as a person has to be attained.

The restrained child's total educative situation is the only place where these meanings and what has led to them are to be found (also in terms of underactualizing his psychic life-in-education) (see 299, chapter 5). It is within this situation that the child's dialogue with his educators and life contents has to be gauged.

In his educative situation, the restrained child also "exists in his totality and the whole of his personal world is implicated. A situation is the totality of the personal world perspectively structured by an intentional structure," says Linschoten (269, 429 [in Dutch]). Thus, the orthopedagogic evaluator searches for an essential view of the child's relationships (see 171, 11) he has constituted in his dialogue with the world.

Such an analysis of essentials has to indicate how the child actualizes his own becoming adult as well as the meanings he gives to his becoming. From this, his lived experienced problems of becoming will appear and also how he assimilates or doesn't assimilate them because an essential viewing is made of the actualized fundamental pedagogic structures which, on the basis of their inadequate actualization, can make the child's educative situation a problematic one.

To understand a child restrained in becoming adult in his situation requires that the evaluator understand his **relationships** to life contents. Such an understanding naturally requires knowledge about the events of educating and becoming adult. Only with this knowledge can the distressful situation and his being enmeshed in it be gauged and can it be confidently shown what this particular child's achievable level of becoming is.

Necessarily, the orthopedagogue has to gauge in their essentials the pedagogically achieved and achievable so that one can determine with confidence what the **gap** in becoming adult includes since this is the basis of his problematic becoming adult.

Thus, the orthopedagogue is really searching for an image of the particular child's meanings as an image of his experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving, a "totality image" of the

world relationships he has already established. Thus, there has to be a reflection on all of the situations where the "problem appears; the persons and matters regarding its appearance and what the undesired behaviors themselves are" (see 56, 54-55 [in Dutch]).

Vermeer (306, 164) says the orthopedagogic evaluator seeks an overview of the child's personal world of meaning and of his educative reality. He tries to arrive at a cross-sectional view of the longitudinal coherence of meanings that characterize the child's life history (306, 154).

The **inadequate** response of the child restrained in becoming adult to the appeal that is directed to him has to be explicated. His disturbed dialogue has to be uncovered there **where** his giving meaning with the adult's help has failed in daily life (see 45, 88).

Such explication, moreover, will be about his **different** actualization of his psychic life-in-education. More explicitly, this is a penetrating analysis of the essentials of the restrained child's actualization of his psychic life-in-education. Thus, there is a search for his **different** experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, etc. It is determined how the structure of his psychic life appears in reality and what its relationship is to the origin of the significant gap between what is pedagogically achieved and achievable. Thus, the orthopedagogic evaluator has to determine the relationship between the way a child actualizes his becoming adult and the structure of his affective foundation; what dynamic workings have a role in these interactions among the different modes of his psychic life; what changes have occurred in his educative situation which directly or indirectly can influence the manifested restraints; what influences does the restrained becoming itself have on the structure of his psychic life and how does this particular structure influence his dialogue with educative contents; and the extent to which the manifested stagnation is appropriate for the particular structure (see 287, 96-97).

This requires an analysis of the actual structure of the restrained child's psychic life-in-education and of the structure of the educating that has contributed to unfolding such a personality structure.

Strasser says: "We have to ferret out what exists for him and how" (247, 115 [in Dutch]). Thus, this involves determining **what** he

knows, what he has already discovered; **how** he feels and how he arrived at these feelings; what **meanings** he has attributed to life contents, **how** he has arrived at such meanings. Thus, on the one hand, the question is **what** constitutes his **experiential world** and how has he gradually constituted these meanings; and, on the other hand, how does he now act and how does he now allow himself to be known as a child who is inadequately becoming adult.

Thus, the essentials of the actual structure of his psychic life has to be determined, what distinguishable modes of actualization figure prominently regarding particular demands of becoming adult, what modes of actualization are not actualized adequately and what their relationships are to his psychic life as a functional totality. Also to be determined is the state of his fundamental emotional structure and how this influences the adults' guiding him to actualize his potentialities for becoming adult as well as the extent to which problems in this becoming lead to further underactualization.

Disclosing the essentials of the restrained child's experiential world includes gauging the actualization of his psychic life in his dialogue with life tasks in the world and, in particular, the disturbed actualization of his psychic life-in-education. This involves gauging the degree of blunted directedness, disturbed experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving and the valences life tasks have for him. Thus, a qualitative analysis of his **response to life's** appeals is required (see 243, 87).

Thus, there needs to be a search for the **essentials** of the restrained child's disturbed experiencing-, willing-, lived experiencing-, knowing-, and behaving-in-education. Because the **quality** of his response to life's appeals is co-determined by the educating he has been given, the quality of this response also is an indication of the level of becoming adult he has already attained. However, this quality has to be continually judged in light of the highest attainable level of experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving deemed possible for a particular child.

5.5 Determining the pedagogically attained and attainable

It is obvious that the pedagogically attained and attainable can only be evaluated in terms of pedagogic criteria. Establishing the pedagogically achieved level really simultaneously answers the

question of what the educative deficiency is and what is at the basis of the problematic educative situation.

The question remains how has the child's becoming adult already been furthered because of educating and always **in relation to what is attainable**. Thus, this is not merely explicating and illuminating the restraints and deficiencies of becoming adult in terms of specific "symptoms" but is an optimistic pedagogically accountable exploration of his "total" educative situation where any aspects of becoming adult are preserved, and the degree to which he is ready for and in a position to venture with the tasks of becoming adult are explicated with the aim of linking up with them while assisting him to "accelerate his becoming adult".

Consequently, the **nature** and **intensity** of his failure to communicate with the world have to be determined. Because such a child's expressive life has become "unreadable" to his everyday educators (see 125), the orthopedagogic evaluator has the task of **reading** it.

The child's potentialities for becoming adult have to be determined without any doubt and so does whether he has at his disposal sufficient abilities to be able to acquire a pedagogically adequate grasp of life contents and integrate them into his already existing possessed experiences. Kwakkel-Scheffer (114, 112) says the state of his educability has to be gauged; whether he still is really educable; whether he already is capable of attributing particular meaning or perhaps not yet. Thus, the orthopedagogic evaluator has the task of searching for the level of becoming adult which the child has attained and to compare this with the level he ought **now** to have attained and to search for the **nature** of the discrepancy and the underlying reasons for it.

It is now clear why Van Gelder (287, 49) says that pedagogic evaluation establishes what has been pedagogically achieved in terms of the level achievable. The orthopedagogue will thus know **what** is restraining a child's becoming adult as well as **why** it is restrained and with the aim of providing assistance.

Orthopedagogic evaluation has a normative character since the child's current situation is continually viewed and explored with respect to what it **can** and **ought** to be. This exploration requires a

blending of the evaluator's perspective with the child's total situation.

The starting point for all of this is the phenomenological method which amounts to the "researcher taking as his point of departure for the investigation a human activity or situation, i.e., the phenomenon itself, viewing and analyzing it naturally and without prejudice" according to Nel and Sonnekus (181, 23).

Here the concern is with the child restrained in becoming adult in his problematic educative situation, i.e., especially with his **inadequate actualization** of becoming adult. The phenomenological method leads to learning to know the restrained child in his world relationships, but at the same time recognizing that he also has his mysteries and secrets which we can only partly reach (see 174, 77).