

Visual Melodies and the Symbolic Representational World

Connections between events are made on the basis of perceptual spatial, temporal, and material similarity and what Piaget (1952) termed transductive logic, that is, reasoning in an arbitrary fashion from particular to particular. This form of "illogic", I believe is responsible for the large number of Special Scores in 5 to 7 year old children. As well, the child's thought has a tendency to center on a single, striking feature of an object, to the neglect of other important aspects, and thus is unable to take into account features which could balance and compensate for the distorting, biasing effects of the single centration. Later, he engages in dichotomous centration, with the same results. Here, thought is concrete in the sense that objects and events are judged to be what they appear to be in immediate, egocentric perception.

The internal world and external reality are but minimally differentiated and, thus, reality is not understood as a convergence of multiple perspectives, but as a direct perception. Thus the individual experiences his viewpoint as the only possible reality. Similarly, play and reality are not conceived as "different cognitive realms possessing distinct and different 'ground rules'" (Flavell, 1963, p.161). As Samuel Beck said "...children may cease at about age seven to live in fantasy as if it were reality" (Beck, 1960, pp. 20-21).

The child's first symbols are highly personal and intimately related to his actions (Ginsburg & Opper, 1979). Along with his ongoing actions, the affective-kinesthetic meanings that the infant made non-symbolically in the predominantly color mode, are now given symbolic expression as the movement mode gains prominence.

Thus the sensations of the infant's body and those originating from its interactions with the environment, along with the meaning he gave to these experiences and the emotions he felt, all become part of the **symbolic representational world**. These embodied schemas, or object relations, form the foundation on which a symbolic sense of self emerges. They will continue to develop and be elaborated and modified during subsequent experiences as they are "metaphorically projected" into higher levels of functioning that develop" (Santostefano, 1998). Although Ogden (1986) sees symbols emerging earlier than Piaget does, he has some interesting comments on the infant's experience at the onset of this period. He says that the infant utilizes splitting as a way of ordering experience into categories of pleasure and unpleasure, danger and safety, hunger and satiation, and so on. This makes for discontinuity of experience, and little sense of continuity of the self. Also, early in this period, the infant's subjectivity or sense of "I-ness" is limited: he is not the self as creator and interpreter of his thoughts, feelings, or perception-they simply happen. Rather than living his experience, **the infant is lived by his immediate experience.**

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